



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

Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

**Bachelor of Education
Bahrain Teachers College
University of Bahrain
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 17-20 October 2016
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Acronyms

B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
BTC	Bahrain Teachers College
BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
DAC	Divisional Accreditation/Academic Committee
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEC	Higher Education Council of the Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain
HR	Human Resources
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MIS	Management Information System
MoE	Ministry of Education
NARIC	National Agency for the Recognition and Comparison of International Qualifications and Skills
NIE	National Institute of Education of the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore
PAC	Professional Advisory Council
PD	Professional Development
PEO	Programme Educational Objective
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
QA	Quality Assurance

QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre
QASP	Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning
SAC	Student Advisory Committee
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SIS	Student Information System
SSR	Student to Staff Ratio
TP	Teaching Practice
UoB	University of Bahrain

The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process

A. The Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework

To meet the need to have a robust external quality assurance system in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR) of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA) has developed and is implementing two external quality review processes, namely: Institutional Reviews and Programmes-within-College Reviews which 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 BQA, 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.

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 University of Bahrain

A Programmes-within-College review of the Bachelor of Education programme offered by Bahrain Teachers College (BTC) at the University of Bahrain (UoB) was conducted by the DHR of the BQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place on 17-20 October 2016.

UoB was notified by the DHR/BQA on 17 April 2016 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College review of the Bachelor of Education programme offered by BTC with the site visit-taking place in October 2016. In preparation for the review, UoB conducted a self-evaluation of the programme and submitted the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) with appendices on the agreed date on 8 June 2016.

The DHR constituted a panel consisting of experts in the academic field of Education and in higher education who have experience of external programme quality reviews. The Panel comprised three reviewers.

This Report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Bachelor of Education based on:

- (i) analysis of the Self-Evaluation Report and supporting materials submitted by the institution prior to the external peer-review visit

- (ii) analysis derived from discussions with various stakeholders (faculty members, students, graduates and employers)
- (iii) analysis based on additional documentation requested and presented to the Panel during the site visit.

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

The DHR would like to extend its thanks to the UoB 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 and administrative staff of the Bachelor of Education programme.

C. Overview of the Bahrain Teachers College

BTC is a semi-autonomous college of the UoB, which was established in 2008 as part of Bahrain's education reform programme. The mission of BTC is to 'empower educators to build a better future for Bahrain.' The BTC has been assigned, as part of its mandate, the task of preparing teachers and educational administrators who can educate a workforce that can meet the future challenges of a more diversified knowledge based economy. BTC offers programmes for initial teachers and existing teachers, school leaders and educational specialists. The initial teacher programmes are Bachelor of Education and Postgraduate Diploma in Education. The in-service programmes include Educational Leadership Certificate, Educational Leadership Diploma, Educational Leadership Advanced Diploma and Professional Development Courses, which are offered as part-time courses that last up to 15 weeks. At the time of the site visit, Bahrain Teachers College had 71 academic staff, including two part-time, as well as 30 full-time administrative staff.

D. Overview of the Bachelor of Education

The BTC at UoB offers the Bachelor of Education as a four-year programme providing initial teacher education for the primary years 1 to 6. The programme targets high school graduates whom are pursuing a career in public education in Bahrain. The first year of the programme is devoted to general education while during the remaining three years; students select a specialisation area being either in

classroom teaching for grades 1 to 3, named Cycle 1, or in specialised subject teaching for grades 4 to 6, named Cycle 2. Cycle 1 prepares students for lower primary education where they would be teaching all the major subject areas. Cycle 2 prepares students for upper primary education where they would be teaching one of three subject disciplines, being Arabic Language/Islamic Studies, Mathematics/General Science Education, or English Language Education. The Bachelor of Education programme commenced intake in the academic year 2008-2009, with 92 students, and graduated 85 students in 2012 as part of its first batch. The programme was first developed by the National Institute of Education (NIE) of the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore and was then revised by the UoB in 2015. At the time of the site visit, the total number of graduates was 630, the programme had 490 registered students, and there were 65 faculty members contributing to this programme.

E. Summary of Review Judgements

Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor of Education programme

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

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 The academic planning framework for the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) has been developed in alignment with UoB's Academic Course and Programme Regulation and other relevant UoB policies and procedures. The programme was first designed and developed in partnership with the NIE in Singapore and is aimed at high school graduates who plan to pursue a career in public education in Bahrain. The curriculum was formally reviewed in 2014-2015 in order to ensure that the programme was fully contextualised and relevant to the needs of teachers working in Bahrain's primary schools; the revised curriculum was approved by the BTC Academic Board and the UoB's Curriculum Council in 2015 in line with University policy. Programme aims are expressed through the Programme Educational Objectives (PEO); these align with UoB's commitment to excellence in teaching and learning and the SER and supporting documents provided show how these have been mapped to the university's three core functions: education, research and community engagement. BTC's mission is '...empowering educators to build a better future for Bahrain...' which reflects the Ministry of Education's (MoE) mandate to modernise Bahrain education to meet international standards. Overall, the Panel appreciates that the programme has clear aims in line with the college's mission to produce qualified primary level teachers and the institution's three core functions.
- 1.2 The B.Ed programme is organized into five general components: educational content and theory; effective pedagogical methods; practical experiences in authentic school settings; development courses for subject areas enhancement; and university requirements. Following the first year of study on the programme, students follow either the Cycle 1 or Cycle 2 curriculum. Cycle 1 curriculum has been designed for students who will be teaching primary years one to three; Cycle 2 prepares teachers for primary years four to six and offers specialization in either Arabic language and Islamic Studies; English; or Mathematics and Science. The revised plan of the B.Ed curriculum stipulates that graduating students should complete 130 credits, for either Cycle 1 or Cycle 2, over four academic years. The study plan indicates 14 to 18 credit hours per semester, where the last semester includes the final teaching practice course, which bears nine credit hours. As well as the final course, there are three other teaching practice courses, with pre-requisites, that students have to take in succession, providing a balance between theory and practice. During the first year of the B.Ed programme, all students must complete 31 credits that include UoB requirement courses (8 credits), general education core courses (21 credits), and Teaching Practice (2 credits). During the next three years, students enrolled in Cycle

1 must complete 99 credits that include a group of courses in education studies (38 Credits), Arabic language and Islamic studies (21 credits), English language (9 credits), mathematics and science (18 credits), and teaching practice (13 credits). On the other hand, Cycle 2 students must complete 99 credits consisting of courses in education studies (23 credits), teaching practice (13 credits) and a set of courses from one of the following groups (63 credits): Arabic language and Islamic studies, English language or mathematics and science, depending on their track/stream. The 4-year programme outline suggests there is a clear year on year progression (whether for students in Cycle 1 or Cycle 2). The Panel notes that the programme is delivered within a block schedule in which classes are offered once a year and acknowledges that courses are designed to support effective teaching. Noting the above, the Panel appreciates that the programme is well structured to provide a balance between theory and practice and facilitate student progression.

