**National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training**

Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

Bachelor of Visual Design

Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT

Bahrain Polytechnic

Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 5-8 October 2015

HC067-C2-R067

Table of Contents

Acronyms

ANQAHE	Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
AQAC	Academic Quality Assurance Committee
BP	Bahrain Polytechnic
BVD	Bachelor of Visual Design
CAC	Curriculum Advisory Committee
CAP	Certificate in Academic Preparation
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
CSB	Civil Service Bureau
CTTL	Certificate in Tertiary Teaching and Learning
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
EDICT	Engineering, Design and ICT
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEC	Higher Education Council
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
MIS	Management Information Systems
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PAD	Programme Approval Document
PBL	Problem-Based Learning
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
QMAP	Quality, Measurement and Analysis Unit

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   2

QMS	Quality Management System
QQA	National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training-Bahrain
SER	Self-Evaluation Report

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *3*

The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process

A.   The Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework

To ensure a robust external quality assurance system in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR) of the National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training (QQA) has developed and is implementing two external quality review processes, namely: Institutional Reviews and Programmes-within-College Reviews. Together will give confidence in Bahrain's higher education system nationally, regionally, and internationally.

Programmes-within-College Reviews have three main objectives:

- to provide decision-makers (in the higher education institutions, the QQA, the Higher Education Council (HEC), students and their families, prospective employers of graduates and other stakeholders) with evidence-based judgements on the quality of learning programmes.
- to support the development of internal quality assurance processes with information on emerging good practices and challenges, evaluative comments and continuing improvement.
- to enhance the reputation of Bahrain's higher education regionally and internationally.

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

Indicator 1: **The Learning Programme**

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

Indicator 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 3: **Academic Standards of the Graduates**

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

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *4*

Indicator 4: **Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance**

The arrangements in place for managing the programme, including quality assurance, give confidence in the programme.

The Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as 'the Panel') states in the Review Report whether the programme satisfies each Indicator. If the programme satisfies all four Indicators, the concluding statement will say that there is 'confidence' in the programme.

If two or three Indicators are satisfied, including Indicator 1, the programme will receive a 'limited confidence' judgement. If one or no Indicator is satisfied, or Indicator 1 is not satisfied, the judgement will be 'no confidence', as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Criteria for Judgements

Criteria	Judgement
All four Indicators satisfied	Confidence
Two or three Indicators satisfied, including Indicator 1	Limited Confidence
One or no Indicator satisfied	No Confidence
All cases where **Indicator 1** is not satisfied	

B.   The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process at the Bahrain Polytechnic

A Programmes-within-College review of the programmes offered by Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT at Bahrain Polytechnic (BP) was conducted by the DHR of the QQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place in October 2015 for the academic programmes offered by the Faculty. These programmes are Bachelor of Visual Design, Bachelor of Web Media, Bachelor of Information and Communication Technology and Bachelor of Engineering Technology.

This report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Bachelor of Visual Design (BVD) based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and appendices submitted by Bahrain Polytechnic (BP), the supplementary documentation made available during the site visit, as well as interviews and observations made during the review site visit.

BP was notified by the DHR/QQA in April 16, 2015 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College reviews of programmes offered by its Faculty of

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *5*

Engineering, Design, and ICT with the site visit taking place on 5-8 October 2015. In preparation for the review, BP conducted its self-evaluation reports of all its programmes and submitted the SERs with appendices on the agreed date in June 15, 2015.

The DHR constituted a Panel consisting of experts in the academic field of Visual Design, Web Media, Engineering, Information and Communication Technology and in higher education who have experience of external programme quality reviews. The Panel comprised nine external reviewers.

This Report records the evidence-based conclusions reached by the Panel based on:

1. analysis of the Self-Evaluation Report and supporting materials submitted by the institution prior to the external peer-review visit.
2. analysis derived from discussions with various stakeholders (faculty members, students, graduates and employers).
3. analysis based on additional documentation requested and presented to the Panel during the site visit.

It is expected that BP will use the findings presented in this report to strengthen its Bachelor of Visual Design. The DHR recognizes that quality assurance is the responsibility of the higher education institution itself. Hence, it is the right of BP to decide how it will address the recommendations contained in the Review Report. Nevertheless, three months after the publication of this Report, BP is required to submit to the DHR an improvement plan in response to the recommendations.

The DHR would like to extend its thanks to BP for the co-operative manner in which it has participated in the Programmes-within-College review process. It also wishes to express its appreciation for the open discussions held in the course of the review and the professional conduct of the faculty contributing to the Bachelor of Visual Design and the BP staff in general.

C.   Overview of the Faculty of Engineering, Design, and ICT

The 2013-2014 Polytechnic Catalogue lists the Faculty of Engineering, Design, and ICT as one of the faculties of BP that was established in 2008. The Faculty offers undergraduate programmes comprising Visual Design, Web Media, Information and Communication Technology and Engineering Technology. The management structure of the Faculty includes a Dean, Head of Schools and Programme Managers.

At the time of the site visit, the total number of academic staff in the Faculty was 58 (57 full-time and one part-time), the total number of administrative staff in the Faculty was

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *6*

12 full-time members, and the total number of students at the time of the site visit was (395 full-time and 221 part-time).

D.   Overview of the Bachelor of Visual Design

The Bachelor of Visual Design (BVD) programme has been offered in September 2010. It aims at preparing students for careers in the field of Visual Design. The BVD programme had its first intake in 2010, and 25 students graduated from the programme since its inception. As of September 20, 2015, 61 students were enrolled in the programme and five full-time teaching staff contribute to the programme.

E.   Summary of Review Judgements

Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor of Visual Design

Indicator	Judgement
1: The Learning Programme	Satisfies
2: Efficiency of the Programme	Satisfies
3: Academic Standards of the Graduates	Satisfies
4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance	Satisfies
Overall Judgement	**Confidence**

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Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *7*

1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

1.1   Bahrain Polytechnic has vision and mission statements that have been derived from Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, whereas the mission of the institution is to 'produce professional and enterprising graduates with the 21st Century skills necessary for the community locally, regionally and internationally'. The strategic goals of BP have been recently revised and the goals for 2015-2019 period include sustainability, graduate reputation, assurance of learning, engagement for impact and incubating entrepreneurship and research, which are also reflected in the strategic plan of the Faculty. Moreover, the BVD Programme Approval Document (PAD) demonstrates a clear academic planning framework and implementation for the BVD programme. During the site visit, the Panel notes that the aims of the programme lean towards the practical side, in order to contribute to achieving BP's mission and strategic goals, including a detailed consideration of producing work-ready graduates. From interviews with staff members, the Panel confirms that the Visual Design programme aims are appropriate to the type and level of programme offered by the Faculty of Engineering, Design, and ICT (EDICT). This is demonstrated by the internal development of the Visual Design programme in consultation with the local industry which ensures that the programme takes into consideration the needs and characteristics of the local labour market and produces employable graduates in line with the institution's mission as mentioned above. The Panel appreciates the detailed approach that BP has taken with respect to academic planning for the BVD programme and that there are clear programme aims which contribute to the accomplishment of the institution's mission and the strategic plan of the Faculty.