- 1.3 According to the SER and the reviewed evidence, the Panel notes that the Cycle 1 programme has been designed to support a holistic teacher training experience rather than a focus on subject area content alone providing a balance between knowledge and skills. Nonetheless, stakeholders' feedback indicates that while trainee teachers and new teachers demonstrate capable classroom management skills, there is a need to revise Cycle 2 curriculum to include sufficient knowledge in relation to the subjects the programme graduates will be teaching, which has been identified as an area for improvement by BTC, and as noted in Paragraph 4.8. The Panel recommends that the College should further revise the curriculum of Cycle 2 in a way that enhances the content of the subject specialisation in order to ensure that graduates are effective in their teaching areas.
- 1.4 Course syllabi are provided using a standard template that includes clear information on the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs); their alignment to the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs); textbooks and reference materials; a course breakdown; instructional approaches; and the assessment methods and assessment schedule. The original norms and standards of BTC's B.Ed programme were informed by the NIE programme from Singapore. The programme was then contextualized to meet local needs. This is evident in the inclusion of the Arabic and Islamic Studies specialisation; courses on Arabic Communication for Education and Social Context in Education which considers the specific Bahraini learning context. Moreover, a review of the programme by NIE in 2012 called for the 'need to reflect current realities and relevant learning', which led to changes in the curriculum and its content that were implemented in 2015-2016. The Panel appreciates the contextualisation of course contents to meet the local needs. During interview sessions with students and faculty, the Panel was informed that course outlines are provided to students in printed form and are published on 'Moodle.' Moreover, the course outlines are reviewed by the BTC's Quality Assurance and

Strategic Planning Office (QASP) on an annual basis in order to monitor compliance. The Panel studied the content of the courses and notes that these cover all pedagogical elements expected of an initial teacher training programme and are of an appropriate level in terms of depth and breadth. This is supported by the findings of the 2012 National Agency for the Recognition and Comparison of International Qualifications and Skills (NARIC) report and confirmed in the NIE Report 2012. The Panel appreciates that programme syllabi are suitable for the type of the programme and provide the pedagogical depth and breadth needed. The Panel reviewed a sample of the textbooks and teaching materials which showed that a range of resources is used, some of which are more recently published than others; however, texts to support the teaching of literacy in Arabic are translated from English and still contain examples in the English language. The Panel suggests that the College reviews these texts to ensure fitness for purpose. Furthermore, during interview sessions, the Panel was informed that teaching faculty keep up to date with current and recent professional practices through visiting websites of institutions delivering similar programmes in English but as noted elsewhere in this Report (e.g. Paragraphs 3.2 and 4.7) there needs to be a formalized approach to monitoring and maintaining currency of the programme. Moreover, during interview sessions, the Panel concluded that when teaching faculty members are preparing teaching and learning materials, they are unaware of what is being covered in other courses, which potentially could lead to overlap and redundancy, and a missed opportunity to cross-reference courses. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should prepare and disseminate an accessible overview of the programme syllabi in order for faculty to provide the most appropriate content to students.

- 1.5 The B.Ed programme is guided by nine PILOs covering content knowledge, student development, diverse learners, instructional strategies, the learning environment, assessment, communication and instructional technology, school and community engagement, reflective practice/ethics and professionalism. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the PILOs were developed in line with Bloom's taxonomy. Furthermore, the PILOs are mapped to the PEOs and to the university's ILOs. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are also specified for each of the PILOs to help in making them measurable. According to the SER, the purpose of the programme is to produce graduates who demonstrate the core personal and professional knowledge, skills and values essential for appointment by the Ministry of Education (MoE) as a primary teacher in Bahrain public schools. The nine PILOs reflect the MoE teacher competencies and are clearly expressed in the programme specifications; the alignment of these PILOs with the MoE competencies supports the programme in meeting the college's mission. Through its focus on developing skills in learning and teaching and the partnership with the MoE, the programme and PILOs align and support key elements of UOB's mission. The Panel studied the PILOs and notes with appreciation that the PILOs are clearly expressed, appropriate

and aligned with the programme aims and objectives as well as the college and the university's mission.

- 1.6 According to the SER, there are clearly stated CILOs that are included in the course specification and are used to provide clear criteria for teaching and assessment. The CILOs indicate specific content or competencies to be learned; expected student performance in line with the levels in Bloom's taxonomy; and key performance indicators which outline the expected level of student achievement. For example, the CILOs for the Literacy for Early Primary Teachers course are proposed in four categories: knowledge of fundamental literacy terms and processes, understanding of literacy processes, understanding of instructional procedures that promote literacy, and ability to use understanding of literacy processes in primary level instruction. The Panel notes that the CILOs were reviewed in 2012-2013 to ensure alignment with PILOs and assessment and this led to the introduction of the standardised format noted earlier. From interviews with faculty and students, the Panel confirmed that the CILOs support the delivery of the programme and students are clear about what is covered and assessed in each course. The Panel was provided with extensive evidence of how CILOs are mapped to the PILOs. Consideration of the CILOs in the course folders provided indicates that they are appropriate to the level and aims of the courses in line with the overall programme aims. The Panel appreciates that CILOs are clearly stated for each course, are appropriate for the course content and level and, overall, are properly mapped to the PILOs.
- 1.7 All students are expected to undertake four Teaching Practice (TP) courses over the four-year programme; TP is an integral part of the degree programme in order for students to demonstrate achievement of key competencies. TP requirements are staggered, with pre-requisites, over the four-year programme, increasing the level of difficulty so that students are given the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the nine competencies. There are TP policies and assessment procedures that were reviewed and changes implemented in 2014-2015 based on feedback from TP supervisors and final year students. The implementation of these policies and procedures is overseen and coordinated by the TP Division/Office and the Teaching Practice Committee. Moreover, students are required to sign a teaching practice agreement. Each TP course is allocated credit hours and has a different focus: TP 1, 2 and 3 last 20 days each and have two credit hours, while TP 4 takes place during the final year, has nine credit hours and lasts for a whole semester. The CILOs for the four TP courses are appropriate and clearly aligned to the PILOs. In addition, the reflection activity for TP4 requires students to consider the extent to which they meet each of the MoE teacher competencies. Assessment tasks are appropriately designed to measure students' achievement of learning outcomes: for TP 1, students are assessed on a sample of their observation logs, their reflective report and participation in seminars; in TP 2 students are additionally assessed on their mini