1.2   The BVD programme consists of 480 credit hours -where a typical course is awarded 15 credit hours- distributed over eight semesters and is structured in a way that students should complete their degrees in four academic years. The 480 credits of the programme are divided into a set of core courses (255 credit hours), English Communication (60 credit hours), studio options (90 or 105 credit hours) and general electives (60 or 75 credit hours). The English Communication courses are related to the discipline of Visual Design. The Panel appreciates that the programme provides provision for developing students' communication skills according to the discipline. The curriculum is well-organized to provide academic progression course-by-course and year-on-year, with suitable workload for students. Enrolment and Academic Progression policy ensures that all course requirements in terms of pre-requisite are satisfied. For example, the major courses in visual design are (VIB5100: Visual Design I: Colour Theory, Design Theory & Methods,

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *8*

VIB5101: Visual Design 2: Typography & Graphic Design, VIB6200: Visual Design 3: Advanced Typography, VIB6201: Visual Design 4: Branding & Branding Methods, VIB6300: Visual Design 5: Sustainable Design and VIB7301:Visual Design 6: Portfolio Preparation). These courses provide the necessary theoretical and practical aspects of the field starting from basics ones to more advanced level. In conjunction with the above courses, industry and community projects, counting for 30 credits each, constitute a culminating experience for students prior to graduation where they will be able to put in practice the theoretical aspects that they learnt throughout their study. The Panel notes with appreciation that the curriculum of BVD programme is well-organized to demonstrate academic progression and appropriate balance between theory and practice.

1.3   The course syllabi of the BVD programme are self-descriptive, have good breadth and depth, and are consistent with similar programmes, locally and internationally. All course syllabi are available online on both SharePoint for use by academic units and Moodle for use by students. The course syllabi provided to the Panel comply with a common template detailing the course descriptor (name, code, requirements, hours, aim, and learning outcomes), general course overview (content, assessment description, learning and teaching strategies, and learning resources), semester structure (outline), and assessment schedule (components, weightings, due dates, type, justification, and employability skills assessed). The Panel studied the samples provided and notes that the courses are relevant for the discipline and provide the depth and breadth needed for this type of programme. All Major courses such as VIB5102, VIB5103, VIB6202, VIB6203, VIB7303 and VIB7407 provide sufficient breadth and depth in the field of Visual Design in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitude that shape the learning experience of students. Moreover, the syllabi detail the different learning resources that enriches the learning experience. Regular reviews of all courses offered in the programme conducted by the programme team enables a continuous update of syllabi in terms of topics, assessment types, library resources, and even classroom/studios appropriateness. The Panel notes with appreciation that course syllabi provide the death and breadth needed for the type and level of this programme and are kept relevant and updated regularly.

1.4   Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) are stated in the PAD. There are five PILOs that are linked to the aims of the programme and cover a wide range of managerial and technical skills that BVD graduates are expected to acquire such as 'use design and technology to sustain and simplify our lives' and 'use a design approach to address the social issues of today and the future'. Interviews with staff members showed a clear understanding of the PILOs and how these will ensure the delivery of the programme aims. Moreover, during interview sessions, the Panel was informed about the work in-progress to map PILOs onto the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The Panel

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *9*

notes with appreciation that the PILOs are well-written, meet students' expected achievements in similar programmes, and are appropriate for the level of the degree. Notwithstanding the above, the Panel noted that the current PILOs do not include the development of the entrepreneurial skills although this is emphasised in the institution's mission. Accordingly, the Panel recommends that the Faculty revise the PILOs and introduce this aspect into them to be in line with the institution's mission.

1.5   The Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) are clearly indicated in all course syllabi and are drawn from two main categories referred to as 'Knowledge' and 'Skills'. The former is divided into theoretical understanding (A1-A5) and practical application (B1-B5). The 'Skills' category is related to employability (C1-C8). According to the SER 'each course descriptor identifies each ILOs within one or more of three categories generic transferable skills, knowledge and understanding and practice. Courses like VIB5100, VIB5101, VIB5901 and VIB5902 are good examples of the aforementioned. Different bodies ensure the appropriate definition and consistency of all CILOs and their linkage to the PILOs. These bodies include the Curriculum Development Unit, BVD programme committee, EDICT faculty board, Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC), and finally the Academic Board. Before the beginning of each semester, the checks and approval processes on the course descriptors are conducted to ensure that the delivery of each course is directly aligned to the Visual Design programme aims and is linked to the PILOs. This practice is presented in the PAD by using the standard matrix mapping. During staff interviews, the Panel was informed that BP has conducted workshops on writing learning outcomes to ensure that learning outcomes are appropriately written. Furthermore, the Panel notes that various assessment tools are applied by staff to measure the achievement of CILOs. The Panel notes with appreciation first, the mapping of CILOs onto PILOs and second, the participation of multiple bodies in ensuring the definition and appropriateness of these CILOs to the aims and levels of courses.

1.6   The BVD programme includes a work-based learning component that consists of a 30-credit hours of Internship (VIB7303) where students work for non-profit-organisation as part of serving the community and it is taken prior to their graduation. In addition to the internship, the programme includes a 30-credit Portfolio Preparation and Design course (VIB7301) -which is considered to be a second project - where students compile all their work from the time they join the Visual Design programme until they graduate. Both projects have appropriate CILOs that are mapped to the PILOs to cover the practical aspect of knowledge and demonstrate the required employability skills. Interviewed staff clarified that both projects aim to equip students with generic transferable skills and at the same time achieve the required ILOs. The Panel notes that there is a general Offsite and Workplace Activities Policy covering issues related to the responsibilities of all the

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *10*

involved parties including students, staff and employer along with a generic Assessment and Moderation policy. For example, assessment of the industry project (VIB7303) is divided into community (50%) and design studio (50%) whereas the assessment of the portfolio (VIB7301) is different and is divided into two projects. The former is allocated (25%) and the latter (75%). For the industry project, students are expected to submit regular reports along with a final report summarizing their occupational experience at the hosting organizations. Contrarily to the industrial project, that involves a direct supervision of students by both organization supervisor and Visual Design supervisor, in the Portfolio project students are expected to arrange and present all their work on their own. During interviews, students expressed their satisfaction with the practical skills gained when working on these projects. The Panel appreciates that work-based learning supports students to gain practical experience and enable them to achieve subject-specific occupational skills relevant to the programme intended outcomes.

1.7   The institution has a formal document that emphasis the utilization of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach to allow students to experience solving real-world problems. Recently, they are also being introduced to project learning approach to facilitate the recruitment of new staff members who are unfamiliar with the PBL approach although they are highly qualified academics. From interviews with staff and students, the Panel notes the different teaching approaches used for course delivery including lectures, tutorials, hands-on laboratories, case studies, oral presentation, group discussions and online communication. The Panel is satisfied that each course descriptor states the learning and teaching strategies in the syllabus. 'Moodle' also supports staff in delivering their courses online by ensuring that students have access to all necessary resources such as course materials, assignments whether they are on-campus or off-campus. Independent learning occurs when students work on the Portfolio Preparation and Design project where they work independently (more details are covered in paragraph 3.10). Moreover, to ensure that all staff members are up-to-date with all the current professional practices in the Visual Design field, they are also obliged to be enrolled in Certificate in Tertiary Teaching and Learning (CTTL). During interviews, staff highlighted that they transfer what they learnt into their classes. During interviews with students, they commended their tutors for using different teaching methods, encouraging them to work independently and keeping them updated with current trends and topics related to their programme. The Panel appreciates that Visual Design staff use a variety of teaching and learning methods to support the delivery of the programme.