lessons and video reflection. For TP 3 and TP 4 students are assessed on five areas, which include their lesson plans and teaching. The Panel reviewed the TP materials provided and noted the detailed feedback provided by supervisors and the considerable opportunities made available for student reflection. During student interviews, the Panel confirmed that students are aware of the importance of the TP and what the expectations are in terms of meeting the programme's educational objectives. Moreover, it was clear from meetings with MoE staff, coordinators and the programme management, that TP is seen as an invaluable part of the teacher training experience and has a key role in preparing trainee teachers for the realities of classroom teaching. The Panel appreciates that teaching practice courses have clear learning outcomes that support the achievement of the PILOs and are supported by clear assessment policies and procedures that are known to students and evaluators.

- 1.8 Teaching and learning approaches are set out in the Student Handbook and course outlines include instructional approaches to be adopted. The SER states that the principles of the approaches to teaching and learning were set out by NIE in the 2008 concept paper. These include holistic development; purpose driven; theory-practice link; experiential learning; modelling desired competencies; and the development of reflective communities of practice. BTC's Strategic Plan also refers to the advancement of student-centred and hands on approaches to teaching and learning. Nonetheless, this has not been translated into a formal policy and from interviews and the provided evidence, the Panel notes that approaches to teaching on the programme are dependent on the individual teacher's informed opinion and professional judgement. The Panel was provided with examples of hands-on, enquiry-based student-centred teaching approaches but it is not clear that these are implemented throughout the programme. There is still a dependence on teacher-centred direct instruction as a main teaching approach. The Panel recommends that the College should develop and implement a college-wide teaching and learning policy to underpin principles and methods used for teaching. Notwithstanding the above, there are a number of opportunities for students to develop independent learning, such as during teaching practice, in the preparation of the e-Portfolio and in courses such as Introductory Statistics, which they appreciated during interviews. Furthermore, during interview sessions with faculty, students and alumni, the Panel was informed that a range of technology-based teaching approaches is incorporated such as the use of smart boards and mobile phones in the classroom, online dictionaries and sharing of materials through Google docs. The Panel appreciates that a wide variety of teaching methods are used in the programme to support the attainment of its objectives and useful opportunities are provided to encourage independent learning.

- 1.9 In order to support the sharing of teaching and learning practice, BTC has introduced a series of 'Brown-Bag' seminars, which cover such topics as problem-based learning; formative assessment and challenges in the classroom. While these are well attended by English-speaking faculty, there is less engagement from Arabic-speaking staff. Presentations have also been delivered by staff visiting from NIE. Although the Panel did not find evidence of how learning from these has been reflected in classroom practice. Moreover, while there are many experienced teaching faculty members, there has been some resistance to the introduction of new or alternative teaching methods as evidenced by the inconsistent use of Moodle. The Panel urges the College to investigate ways to make Professional Development (PD) opportunities accessible to all faculty members, as further discussed in Paragraph 4.9.
- 1.10 Assessment arrangements for the B.Ed are guided by the UoB's 'Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy'; 'Study and Exam Regulations'; and the 'Assessment and Moderation Policy', and the college's policies, such as 'Final Exam Instructions', which are accessible by staff through SharePoint. The Panel notes that the College utilises a range of assessment policies and procedures. In addition, assessment tasks and methods for each course are communicated to students through the course outlines, which vary depending on the CILOs to be assessed. Moreover, the Student Handbook outlines assessment policies. Nonetheless, the Panel is of the view, which is also acknowledged by the BTC in the SER, that these policies and procedures are variable which can lead to a degree of inconsistency between the different courses as well as between different academic divisions and this variety in practice was confirmed by teaching faculty in interviews. The Panel recommends that the College should develop and implement an overarching assessment policy to support the consistent monitoring of student achievement. The SER states that the BTC employs three methods of assessment: formative, interim and summative. While formative assessment may be formal or informal, interim and summative assessments are evaluated through assessment rubrics outlining performance expectations. From faculty and student interviews and viewed course files, the Panel confirmed that feedback on assessment is provided promptly both orally and in written form. The BTC Exam Board, chaired by the Dean, provides the forum for the discussion and approval of final grades as well as handling appeals. Furthermore, the Student Handbook covers the procedure for 'request for reconsideration of grades and appeals'. According to the university-wide Anti Plagiarism Policy, students and staff are informed of the policy when they join the university, which the Panel confirmed during interviews. The Panel acknowledges that suitable assessment procedures are used which provides provision for an appeal by students.

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

- Overall, the programme has clear aims in line with the college's mission to produce qualified primary level teachers, and the institution's three core functions.
- The Bachelor of Education programme is well structured to provide a balance between theory and practice and facilitate student progression.
- The course content is contextualised to meet the local needs and is suitable for the type of the programme and provides the pedagogical depth and breadth needed.
- Programme Intended Learning Outcomes are clearly expressed, appropriate and aligned with the programme aims and objectives as well as the college and the university's mission.
- Course Intended Learning Outcomes are clearly stated for each course, are appropriate for the course content and level and, overall, are properly mapped to the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes.
- Teaching practice courses have clear learning outcomes that support the achievement of the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes and are supported by clear assessment policies and procedures that are known to students and evaluators.
- A wide variety of teaching methods are used in the programme to support the attainment of its objectives and useful opportunities are provided to encourage independent learning.

1.12 In terms of improvement the Panel **recommends** that the College should:

- further revise the curriculum of Cycle 2 in a way that enhances the content of the subject specialisation in order to ensure that graduates are effective in their teaching areas
- prepare and disseminate an accessible overview of the programmes syllabi in order for faculty to provide the most appropriate content to students
- develop and implement a college-wide teaching and learning policy to underpin principles and methods used for teaching
- develop and implement an overarching assessment policy to support the consistent monitoring of student achievement.

1.13 **Judgement**

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

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 Admission to the B.Ed programme is governed by the MoE's overarching admission policy, where a minimum high school score of 80% is required. In addition to medical checks, the MoE carries out screening that includes Arabic and English language tests and a general aptitude test of the prospective students. According to the SER 'direct entry of students onto B.Ed. 1 (year-1) is available for high school graduates who provide BTC with proof of a TOEFL score of 500 or an academic IELTS score of 5, or successful completion of an IB programme or A-Levels'. Students not meeting direct entry requirements have to complete a foundation programme and pass it with a Grade Point Average (GPA) that is not less than 2.0. Furthermore, according to the Student Handbook, admission into the foundation programme is based on a recommendation made by the MoE. During interviews, current and past students who were aware of the admission requirements expressed their appreciation for the level of support they received from BTC faculty. Nonetheless, the Panel noted that all students submitted for admission in the BTC programme from the MoE are required to complete two admission applications, one for the UoB and one for the BTC. This inefficient duplication of the process has been acknowledged by the BTC and UoB's registration offices. During site visit interviews, the Panel was informed that the BTC is required to admit all students recommended by the MoE, while the BTC is having little say in the selection process or the number of admitted students. The Panel noted during the site visit that the aforementioned requirement might cause the BTC to experience stress on its resources when the number of students is higher than expected. The Panel learned, for example, that the number of students submitted for admission for the 2016-2017 academic year far exceeded BTC's expectations. According to interviewed faculty and programme management, this increase has necessitated larger class sizes, particularly in the number of students in the Foundation Programme, and additional demands on the programme faculty and student support staff. Moreover, BTC receives the list of students for admission to the programme from the MoE at a late time 'causing serious difficulties to proper planning instructional needs and scheduling'. The Panel is of the view that without controls in the admission process over the quality and a number of students accepted into the programme, the College may continue to experience challenges in providing students with appropriate material resources and academic support. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College in collaboration with the MoE should revise student admission requirements and set a target number of students to be admitted to the programme to ensure that the admitted students are appropriate for the type of programme and available resources.

- 2.2 Admitted students in the B.Ed programme are full-time Bahraini high school graduates pursuing a career in public education in Bahrain and are selected by the MoE to become teachers in its schools. As stated earlier, students are accepted either directly to the programme or through a Foundation year. The Panel notes that up to 36% of students in the Foundation programme withdraw or fail, even though the required cumulative GPA for entry into the B.Ed programme was lowered from 2.5 to a 2.0 at the end of 2015 by the MoE. During interviews, the programme leadership and faculty indicated that the very high attrition rate in the Foundation programme acts as a kind of ‘screening’ mechanism that moves students, who do not have the academic capacity and/or the motivation to be successful, out of the B.Ed programme. The Panel notes that those who do graduate from the Foundation programme, and the students who enter the B.Ed programme directly, have a 97% overall graduation rate. The Panel is satisfied that the Foundation programme is effective in screening admitted students into the B.Ed programme. Moreover, the programme’s year one students are required to take three streaming tests, in Arabic, English and mathematics and science, that will determine their readiness for studying in the different specialisations offered within the B.Ed programme. According to the SER, students who are successful in passing their streaming tests are able to study their first choice of specialization. Concerning the profiles of students admitted to the programme, one of the BTC’s expressed programme aims is to develop teacher candidates who appreciate and provide instructional opportunities for diverse learners, and yet the Panel noted limited gender diversity in the programme. The ratio of male to female graduating students has been steadily decreasing from almost 1:1 in 2011-2012 to 1:4.5 recently. The Panel received acknowledgement of this issue from BTC administration and faculty, as well as members of the MoE-BTC Governing Council. All expressed the desire to find ways to increase entrance of male teacher education candidates into the B.Ed, though the Panel did not hear or find evidence of any specific strategies in place for this purpose. Thus, the Panel encourages that the BTC in cooperation with the MoE develops and implement a strategic plan to recruit and retain a more appropriate male to female ratio of its candidates in the B.Ed programme in line with the programme aims and MoE’s requirement.
- 2.3 There is a formal management structure for the B.Ed programme that is clearly stated in the SER. The SER and BTC Organisational Chart refer to the Dean and two Associate Deans, one overseeing academic affairs and one for academic programmes as the management team responsible for running the programme. During the site visit, the Panel was informed that the two associate Dean positions remain vacant and that the programme has been managed by acting Deans since 2013. The Dean manages the programme with the help of four academic Group Heads for specialization areas in Arabic and Islamic Education, English Language Education, Mathematics and Science Education, and Education Studies, as well as the director

of the college's QASP office. Furthermore, academic Group Heads hold regular meetings with faculty in their groups and represent their groups in the BTC Academic Board. During the site visit it was evident that the lines of responsibility are followed by the faculty, academic Group Heads, and the acting Dean, and that faculty members are informed regarding programme decisions. The decision-making process, according to the SER, includes input from various combinations of at least 20 committees. Prominently placed committees in the programme hierarchy are the Board of Examiners and the BTC Academic Board. The Panel confirmed from interviews and the site evidence that committees meet regularly and decisions are used to enhance the programme. Thus, the Panel acknowledges BTC's efforts in establishing a governance and committee structure with well-defined lines of responsibility and accountability to support the internal management of the programme. Nonetheless, the Panel is concerned about the large number of committees with overlap in responsibilities while no evidence was provided on the way they interact with each other, which raises a question about their effectiveness. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should conduct a review of its committee structure and expedite the recruitment of a permanent Dean, as well as other vacant positions, to ensure that the programme is sufficiently and adequately managed.