1.8   The BVD programme follows BP's Assessment and Moderation Guidelines. At the beginning of each semester, Assessment Plan for each course is provided to students. Moreover, there is a marking rubric for every assessment and all assignments have cover

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *11*

sheets showing detailed information on submission dates, submission requirements and links to learning outcomes. The assessments in the Visual Design programme are subject to moderation as stated in different policies that are communicated to both faculty and students. There is a pre- and post-assessment internal moderation that permits to ensure the fairness and appropriateness of assessments with respect to the different Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs). Interviewed staff clarified that post-assessment external moderation has been stopped for three years now due to budgeting issues. During interview sessions, students highlighted that various assessment tools such as individual projects, group projects, examinations, and quizzes are used to cover theoretical and practical aspects discussed in Visual Design courses. Interviewed staff clarified, that they use formative assessment throughout the semester to evaluate students' assignments, laboratory reports and short quizzes. Summative assessment occurs at the end when students submit their completed projects. To ensure fairness in students' marks, double marking is used to verify students' grades. According to the policy, staff are given ten working days to pass on their feedback to their students either through 'Moodle' or face-to-face meetings. Interviewed students highlighted that they prefer to have one-to-one meetings with their tutors to get their feedback on their designs/projects and staff members confirmed that students always come to get spoken and written feedback during office hours and sometimes off-campus in cafes. To ensure that the assessment procedure is comprehensive students are granted the opportunity to appeal their grades, should they have any concerns over the grades received in assessments. Interviewed students, showed full awareness of the appeal procedure and highlighted that they approach their tutors first before submitting an official request. The Panel appreciates the existence of a comprehensive assessment procedure that is transparent and well-communicated to students and staff members.

1.9   In coming to its conclusion regarding The Learning Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- There are clear programme aims which contribute to the accomplishment of the institution's mission and strategic goals.
- The programme provides provision for developing students' communication skills according to the discipline.
- The curriculum of Visual Design programme is well-organized to demonstrate academic progression with an appropriate balance between theory and practice.
- The syllabi of the Visual Design Programme have sufficient depth and breadth and course contents are kept relevant and updated regularly.

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *12*

- The programme intended learning outcomes are well-written, meet students' expected achievements in similar programmes, and are appropriate for the level of the degree.
- Course intended learning outcomes are well-mapped onto programme intended learning outcomes.
- Several parties are involved in ensuring the definitions and appropriateness of course intended learning outcomes to the aims and the level of the courses.
- Work-based learning supports students to gain practical experience and enable them to achieve subject-specific occupational skills relevant to the programme intended outcomes.
- A variety of different learning and teaching methods is used to support the delivery of the programme.
- The existence of a comprehensive assessment procedure that is transparent and well-communicated to students and staff members.

1.10   In terms of improvement the Panel **recommends** that the Faulty should:

- align the programme intended learning outcomes with the entrepreneurial skills, which is part of the mission of Bahrain Polytechnic.

1.11   **Judgement**

On balance, the Panel concludes that the program **satisfies** the Indicator on **The Learning Programme.**

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *13*

2.   Indicator 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.

2.1   BP has clear and well-documented admission policy and procedures for all students applying to the different programmes of BP including BVD. The entry policy is reviewed periodically in accordance with the policy on Creating Policies. Interviewed students and staff, show clear understanding of the policy and indicated that it is available on SharePoint and Student Handbook. Moreover, Programme Approval Document (PAD) lists particular admission requirements for the Visual Design programme. To admit a student to the first year in the BVD programme, he/she must have a high-school certificate with a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of (70%). Entry Criteria to BP programmes require a satisfactory level of Mathematics and English in the placement tests. However, if a student does not achieve the required passing rate then he/she ought to be enrolled in Certificate in Academic Preparation (CAP) programme. During site-visit interviews, the Panel learnt that there are two specific requirements to enrol in the Visual Design Programme. Firstly, applicants are required to submit a portfolio of their work. Secondly, they have to undertake an interview and pass it as confirmed in the SER also. The Panel is satisfied that admission policy and procedures are well-documented and reviewed annually.

2.2   The Panel notes from the provided evidence that the cohort of admitted students is diverse with different nationalities (Bahrainis, Gulf citizens and Middle East) and a mix of gender coming from private and government schools. Their maximum high school GPA ranged between (95%) to (97%) during 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively with a minimum GPA of (76%). From interviews, the Panel learnt that students join the BVD programme either through direct entry or after completing one year in the Certificate in Academic Preparation (CAP) programme depending on the results of their entry placement tests as mentioned earlier. From interviews during the site-visit, students did not express major concerns over completing the CAP programme. Provided statistics show that (87.5%) students got their degrees in four years. The SER states ' Results from the 2013-2014 show that on average BVD first year courses had a (98.7%) pass rates, and their first year English courses a (100%) pass rate suggesting that entry standards are appropriate.' As of September 2015, there were 61 students in the BVD programme. This number depends on the staffing and physical resources available in the Faculty of Engineering, Design, and ICT for the BVD programme. The Panel appreciates BP's efforts in ensuring that the profile of admitted students suits the type and nature of this programme.

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *14*

2.3   BP's organizational chart included in the submitted SER delineates clearly the duties and responsibilities of the management and operational teams. At the management level the Dean of Faculty, the Head of School, and the Programme Manager lead the BVD programme. Their respective job descriptions are defined in the Job Descriptions document. At the operational level, faculty members are referred to as 'tutors' responsible for delivering the courses and reporting directly to their Programme Managers. Other positions in BP such as the Programme Manager Quality and Programme Manager for Work Integrated provide the necessary support to the BVD programme. However, the position of the Work Integrated Manager is yet to be filled. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the Work Integrated Manager's main responsibility is to reach out to industry so that collaboration links are developed. These links should help in identifying job opportunities for students, understand the latest trends in Visual Design, identify opportunities for industry and community projects that the student could undertake, identify partners who could sponsor student projects in Visual Design. The Panel recommends that the Faculty expedite the recruitment of the vacant position. From interviews, the Panel was informed that there are several entities to support the delivery of the programme such as Visual Design Programme Committee which reports to the Faculty Board which in turn reports to the Academic Board and senior management team. Regular meetings are conducted amongst these entities and outcomes are communicated to the Programme Manager after the bi-monthly management meetings. Staff interviewed by the Panel showed an understanding of the Faculty organizational chart and management hierarchy. They clarified that processes like application leave for conferences, performance evaluation, and professional development planning are directly communicated to the Programme Manager. Additionally, students interviewed by the Panel confirmed the transparency of the organizational hierarchy. The Panel appreciates that the lines of accountability with regard to the management of the Visual Design programme are clear and well-established.