- 2.4 Panel interviews with the management as well as close reading of the BTC Charter reinforce the inherent and dependent relationship the BTC has with the MoE. The Panel acknowledges the governance challenges of the BTC brought about by the leadership vacancies, as well as the influence and contingencies of the MoE, and thus acknowledges the BTC's efforts to establish its own governance and committee structure to support the internal management of the programme. Nonetheless, the Panel is of the view that the role of the MoE in BTC management be delineated clearly in the Organization Chart and descriptions, and that the BTC work actively with the Governing Council and Policy and Strategy Committee to ensure appropriate management of its programme relative to its mission (see Paragraph 4.2).
- 2.5 According to College Profile data supplied to the Panel, as of October 2016, there were 65 faculty members teaching a total of 490 students in the programme. These figures represent a Student-to-Staff Ratio (SSR) of 13:1, which suggests there is a sufficient number of faculty members for the programme. The Panel recognizes that supervision of TP courses and experiences necessitate much smaller SSRs as compared with theoretical and content courses. The Panel confirmed the level of qualifications by reviewing the CVs of all faculty members. The BTC faculty CVs demonstrate that they have appropriate advanced degrees and experiences related to the foundational and the B.Ed programme. Furthermore, during interviews, students expressed their appreciation for the faculty's dedication to deliver the

courses. Overall, the Panel appreciates that there is a suitable number of faculty members with a range of qualifications and experience that include possessing capable pedagogical skills and student-centred orientations that match the aims and needs of the programme. Notwithstanding the above, the Panel noted that almost all faculty have teaching loads that are very close to the maximum load prescribed by the BTC (five courses for lecturers and four for assistant and higher rank professors). For this reason, the Panel is of the view that the teaching load is on the high side with less opportunity for faculty members to engage in research and self-development activities. Although the College supports research by providing monetary incentives for publishing, conference attendance and small grants for research projects, the research outcome remains modest and limited to a small number of faculty members. Additionally, only two members of the faculty are at the professor rank and five at the associate professor rank, while all others are at the assistant rank or lecture status. The Panel learned through interviews with of the college leadership that while the BTC has focused on teaching, it will need to align itself more closely with the UoB's expanding research agenda. Thus, in order to improve the generation of knowledge through research by college faculty members, the Panel recommends that the College should explore ways of providing faculty more time and resources to increase their research and scholarly productivity, and increase the research and scholarship profiles of faculty to further match the programme aims and curricula content.

- 2.6 The BTC has clear policies and procedures for the recruitment, appraisal, and retention of faculty. The SER states that the recruitment guidelines are 'almost similar' to those of the UoB. In addition, the College advertises vacancies in international outlets (e.g., Higher Education Jobs, Times Higher Education and Chronicle of Higher Education). The College recruits regionally and nationally using print and non-print outlets. Once the College agrees on a vacancy requirement, the position is advertised and application files are submitted to the BTC Human Resources (HR) office and reviewed by the concerned Group Head and the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee interviews and nominates shortlisted candidates to be approved by the Dean and then the University Council. The Panel further notes that faculty numbers have remained almost constant in the past four years, with a slight increase in the last year. The Panel had the opportunity to interview faculty members who had been recently hired and were told the process of recruitment was fair and transparent and that HR staff was helpful throughout the process. Whilst there is no evidence of formal induction policies for newly appointed academic staff, the Panel learned from the SER and interview sessions with faculty members, HR staff and programme management that newly recruited staff are provided with orientation and receive informal mentoring by Group Heads. The Panel recommends that the College should develop and implement a formal faculty induction policy and programme, and assess its effectiveness. The Panel

notes that the appraisal process has included course folder evaluations, mid semester student evaluations, peer observations, and goal setting forms. According to the SER and the senior management, a new online faculty appraisal system is being tested in the College this academic year. The goal of the system is to monitor faculty performance relative to the college's mission, as well as providing faculty with a platform for documenting activities relative to promotion bylaws of the UoB. From site visit interviews and evidence provided, the Panel confirmed that these procedures are understood by all concerned parties and they are in place. The Panel appreciates that there are implemented formal policies and procedures for recruitment and staff appraisal that are known to all concerned parties and are in place. The UoB has policies for promotion that are followed by the BTC. The Panel reviewed these policies that detail the steps required by faculty seeking promotion must follow, as well as the numbers and types of teaching, research, and service activities required. The Regulations of Academic Promotion at the University of Bahrain were published in 2006 and reviewed in 2012. During interviews, the Panel learned that there are very few faculty members who have moved up in rank in the College. Furthermore, the Panel heard from faculty that in spite of written promotion policies, the process seemed 'mysterious', and 'confusing', and that knowledge of colleagues who were thwarted in repeated efforts to seek promotion left them discouraged and unmotivated to enter the promotion process. The Panel, therefore, recommends that the College should ensure that faculty clearly understand the guidelines for promotion and take measures that support faculty's efforts to progress in rank.

- 2.7 According to the SER, the BTC has found it necessary to develop an in-house Student Information System (SIS) designed to manage particular data important to its students, because the comprehensive UoB Management Information System (MIS) does not allow BTC electronic access nor is it capable of generating student reports relevant to the BTC. During the site visit, the Panel was informed that currently the two systems are not connected electronically to each other and interviewed BTC staff indicated that this duplication of effort has been an inefficient use of resources and were concerned that it could place the accuracy and security of certain student information at risk. The Panel was also informed that UoB is trying out a new MIS that would make it possible for individual programmes to access tailored and relevant student data. Consequently, the BTC has not expanded further its SIS. The Panel encourages the BTC leadership to continue to work with the Governing Council and others in UoB leadership to improve its MIS to support the BTC programme goals. Nonetheless, the Panel notes that between the UoB's MIS and the BTC's SIS, the required student information is being maintained, kept secured and required reports generated. The BTC SIS system has also allowed for more efficient scheduling of teaching practice courses for students and supervising faculty, which has had the effect of improving the time lines of BTC student course registration in

the UoB system. During interviews with faculty and staff, the Panel learned that the BTC's SIS has also helped provide academic advisors with important timely student information that has improved scheduling of and student attendance to advising sessions. The Panel appreciates the efforts of the BTC to create its own SIS, in the absence of a UoB MIS that is tailored to its unique needs, for the BTC students, staff, and faculty.