2.4   Faculty members in the Visual Design programme are divided into four Masters' Degree holders and one Bachelor's degree contributing to teach 61 students enrolled as of September 2015. During the site visit, the Panel reviewed the CVs of the faculty members teaching in the programme. The Panel encourages BP to develop a mechanism to attract more senior and experienced faculty members to support the current young ones. Research at BP is very limited due to BP's mission that stresses on teaching with no incentives (e.g., promotion) to publish. However, the Panel was pleased to observe that despite the challenges some of the staff were working on research papers as a self-driven objective. From interviews, the Panel learnt that all staff members have taken the Polytechnic Certificate of Tertiary Training and Learning (CTTL). It is worth noting that some faculty members have also got various industrial experiences prior to joining BP.

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *15*

The Panel is satisfied with the industrial credentials of the faculty members contributing to teaching in the Visual Design programme. Nonetheless, the Panel notices the high work load of some faculty members as they contribute to the delivery of other programmes, or engage in other administrative assignments. Despite this load, interviewed staff indicated their overall satisfaction with the cross-programme collaboration as they learn from each other and widen their knowledge and teaching perspective. The ratio of students to staff is generally held at approximately 12:4 and the Panel noted evidence of student numbers ranging from 10 to 16 in classes. The Panel recommends that the Faculty encourage staff members to conduct applied research in line with the type of the institution.

2.5   BP has very clear, well-documented policies for the recruitment of new staff. Being a public institution, BP is required to liaise with the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) and its associated policies and guidelines for staff recruitment. During interview session, the Panel was informed that the institution communicates its recruitment requirements to the CSB, which then sub-contracts the sourcing of candidates to an external consultancy to perform an initial filtering. When interviewed, staff appeared to have had an almost identical recruitment process indicating a consistency of the recruitment in BP. The Panel concurred with staff members concerns over the length of time between initially applying for a position and being sent an offer. To find a remedy for this issue, all interviewed staff members reported that they received a high degree of flexibility from management in the first few weeks which allowed them plenty of time to find housing, set up bank accounts, and other essentials services. Once they are physically on campus, staff uniformly reported a very high level of satisfaction with the orientation process. Interviewed staff members, reported receiving training in the teaching systems (e.g., Moodle and Banner) as well as general lectures on different topics such as quality assurance policies and procedures, safety, and library resources. The Panel appreciates that BP has a comprehensive induction programme for its new staff members. All staff members at BP are required to enrol on the Certificate of Tertiary Teaching and Learning (CTTL) programme to ensure that a common understanding of problem-based learning is spread and embraced by all staff members which by all accounts is working well and highly appreciated by staff. The Panel appreciates that BP offers the CTTL Programme to all its staff to ensure the quality of its teaching staff. During interviews, the Panel was informed that there is no formal mentorship programme at BP for new faculty and this appears to be conducted in a random and unstructured way. Staff conducting the mentoring do not receive any sort of incentive for this work. The Panel suggests that BP develops a formal mentoring approach to ensure that the new faculty receive consistent guidelines. BP has a formal process for faculty appraisal. Faculty meet yearly with their direct line managers to discuss performance. When interviewed by the Panel, faculty reported a high level of satisfaction with this process and felt they were given opportunities to raise concerns,

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *16*

request funding for professional development activities, and engage in other developmental tasks. One major concern identified by the Panel was the lack of a Promotion Policy at BP and the complete lack of promotion opportunities available to staff members. As discussed previously, BP is required to follow CSB guidelines in this regard, and the concept of 'academic rank' is not recognized. As such, new teaching staff members are hired as 'tutors' regardless of qualifications and experience, which undermines their career development opportunities like promotion. This obviously has an impact on staff's motivation to perform at a higher level. During interviews, it was clarified that BP is currently negotiating with the CSB for a custom promotion policy. The Panel recommends that BP develop formal policies for academic promotion to ensure that qualified academics are motivated to deliver the programme effectively. Furthermore, the Panel notices that BP has not developed a formal policy for staff retention. Currently, BP follows CSB guidelines that grant foreign staff members, including academics, fixed-term contracts with a maximum length of two years. The Panel initially has concerns that this policy may have had a limiting effect on staff retention, but most staff interviewed reported very little difficulty in having their contracts renewed. Indeed, most staff interviewed enjoyed the flexibility that two-year contracts provide. The Panel recommends that BP develop a long-term succession plan to ensure that specialised local academics are available and well-trained to ensure the continuity of the programme and its delivery.

2.6   BP uses two Management Information Systems (MIS); namely 'Banner' and 'SharePoint' to ensure sound decision-making processes. Staff, in general, and registrar, in particular, use Banner for registration and storage of student records including official grades. Banner is capable of automatically generating reports (e.g., flagging 'at risk' students. During the site visit, this capability was demonstrated to the Panel. Additionally, Banner can generate statistics and graphs as well as academic transcripts. This capability allows staff to make informed decisions on students' academic progress based on their current and past performance. Staff use SharePoint, but the implementation appears to be limited as a 'file sharing' platform only. The Panel is of the view that the 'SharePoint' system is a powerful report generation yet it is not fully utilised by the Faculty. During interviews, the Panel was informed that BP also plans to implement a new reporting tool, 'Argos', so that customised data and reports will be available. However, the Panel was not given any exact date on when 'Argos' will be effective. Moreover, the Panel is concerned that without fully utilising the current reporting resources available to staff members and programme team, adding new reporting tool might not solve the problem. Hence, the Panel recommends that BP develop comprehensive training programmes on SharePoint so that its full capabilities are used.

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *17*

2.7 There are three main policies to ensure accuracy of students' records namely Assessment and Moderation, Results and Reporting, and Student Academic Appeal. BP has a detailed and well-documented business continuity plan that discusses, amongst other things, procedures for ensuring data backup off campus. Whilst it is impossible to verify the efficiency of any disaster recovery plan prior to a disaster occurring, in general the BP policy appears to be comprehensive and well thought out. As per the SER and confirmation received during interviews, prior to entering students' grades into Banner, these grades are signed off by course coordinators and then approved by the Academic Board. All involved parties have different levels of access with unique user names and passwords. During the site visit, the Panel observed that physical students' records were housed in filing cabinets behind staff in the Registration Office. Although the Panel understands that these records are effectively backed up, and that usually digital versions of the records would be used for day-to-day operations, there are still some concerns about record storage. When touring the registrar, the Panel did not observe any physical barrier (in the form of a glass window or steel wires) between the lobby and the filing cabinets. This offers a very real possibility for records to be stolen, destroyed or physically altered. The Panel advices the institution to introduce new methods to ensure full protection of student data and records.

2.8 During the site visit, the Panel toured some classrooms, laboratories, and other facilities. The number of classrooms and laboratories is adequate for the current student numbers but will need to be carefully monitored if student numbers increase. The Panel also toured several staff offices, and considered these to be of a very high standard. The Visual Design programme has one design studio, 60 iMac computers hosted in three laboratories, two coloured printers and three scanners and Wacom tablets equipment. It also relies on another Mac Laboratory assigned to the ICT programme. During interviews with students, they reported that some computers are outdated and that equipment like cameras cannot be borrowed for off-campus use, which forces the students to rent the equipment from other private sources. The Panel recommends that the Faculty of EDICT develop a loan procedure for students for off-campus use of Visual Design equipment. The Panel notes from statistics in 2013-2014 during the first semester 51 registered Visual Design borrowed 443 items. Another major limitation is the library's operation hours (weekdays between 8am and 6pm with no weekend access). In practice, the campus closes at 5pm further limiting availability. The Panel recommends that BP urgently review the library resources available to the Visual Design field and further investigate ways to extend the opening hours of both the library and the campus in general. Aside from the library, BP offers a large number of informal study areas across the campus. Other IT facilities toured by the Panel appeared to be adequate and interviewed students expressed their satisfaction with these resources. There is a sufficient number of computers and

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015 *18*

ready access to e-mail and electronic resources and *Wi-Fi* coverage appears to be good throughout the campus. There is also a large auditorium used for large events and expositions. Students have access to an on-campus subsidized gymnasium, which is modern and well-maintained. There is also a court for playing games such as badminton and basketball and students have access to equipment for these. There is also a health centre that is staffed by a registered nurse. When interviewed by the Panel, students expressed knowledge and enthusiasm for these supplementary facilities. The Panel appreciates the supplementary and recreational facilities provided to students on campus.

2.9   BP uses different information systems to track the usage of its resources including Banner as a student information system, Celcat as a timetabling system, Millenium as a Library Management System, Moodle as a virtual learning environment, and SharePoint as a document management system. Laboratories and classrooms are electronically scheduled and usage is tracked by Celcat while the use of the Internet is tracked and monitored by the IT Department. During interviews, the Panel learnt that BP plans to use access cards for all campus laboratories in order to reinforce equipment security and allow their better use. The Panel suggests that BP enhance the current tacking system to electronically track the usage of the laboratories.

2.10   The Panel visited the Writing and the Career and Employment Centre (located in the library) which provide support for students with regard to general writing, basic Mathematics, and academic skills as well as career guidance. Students interviewed by the Panel showed high level of satisfaction with the Centres and many indicated that they benefited substantially from using the provided services. BP has also introduced a system called PASS System where students who receive high grades in some papers can support their peers upon the recommendations of their tutors. This allows these students to gain experience mentoring weaker students and allows them to build their knowledge and confidence of the subject. The PASS System is well- advertised and students interviewed by the Panel demonstrated awareness of it. However, none of the students interviewed by the Panel had used the PASS System, although one was currently acting as a volunteer and spoke highly of the experience. Students with learning difficulties are also supported by providing special software for learning, extra readers/writers during examinations and extra time during examinations. BP has a Student Council consisting of 12 high-GPA students who are elected by the student body. When interviewed by the Panel, the Student Council reported having good support from the senior management. A major limitation of this council, however, is that there is no requirement for members to be from different BP faculties. The Panel suggests that BP Student Council considers developing a constitution outlining membership, procedures for nominations by including students with different range of GPAs. The Panel appreciates that there is a well-managed student

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *19*

support system that includes the Writing Centre, PASS System, Students Council and Health Centre.

2.11   BP runs an annual orientation for the newly admitted students and transferred ones. It is comprehensive and organized at the beginning of semester one of each academic year. The orientation programme covers key areas of information (e.g., policies, procedures, and attendance rules) that students would require in order to succeed in their studies. Students are introduced to the programme team and tour BP's facilities. They also receive a copy of the Student Handbook. Staff interviewed by the Panel also had no hesitation in helping students to gain whatever knowledge they needed. Interviewed students whom had attended the orientation programme expressed their satisfaction with its organization. The Panel appreciates the comprehensive orientation programme offered to new and transferred students. Notwithstanding the above, the Panel noted that no provision is given to students who miss the orientation programme as they are responsible for gaining the knowledge presented during the orientation programme independently. The Panel encourages BP to introduce an alternative arrangement for students who miss the orientation programme to ensure that they are well-informed about the institution policies, procedures, facilities and resources.

2.12   BP has a rigorous and robust policy for identifying 'at-risk' students. The students at risk policy is comprehensive and exemplifies the different types of risks students may be identified for, such as academic progress, personal and psychological issues, health and safety related issues, financial issues, and social and behavioural issues. The Panel views this information document as good practice as it specifically guides faculty members on how to identify such students, details some examples of types of support that could be offered (depending on the circumstances) and then sets out the entire process by means of a flow diagram. In conjunction with using Banner to identify at-risk students because of attendance, faculty members are also expected to be pro-active by following up with students who are absent, for example. Moreover, at-risk students are discussed at the monthly Programme Committee meetings which is a standing agenda item. Once a student is identified as 'at-risk' an extensive support system is available in terms of the Library Writing Centre and PASS System (as discussed in paragraph 2.10). Furthermore, students who could not get the required grades to be successful are recorded as 'in probation' and such students are given reduced workloads until they succeed in lifting the probation. Faculty members are made aware of at-risk students via a summarized staff information document detailing reasons for the student being at risk. Students identified to have academic problems are required to attend weekly sessions with their learning advisor for one to one tutoring and may have to attend peer tutoring. During interviews, the programme team confirmed that they receive information on how to identify the

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *20*

students at risk and how to refer them to the correct support. The Panel appreciates the current arrangement for identifying students at risk to support them in a timely manner.

2.13   Students of the Visual Design programme are supported by different means of informal learning. Several seminars are organized by the Career and Employment Centre to enrich students' knowledge. Invitations to attend guest lectures on-and off-campus are always communicated to students. Student seeking assistance can meet their tutors' off-campus. Interviewed students confirmed the easy access to staff on-and off- campus and praised their positive response to their requests or queries even if these queries were irrelevant to the curriculum. This form of informal learning motivates students to be self-learners. Opportunities for engaging in extra-curricula activities like summer work in Visual Design agencies and special projects are also made available to students. The Panel encourages the staff to include more extra-curriculum activities, like fieldstrips to Visual Design agencies. Other facilities supporting informal self-learning and enriching students' experiences include the Writing Centre, Career and Employment Centre, and Students' clubs. The Panel is satisfied with the informal learning environment provided to BP students in general and Visual Design in particular.

2.14   In coming to its conclusion regarding The Efficiency of the Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- The profile of admitted students suits the nature and type of the programme.
- There are clear and well-established lines of accountability with regard to the management of the Visual Design programme.
- There is a comprehensive induction programme for new staff members.
- All staff members are offered a Certificate of Tertiary Teaching and Learning (CTTL) programme to ensure that problem-based learning is spread and embraced by all of them.
- BP provides good recreational facilities for students.
- There is a well-managed student support system that includes the Writing Centre, PASS System, Students Council and Health Centre.
- There is a comprehensive orientation programme for new and transferred students.
- There is a functioning system for identifying and supporting at-risk students.