- 2.8 There are formal mechanisms employed by the IT Centre that ensure the security and safety of all BTC students' records and information. The Panel notes that effective security procedures are in place for conducting examinations, recording grades, changing grades, confirming the academic status of the students, and ensuring that graduation requirements are fulfilled. During the site visit the Panel was informed that there are secured servers on site and data backups are regularly saved locally and on a remote site. Moreover, Group Heads have to approve grade entries and an audit trail for these is generated. Change of grade requests are initiated at the Department and the University Council has to approve them. Access levels with passwords have been established to ensure that only authorised users could access data at their specific level of authority. This was confirmed by the campus tour and the Panel's interviews with the relevant university staff, faculty members, and students. The Panel appreciates that there are clear procedures in place to ensure the safety and security of information and the reliability and accuracy of the data. However, the Panel learned from interviews with faculty and student support staff that for certain advising purposes in the College, occasionally hard copies of relevant student file data are utilized. These are presumed confidential, the Panel was told, and are kept in locked files in faculty and staff offices. Therefore, the Panel encourages the BTC registrar and staff to explore ways to reduce the use of hard copy files for advising and utilizing the existing electronic systems for that purpose.
- 2.9 The Panel toured the college and university's facilities and noted the changes being made to accommodate the increase in the number of students in the programme, as well as the teaching approaches employed by the BTC faculty. For example, round tables are added to classrooms to allow for more flexible grouping of students; unused office space are redesigned to create small classrooms; and a science laboratory is added to an existing classroom. The Panel also observed on its tour that new computers put into two existing computer laboratories. Students informed the Panel they felt that because the BTC is a newer college on campus that its facilities, including learning spaces and technology, are more up-to-date than those of other colleges. The large atrium is also a unique space in the building that students use for formal and informal individual and group study sessions. The Panel acknowledges the college's efforts to find acceptable ways of working within the existing building space, in spite of student enrolment growth. Additionally, the tour of the BTC

library, which was opened in 2012, revealed what appeared to be an adequate collection of conveniently accessible education-related hard copy books, journals, curricular guides, and other reference materials. The BTC library also maintains computers for searching its holdings and those of the UoB main library, as well as for accessing all available electronic journals and books through the UoB library databases. The facility also includes a small seminar room for students to collaborate on group research activities and for librarian-conducted tutorials on search and reference skills. The Panel also visited the University library and learned from library staff that there are many print-based and e-resources available to B.Ed students and faculty to support course-related activity as well as research and writing. A university librarian liaises with the BTC library to cooperate on acquisitions and student support services. Both on and off campus, students and staff have access to a wide range of e-resources, including journals, dissertations, and books. As part of the BTC facilities tour, the Panel observed a video production studio that faculty and students use to create project-related videos, lectures, and other instructional applications posted on the BTC's dedicated YouTube site. As well as access to Wi-Fi and email accounts, additional IT support for students and faculty is available in the college's computer laboratories, where, for instance, faculty can analyse research data using programmes such as SPSS. The Panel appreciates that the IT and learning resources provided, including the library, are appropriate to the BTC mission and the programme aims. Nonetheless, the SER, as well as input from faculty during the facilities tour and interviews, make clear the need for the College to find additional classroom space for the growing number of students and classes, particularly during term 1. The SER states that there are some challenges with existing spaces and resources in the BTC building. Concerns related to adequate facilities and a sufficient number of classrooms and laboratories are outlined in a Furniture Task Force Reports. The Panel is of the view that the College has made some progress in adapting to the challenges that the increase in the number of students has created and recommends that the College should continue to explore ways of maximizing efficient use of existing spaces within the building floorplan.

- 2.10 During interview sessions with faculty members, librarians, students, and IT management staff, and on reviewing the supporting evidence, the Panel learned that there are vehicles for tracking the use of classrooms, laboratories and e-resources. There is tracking of information on classroom use available through the SIS, and library use is tracked through its Learning Information Management system. Data provided suggest that BTC building classrooms are being used to capacity; that there has been a steady increase in the number of students and faculty using the 'Moodle' platform, as well as library e-resources. Although these data were found and included in the SER, the Panel notes that neither the SER nor those interviewed during the site visit referred to any comprehensive and ongoing system for implementing changes based on acquired data for the usage of resources and other

teaching and learning facilities the College and University provide for students and faculty members. The SER states that these tracking data 'show sufficient utilization of these resources'; and yet as noted in Paragraph 2.8 of this Report, the SER makes clear that classroom usage is beyond capacity. Thus, the Panel was unable to find evidence of sufficient links between the tracking data presented in the SER and informed decisions about spaces and e-resources in the College. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should further utilise the outcomes of the monitoring of resource usage to inform decision making on their appropriateness and efficiency.

- 2.11 As described in the SER and various supporting materials and reinforced during faculty and staff interviews and the site visit tour, the BTC has a comprehensive system of support procedures and services for its students. Upon admission to the programme, a student is assigned an academic advisor through the College's Student Advisory Services. The advisor provides ongoing and requested assistance throughout the duration of the student's programme. The Student Advisory Services staff also provide students additional forms of counselling, including psychological counselling. The BTC and UoB staff members also provide assistance and support to students with regard to use of the library, e-resources and laboratories. New student and faculty orientations include ways of using e-resources to meet course goals and maximize learning. Faculty lends additional support through course assignments that require the use of e-resources and then guiding students in the appropriate use of these resources. Additionally, the e-learning support staff in the College organize training sessions for students on the use of 'Moodle'. Students interviewed during the site visit valued the level of support and care the College and the University provide to them. The Panel appreciates that the student support mechanisms are well established and responsive to students' needs.
- 2.12 The SER describes the approach the BTC and UoB undertake to orient new students. Panel interviews of faculty and staff confirmed the goals, content, and activities of these induction events. A series of induction experiences are offered to familiarize students with the UoB and BTC's policies and services, including the 'Moodle' platform and e-portfolio. Faculty, staff, students, and the MoE participate in these induction activities, in partnership with the BTC Student Services. It was learned in interviews that the number of direct entry into year 1 of the 4 year B.Ed is so small, since nearly all students come from the foundation programme, that these students are included in the same new student induction as the others. The BTC induction programme has undergone systematic evaluation based on a formal student questionnaire as well as individual comments received through it. The results of the questionnaire support the contention in the SER that the inductions are generally well received by students, where survey satisfaction rates are between 87% to 91% in different question groups. Moreover, the Panel acknowledges the efforts of the BTC to accommodate the unexpectedly large number of newly admitted students