2.15   In terms of improvement the Panel **recommends** that the Faculty should:

- expedite the recruitment of the vacant position
- encourage staff members to conduct applied research in line with the type of the institution

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *21*

- develop a formal policy for academic promotion to ensure that qualified academics are motivated to deliver the programme effectively
- develop a long-term succession plan to ensure that specialised local academics are available and well-trained to ensure the continuity of the programme and its delivery
- develop comprehensive training programmes on SharePoint to ensure full use of its capabilities
- develop a loan procedure for students for off-campus use of Visual Design equipment
- review the library resources available to the Visual Design field and further investigate ways to extend the opening hours of both the library and the campus in general.

2.16   **Judgement**

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **satisfies** the Indicator on **The Efficiency of the Programme.**

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   22

3.   Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

3.1   The Visual Design programme has clearly stated graduate attributes that are embedded within the programme's ILOs and delivered by mapping the course syllabus and their ILOs to the PILOs. This is demonstrated through academic progression through the different levels of the programme and the emphasis on the higher order of knowledge, skills, and attitude. The Panel is satisfied that there are mechanisms to ensure the alignment of assessment with outcomes which in turn achieve the required graduate attributes. During interview sessions, staff showed clear understanding of these attributes and their validation through assessments. The Panel appreciates that graduate attributes are clearly stated and embedded within in the PILOs. Nonetheless, the Panel noted that graduate attributes are not explicitly linked to the PILOs and encourages the faculty to address this issue.

3.2   The Self-Evaluation Report states that BP adapts the definition of Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE). During interviews with programme team, they clarified that recently the programme was evaluated by an external monitor who has extensive American and New Zealand experience in developing similar programmes and evidence was provided. However, this was a one time practice and there was no evidence of formal benchmarking to clearly state that the academic standards of the BVD programme are consistent and similar to other programmes offered in similar institutions. Moreover, the Panel noted that there is no formal policy adapted by BP for benchmarking. The Panel recommends that BP introduce a formal benchmarking policy to benchmark the programme against good practice locally, regionally, and internationally.

3.3   Bahrain Polytechnic has a comprehensive Assessment and Moderation policy that covers most aspects of the assessment process as stated in the SER. There is a clear Assessment and Moderation Guidelines that is communicated to academic staff and students as well as a policy for managing the assessment of multi-section courses. Assessment policies and procedures are implemented, monitored and subject to regular reviews by Curriculum Unit and academic staff. All assessment policies and procedures are made available to students in the Student Handbook and on 'Moodle'. Interviewed students show their awareness of all the assessment tools and confirmed that these tools are documented in the course specification. During the site visit, the Panel was informed that the Faculty of EDICT has clearly stated procedures for internal moderation (more details will be covered

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   23

in paragraph 3.5). The Panel is satisfied with the current arrangements of the internal moderation processes. However, the Panel noted the total absence of external moderation implementation, though a policy exists. Staff interviewed indicated that external moderation has been stopped for the last three years. From the previous samples provided of post-moderation forms, the Panel noted that some forms are restricted to checkmarks without written feedback. The Panel recommends that BP inform moderators to give detailed written feedback on assessments. From interviews, the Panel learnt that Turn-it-in software is used at BP to check students' work against plagiarism. Interviewed students confirmed the use of Turn-it-in by their tutors. Although the Panel notes and as mentioned earlier, several assessment tools are used such as projects, examinations, and quizzes; yet it is suggested to introduce more assessment tools to cater for different students' needs, where possible, depending on the nature of the programme. The Panel appreciates that the assessment methods and procedures are transparent, monitored and subjected to regular reviews.

3.4   A systematic process to align the assessments with Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) has been developed and implemented by the BVD programme team. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure alignment of assessment to Learning Outcomes (LOs). The Assessment and Moderation Policy stresses that assessments are appropriate for the learning outcomes and reflect the academic standards achieved by students. The Panel notes that the mapping of the LOs lists clearly for each outcome whether the marking of these assessments is formative or summative. During interviews, students confirmed that all assessment methods are documented in the course specification, and that they are satisfied with the assessment tools. The Panel acknowledges that appropriate mechanisms are implemented to ensure that assessment tasks are designed to accurately measure student learning, in alignment with the level of the (CILOs). External moderation was also utilized in the past to ensure that final examinations properly assess the achievements of the learning outcomes. The Panel is satisfied that Visual Design team has developed sufficient alignment between course intended learning outcomes and assessment tools.

3.5   All course syllabi, final examinations and projects evaluation are subjected to internal moderation. The internal moderator fills a form entitled (Internal Verification of Course Syllabus/Specifications). The feedback of the internal moderator is submitted to the course tutor who in turn is responsible for incorporating any necessary changes prior to distributing the course specification to students. On site documentation show full details to justify this issue. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the internal moderator checks the final examinations where s/he has to evaluate the appropriateness of the level of the questions session, the structure of question paper the appropriateness of evaluation tools to measure the achievement of learning outcomes by adhering to a standardized

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015 24

assessment of the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) matrix. The internal moderator submits the form to the Programme Manager. Post moderation is conducted by the Internal Moderation Committee which is formed to moderate the results of the final examinations. The Panel appreciates that there is a well-defined procedure for moderation that includes both pre and post-internal moderation and are implemented across the courses.

3.6   The SER states that the Assessment and Moderation Policy requires external moderation of courses at least once every five years for each academic programme offered by BP. Moreover, a general moderation plan is in place at BP for 2013–2018. The Panel encourages the Faculty to increase the frequency of the external moderation of the programme courses. During interviews, the Panel was informed that external moderators are nominated by the programme manager. However, according to the SER and confirmation by interviewed staff, no regular formal external moderation of the BVD programme is currently implemented. The Panel acknowledges that plans are in place for the implementation of external moderation process in the near future. After examining samples of the external moderators' reports, the Panel found that external moderation has not been active for the last three years. The Panel recommends that BP expedite the implementation of external moderation of the programme, since this extra level of checking will provide additional assurance that the assessment process is effective.

3.7   During the site visit, the provided samples of students' assessed coursework from different courses were studied by the Panel. The samples included students' projects, industrial projects, quizzes and final examinations. The Panel notes that assessment tools are aligned with CILOs and that the level of students work and awarded grades are in general acceptable to the type and level of programme course and is consistent with similar programmes offered regionally and internationally. The Panel also examined the provided sample of Visual Design VI: Portfolio Preparation course (VIB7301) and noted that projects in general are of an expected level however a few projects needed further strengthening. Therefore, the Panel encourages the programme team to make the portfolio projects more challenging to students. The Panel noted from the provided sample that quizzes are not used widely. Interviewed academic staff clarified that this is due to the type of the programme. Nonetheless, the Panel encourages the programme team to inject more quizzes into their courses to evaluate the theoretical aspects of the Visual Design field.

3.8   The Faculty of EDICT makes good efforts to ensure that Visual Design graduates meet the objectives of the programme and the ILOs as expressed in students' results, advanced course projects of students, and grade distribution. Interviews with employers, confirmed

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *25*

the capabilities of the graduates and their innovative thinking. They highlighted that they are looking for more graduates to recruit. The SER states that (67%) of the graduates had a Grade Point Average (GPA) of (3.03). the SER states that BP sets the qualification completion requirements, given in the PAD (IT2), as the measure for meeting its graduate profile such that a student has to meet all the learning outcomes in every course whereas the implementation of the Assessment and Moderation Policy is the mechanism used to ensure that learning outcomes are met. During interviews, the Panel was informed that employers are satisfied with the level of achievement of the BVD graduates. The Panel acknowledges that graduate achievements are in practice satisfactory, as confirmed by the stakeholders during the visit and the viewed data. However, the Panel did not see evidence for the overall evaluation of the actual achievement of the PILOs. The Panel recommends that BP closes the loop on graduate attributes and implement a mechanism to assess the achievement of the overall graduate attributes.

3.9   Statistics provided by the BVD programme in the SER indicate that out of the 85 admitted students since the programme inception in 2010, 20 students have discontinued their studies and eight have graduated, the remaining 57 are currently enrolled. The average retention rate is more than (67%) and the graduates' destination shows that (40%) of the graduates proceeded to appropriate employment in their field of study. Moreover, results from the 2013-2014 show that on average BVD first year courses had a (98.7%) pass rates and students complete their studies in four years. The Panel notes that the statistics provided reflect in general a normal cohort progress. However, the Panel is concerned with the percentage of students discontinuing their studies. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that this could be due to student finding at later stages that the nature of the programme is not suitable for them. However, the Panel was not provided with formal evidence of formal investigation of this issue or of any mitigation plan. The Panel recommends that the Faculty of EDICT conduct a study to investigate the reasons for this attrition and develop and implement a mitigation plan.

3.10   The BVD programme has a work-based learning component, which has clear guidelines and specification. The mechanism of the internship project is detailed in (VIB7303) and a full-time staff member at EDICT ensures the logistics of the internship by identifying organizations that will host students. During internship, students are expected to submit weekly reports along with a final report summarizing their experiences at the hosting organizations. Two visits to students by industry project coordinators are also planned. The BP supervisor visits the hosting organisation and meets with the students and their mentors where he/she assesses if the student is on track and the content and level of the students' work is acceptable and appropriate. Similarly, the supervisor meets the client to monitor students' progress. Upon completion of their projects, students present and

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *26*

reflect on the work completed, they also submit required documentation that ensures appropriate professional practice was carried out. The Panel notes that the processes used for the mentoring and evaluation of work-based learning are examples of good practice particularly in terms of meeting the BP's mission of work ready graduates. Moreover, the Panel appreciates the guidance provided to students during the internship period and the way it is implemented and assessed to ensure achievement of the practical aspects of the programme learning outcome.

3.11   The programme has a standing Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC) that is well integrated into the programme's activities. A formal policy guides the terms of reference, membership, operational guidelines and reporting requirements of the CAC. The formal policy states that the CAC should meet four times a year. However, during interview session, the programme team reported that the CAC meets twice per year. Action plan of the CAC was provided during the site visit and interviewed staff members indicated the CAC plays an important role in ensuring industry feedback and comments on the BVD programme to ensure its contextualisation to the Bahraini context. During the site visit, however, the Panel was not provided with opportunity to meet the CAC members. The Panel acknowledges the role the CAC plays in providing feedback from industry and encourages the Faculty to ensure that the CAC meets regularly.

3.12   The Visual Design was first offered in 2010 and only three cohorts, comprising 25 students, have graduated since the time of its inception. Alumni and employers surveys have been formulated and are still awaiting senior management team approval [GE83]. During interviews, employers expressed their satisfaction with the programme's aims and objectives and level of its graduates. Interviewed graduates expressed their general satisfaction with the programme. The Panel appreciates the high level of employers' satisfaction towards the BVD graduates. Nonetheless, the Panel recommends that BP expedite the approval of surveys, distribute and analyse them to enhance the delivery of the programme.

3.13   In coming to its conclusion regarding the Academic Standards of the Graduates, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- Graduate attributes are well-embedded in the programme intended learning outcomes.
- Assessment procedures and methods are transparent, monitored and subject to regular reviews.
- There is a well-defined procedure for moderation that includes both pre and post-internal moderation and is implemented across the courses.

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *27*

- Students' work is of an appropriate level and is consistent with similar programmes offered regionally and internationally.
- The internship programme provides students with clear guidelines and is appropriately assessed to ensure the achievement of the practical aspects of the programme learning outcome.
- There is a high level of employers' satisfaction towards the achievements of the Visual Design graduates.

3.14   In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the Faculty should:

- introduce a formal benchmarking policy to benchmark the programme against different aspects locally, regionally and internationally
- inform moderators to give detailed written feedback on assessments
- expedite the implementation of external moderation of the programme
- close the loop on graduate attributes and implement a mechanism to assess the achievement of the overall graduate attributes
- conduct a study to investigate the reasons for students' attrition and develop and implement a mitigation plan
- expedite the approval of surveys and analyse them to enhance the delivery of the programme.

3.15   **Judgement**

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **satisfies** the Indicator on **Academic Standards of the Graduates.**

4. Indicator 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.

4.1 There are general policies and procedures pertaining to the management of the programme where the Quality, Measurement, and Analysis Directorate at BP has the overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of these policies and procedures across all academic programmes. On-site interviews with the Faculty administrative and academic personnel confirm the existence of policies and procedures that provide necessary support for maintaining academic standards and operation of the BVD programme. The Panel had access to several policies and procedures related to teaching and learning such as Assessment and Moderation, Students at Risk, Student Academic Appeal, Evaluation and Review, Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC) Review Process Approval and Creating Policies. Moreover, the Panel was provided with evidence of the quality-assurance management process that ensures the effectiveness of each policy. From the submitted documents and interviews with administrative, academic, and quality assurance staff, the Panel noted that BP implements policies effectively with the participation of all appropriate stakeholders. The Panel also notes that all policies related to students and staff are available on 'Moodle' and 'SharePoint', respectively. Interviewed students expressed their satisfaction with the availability and implementation of these policies. The Panel appreciates that BP has an effective quality management system that ensures the implementation of all policies across the institution.

4.2 The BVD is managed at different levels starting from the institutional level to the course co-ordinator level. Interviews with staff indicated that the Head of School supported by Programme Manager and Course Coordinators leads the delivery of the BVD programme. While the Programme Manager focuses on day-to-day matters including students and staff teaching BVD courses. Academic decisions are taken by the Programme Committee and endorsed by the Head of School, which are submitted to the Faculty Board for final approval. The Panel appreciates that the BVD programme has effective leadership to ensure the quality of its delivery.