from the MoE in the initially-planned induction and the ones who miss the induction in the make-up induction sessions. The Panel appreciates that the induction of new students is systematic and appropriately comprehensive, which participants are highly satisfied with. However, the Panel suggests a closer analysis of patterns in the individual comments received in the student questionnaire on induction in order to incorporate these into decisions about how to modify and improve induction content and activities. For instance, the Panel observed a repeated theme in the comments from year one students complaining about repetition, since most of them came from the foundation programme and had received the new student induction upon entry to that programme the year before. The Panel suggests that the College utilises student written comments when planning subsequent year's induction programme.

- 2.13 The SER refers to the overall process for monitoring student progress, identifying struggling and 'at-risk' students, and providing needed interventions. This description is further supported by flow charts, procedural details and sample activity for delivering intervention services to these students. The support services are well advertised and accessible to all students. This level of attention to and care for at-risk students was also confirmed by relevant university faculty and staff. Furthermore, the Panel learned that a mid-term progress form completed for each student by faculty and each course makes it easier for faculty to identify students who may be in the early stages of academic difficulty. The Student Advisory Services identifies academic probation to be those students with GPAs less than 2.0 while at-risk students are those with GPAs between 2.0 and 2.49. These students are identified each semester and intervention strategies are formulated with relevant faculty members. Individual and small group support for English language development, writing, and soft skills are made available, as well as more targeted course-specific interventions provided by academic advisors and faculty members. For example, in recognition of the challenges students are facing in the English language, 'Early Bird' courses are being run before normal classes start in the morning. Confirmation of the value of the BTC's system for identifying, monitoring, and supporting struggling students was gained from interviews with current students and alumni. The Panel appreciates the efforts of staff and mechanisms put in place to support students who are at risk of academic failure. However, the Panel recognizes that other factors, such as block scheduling, in which students remain in cohorts as they progress through the programme, may create added pressure on at-risk students, since one of the consequences of failure is the need to take make-up courses or independent study courses, adding to the academic load of students who are already struggling with a normal course load in a block schedule. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should explore ways of providing a greater level of flexibility within the existing block schedule model to ensure that at-risk students are allocated appropriate study load.

- 2.14 The SER states that the BTC creates opportunities for students to have informal learning experiences within and outside the classroom. The Panel learned from faculty, staff, current students, and alumni that students wishing to further develop their English skills are encouraged to attend British Council workshops, while others participate in reading clubs. Moreover, the Panel also identified that teaching practice experiences offer numerous opportunities for informal learning. Furthermore, BTC runs a soft-skills programme that students are required to go through, called the Self Awareness and Personal Development Programme, and is intended to improve students' success in college, in the workplace, and in their personal lives. In addition to field trips, students participate in reading activities and puppet shows for children in shopping malls, and in coaching teams at school; and attend seminars presented by external speakers. Moreover, a prominent architectural feature of the BTC building is the atrium, with numerous tables, chairs, and a café that, as the Panel observed daily, provides a large number of students an informal space for reading and studying individually or in groups. The Panel appreciates the efforts of faculty and staff to create a supportive environment for informal learning.
- 2.15 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Efficiency of the Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- There is a suitable number of faculty members with a range of qualifications and experiences that match the aims and needs of the programme.
 - There are implemented formal policies and procedures for recruitment and staff appraisal that are known to all concerned parties and are in place.
 - The BTC's tailored student information system, together with the UoB's management information system provides the information needed by the BTC on students, staff, and faculty.
 - There are clear procedures in place to ensure the safety and security of information and the reliability and accuracy of the data.
 - The IT and learning resources provided, including the library, are appropriate to the BTC mission and the programme aims.
 - Student support mechanisms are well established and responsive to student needs.
 - The induction of new students is systematic and appropriately comprehensive, which participants are highly satisfied with.
 - There are effective mechanisms put in place to identify and support students who are at-risk of academic failure.
 - There is a supportive environment for informal learning.

2.16 In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the College should:

- revise student admission requirements and set a target number of students to be admitted to the programme to ensure that the admitted students are appropriate for the type of programme and available resources
- conduct a review of the college's committee system and expedite the recruitment of a permanent Dean, as well as other vacant positions, to ensure that the programme is sufficiently and adequately managed
- explore ways of providing faculty more time and resources to increase their research and scholarly productivity, and increase the research and scholarship profiles of faculty to further match the programme aims and curricula content
- develop and implement a formal faculty induction policy and programme and assess its effectiveness
- ensure that faculty clearly understand the guidelines for promotion and take measures that supported faculty's efforts to progress in rank
- continue to explore ways of maximizing efficient use of existing spaces within the building floorplan
- further utilise the outcomes of the monitoring of resource usage to inform decision making with respect to their appropriateness and efficiency
- explore ways of providing a greater level of flexibility within the existing block schedule model to ensure that at-risk students are allocated appropriate study load.