4.3 The quality assurance system at BP is divided amongst several bodies; Quality Management System (QMS) and (AQAC). The former is responsible to manage all the policies and procedures while the latter ensures consistency in the implementation of these policies across all programmes. At the Faulty level, the programme manager of the

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   29

Quality is responsible to maintain the standards of the quality assurance across all EDICT programmes. The BVD Programme Committee plays a vital role in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of all the policies. During interviews, academic and administrative staff show clear understanding and involvement in all quality assurance processes at institutional and programme level. The Panel was provided with evidence showing an action list of the improvement plans for the BVD programme. The Panel appreciates that BP has a comprehensive quality assurance system that is applied, monitored and evaluated.

4.4   BP spreads quality assurance culture amongst its staff through training programmes and regular meetings or seminars. For example, all faculty members have to sign up in the Certificate in Tertiary Teaching and Learning programme, which is BP's in-house tutor training programme that lasts 150 hours, to strengthen their understanding of how to integrate quality assurance requirement in teaching. The Panel acknowledges that this policy effectively helps the academic staff to establish sufficient understanding of the quality assurance issues within their teaching practice. During interviews, the Panel was informed that new staff are expected to attend an induction programme to strengthen their understanding of the teaching requirements, including Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and quality assurance practices. In addition, staff are provided with the Quality Manual, which defines BP's quality assurance model, as well as the Standard Operating Procedures manual for the EDICT Faculty, which is intended as a guide for tutors on aspects of moderation, class delivery and assessments. Moreover, interviewed staff confirmed that all courses undergo internal moderation and they are involved in the process. Furthermore, academics and support staff confirmed their participation in several workshops organised by the Teaching and Learning Unit on the aforementioned aspects and they highlighted that quality assurance issues are always discussed during meetings and any updates or changes in the policies are communicated to them *via* email for possible comments and feedback. The Panel appreciates that BP staff are fully aware of the quality assurance requirements and take part in enhancing the ones related to their duties.

4.5   There are formal policies and procedures in place for the development of a new programme where essential factors are taken into account. The objective is to ensure that the new programmes are in line with BP's vision and mission. These factors include labour market needs, feedback from stakeholders, learning outcome alignment, and internal and external validations as per QQA Institutional Listing Standards. Interviewed staff clarified the process of introducing a new programme. This process is demonstrated in the SER mentioning all parties involved such as Faculty Board, AQAC, Academic Board, and Board of Trustees. Nonetheless, during interviews, the Panel was informed that until

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *30*

now no new programmes have been introduced by the Faculty of EDICT. The Panel is satisfied with the existence of policies and procedures to introduce new programmes whenever needed.

4.6   There is a formal policy for the annual internal review of the programme which is conducted by the Curriculum Unit and AQAC during which academic tutors, programme managers meet to discuss employers and Academic Advisory Committee's feedback so that suitable actions are taken. The process starts by evaluating each course in details and concludes with a list of actions to be taken which is translated into a new action plan and areas for improvements. The BVD programme committee and Faculty Board monitor the process throughout the year. Interviewed staff indicated their participation in reviewing each course and developing the action plan. The Panel notes that although the process is clear and followed; yet evidence of actions taken after the revision was not sufficient to provide further enhancement and improvement to the programme. The Panel recommends that the Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT further utilise the generated data from the annual programme review to improve its quality assurance system and strengthen the delivery of the programme.

4.7   Periodic programme review at BP is grounded by policies including Programme Approval, Assessment and Moderation, and Evaluation and Review. According to the Programmes Approval Policy programmes are reviewed every four years where academic staff members and programme managers consider: student progression, moderation procedures, learning outcomes, feedback from employers, and staff needs for professional development. Upon completion of the review completion, recommendations are produced in order to improve the quality assurance management. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the BVD programme is under full review as of May 2015 and should be completed by December 2015. The Panel is satisfied with the efforts of the EDICT Faulty to conduct a periodic review for its programmes every four years.

4.8   BP acquires feedback *via* its Institutional Quality Survey Framework, which includes surveys on tutors, courses, student experience, student services, and alumni. Analysis of these surveys is used to enhance the quality of the programme and its delivery. From interviews, the Panel was informed that alumni and employers' surveys have been drafted and awaiting senior management approval. Students surveys are analysed by the Quality, Measurement and Analysis Unit (QMAP) and results are forwarded to the Dean, Head of School, and teaching staff. Interviewed staff expressed their satisfaction with the results of the surveys as these results led into enhancing their professional development plans and improving the quality of the programme delivery. The Panel recommends that

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *31*

BP expedite the implementation of the alumni and employers' surveys to strengthen the programme and ensure that it caters for the market needs.

4.9   Efficient and effective procedures are in place to ensure the effectiveness of staff professional development. This is characterised by identifying staff needs in a bottom-up manner, running series of in-house training sessions, providing opportunities for external training and conference attendance and completing the Certificate in Tertiary Teaching and Learning (CTTL), which is a 150-hour training programme offered in-house for new members of staff to improve their teaching skills . Moreover, a hierarchical management system across faculty members, Human Resources, and various academic boards/committees provide ample opportunities to create culture of engagement and learning. During interviews, staff expressed their satisfaction with the arrangements in place for professional development and an evaluation form for each training session is circulated to collect feedback on these trainings. The Panel appreciates the current arrangements in place for staff professional development. Notwithstanding the above, the Panel notices that the component of research is absent from the staff's activities which was highlighted during interviews. Staff indicated that they keep their materials updated regularly to inform students about the latest trends in the Visual Design field. Although the Panel acknowledges their efforts; yet staff ought to be encouraged to conduct applied research.

4.10   The SER states that BP relies on the view of Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC) members to provide the industry's feedback to BP to fulfil its mission. Interviewed employers expressed their satisfaction with the BVD graduates and praised their attitude to learning at the workplace. The Panel acknowledges that there are interactions between the quality assurance management and the programme to ensure that it is updated in accordance with inputs from (CAC) on labour market needs. Nevertheless, the Panel concludes that no evidence was seen on a formal process for scoping the labour market. Hence, the Panel recommends that the Faculty introduce a formal mechanism for the continuous scoping of the labour market needs to ensure that the programme is appropriately contextualised and up-to-date with Bahrain's market needs.

4.11   In coming to its conclusion regarding the Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- The effective quality management system that ensures the implementation of all policies across the institution.
- The effective leadership that ensures the quality of the programme delivery.

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *32*

- A comprehensive quality assurance system is implemented, monitored and evaluated.
- Staff members are fully aware of the quality assurance requirements and take part in enhancing the ones related to their duties.
- There are effective arrangements in place to provide staff with professional development.

4.12   In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the Faculty should:

- further utilise the generated data from the annual programme review to improve the quality assurance system and strengthen the delivery of the programme.
- expedite the implementation of the alumni and employers' surveys to strengthen the programme and ensure that it caters for the market needs.
- introduce a formal mechanism for the continuous scoping of the labour market needs.

4.13   **Judgement**

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **satisfies** the Indicator on **Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance.**

5.   Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own self-evaluation report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the site visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/QQA *Programmes-within-College Reviews Handbook, 2014*:

There is confidence in the Bachelor of Visual Design offered by the Bahrain Polytechnic.

QQA

Programmes-within-College Review Report-Bahrain Polytechnic-Faculty of Engineering, Design and ICT-Bachelor of Visual Design-5-8 October 2015   *34*