2.17 **Judgement**

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

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 purpose of the B.Ed programme is to prepare students to work effectively as teachers in primary schools in Bahrain. The graduate attributes of the programme are expressed in terms of competencies which the College states are closely aligned to the MoE's teacher competencies and are reflected in the PEOs and the nine PILOs. These competencies cover content knowledge, student development, diverse learners, instructional strategies, the learning environment, assessment, communication and instructional technology, school and community engagement, reflective practice/ethics and professionalism. It is evident from interviews with students, teaching faculty, alumni and MoE employers that there is a shared understanding of the expectations of the programme and key competencies in order to produce competent teachers. The SER states that each course folder includes KPIs which state in behavioural terms how students can demonstrate what they have learned; these KPIs form the basis of assessment and are expressed in terms of expected performance. Whilst, samples of course outlines reviewed by the Panel did not make specific reference to KPIs, expected performance was clearly stated in the assignment rubrics, indicating how a range of performance would be assessed. Student achievement against the CILOs is assessed for each course and monitored by the teaching faculty, which are then linked to the PILOs. Achievement of teacher competencies, which are expected from the graduates of the programme, is also assessed through the e-Portfolio, which is maintained throughout the students' period of study. The Panel appreciates that graduate attributes are expressed as clear competencies, which are well understood by staff and students and reflected in the delivery and assessment of the programme.
- 3.2 As noted in Paragraph 1.3 of this Report, the original B.Ed programme was designed and benchmarked against the programme in Education from the NIE in Singapore. The Panel acknowledges that while it was recognised that academic standards might vary between Singapore and Bahrain, benchmarking to a programme emanating from a successful system was seen as a way of supporting the improvement of teacher education in Bahrain. During the site visit, the Panel was informed that the programme team considers the outcome of the study carried out by the National Recognition Information Centre in UK (2012) on initial teacher training systems across 28 countries which ranked BTC's programme within the top seven countries in terms of its convergence with the features and requirements of the English initial teacher training system to be a form of benchmark. Nonetheless, the Panel notes that BTC has not developed or implemented a system for formally benchmarking the equivalence of its programme's academic standards on an ongoing basis. Although

the SER indicates an expectation that the currency of the programme will be maintained in line with the UoB's Benchmarking Policy, the Panel found little evidence to indicate that this policy is being implemented in BTC. In its review of the programme in 2012, the NIE urged the BTC to ensure that the B.Ed curriculum is kept up to date and contextualized. The Panel was informed that although as individuals, teaching faculty informally benchmark the content of their courses through looking at the websites of reputable universities offering education programmes, there is limited awareness of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation or other international/regional benchmarks, which could provide external reference points for determining academic standards. The Panel recommends that the College should implement a formal, documented and systematic use of external benchmarks and reference points in order to determine and verify the equivalence of academic standards in line with UoB's Benchmarking Policy.

- 3.3 As noted under Paragraph 1.9 of this Report, BTC follows UoB's assessment policies and procedures. Consistent implementation of these is overseen by the course coordinators, QASP and the UoB's Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee (QAAC). Relevant assessment policies are communicated to students through the Student Handbook and are made available to the faculty *via* SharePoint and through the Faculty Handbook. During interviews, students confirmed that they are informed on assessment through their course outlines, which are also published on 'Moodle'. According to the SER, there are clear protocols for monitoring and ensuring the security for final examinations. Moreover, all students are expected to sign a Plagiarism Pledge; as a future employer of the BTC graduates, the MoE is informed of any incidents of academic dishonesty, and the Panel was able to confirm these during interviews. Furthermore, final grades and appeals are approved by the Examination Board which is chaired by the Dean. During interview sessions, the Panel learned that the BTC is reviewing its modes of assessment, as noted in Paragraph 3.4. While the Panel was provided with examples of internal moderation of examination scripts and written assignments (see Paragraph 3.5), BTC has yet to develop formal moderation procedures for elements of its particular teaching and learning context, such as for teaching practice and e-Portfolios. Although UoB's procedures call for the use of external examiners for external moderation of assessment, BTC has no mechanisms in place to provide externality (see Paragraph 3.6). The Panel acknowledges that assessment procedures are appropriate, well understood by faculty, clearly communicated to students and are consistently implemented.
- 3.4 According to the SER, academic Group Heads are responsible for ensuring that assessments align with CILOs and hence PILOs. To this end, the course coordinators oversee consistent implementation of the agreed assessment tasks which are graded

using common rubrics. The rubrics define the different levels of achievement expected on a scale of 0-4 and provide clear descriptors for teaching faculty undertaking the assessment. Moreover, the University has implemented an Assessment and Information Management System, which is an online central repository of the assessment data for all programmes at UoB. The repository includes updated information about the learning outcomes at all levels of the educational experience within the University, and the B.Ed programme outcomes are posted on this system. Furthermore, the achievement against the learning outcomes is discussed by the BTC Examination Board, and monitored by QASP and the QAAC, as noted from interviews with BTC staff. The B.Ed programme was also submitted as a pilot programme for inclusion on the National Qualifications Framework. As a result of this activity, BTC states that it is reviewing its modes of assessment to further ensure that they align with the complexity of the learning outcomes; and the outcomes of these are due to be implemented in 2016-2017. Staff have been provided with training to assess the achievement of CILOs and PILOs and each course folder contains documentation to show the monitoring of the percentage of student achievement against each CILO and PILO. Moreover, it was clear from the samples of course folders and student assessments provided that, on the whole, student assessments are appropriate for the measurement of the achievement of learning outcomes, both in terms of taught courses and teaching practice. For example, students submit recordings of dramatic dialogues and storytelling in order to assess an understanding of phonology (TC1EN312 Phonetics and Phonology). The Panel appreciates that assessment is clearly aligned with CILOs and PILOs in support of academic standards.

- 3.5 The SER states that internal moderation is carried out in line with the university's Assessment and Moderation Policy, the Grades Normalisation Regulations and Study and Exams Regulations. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that course coordinators liaise with teaching faculty members regarding the setting of assignments and the assessment schedule; teaching faculty members work in collaboration with colleagues for the setting and marking of assessments, although practice varied from one division to another. According to the SER, BTC itself acknowledges that there is a degree of inconsistency between the assessment of courses as well as between academic divisions and that the implementation of the procedure for the variability of inter-assessor grading needs to be tightened up and formalised. While the SER describes the process for the internal moderation of mid-term tests and final examination papers, it is not clear how other forms of assessment are internally moderated. For e-Portfolios, final year students are expected to deliver a presentation which is assessed by two members of staff. The Panel was informed that while there are no formal mechanisms in place for internal moderation of these at the moment, staff have begun to share exemplars of e-Portfolios amongst themselves to compare marking. Moreover, for TP courses there are clear assessment

policies, nonetheless BTC is encouraged to provide opportunities for moderation (such as through the sharing of videotaped lessons) in order to support consistent rating of student performance and to manage possible interrater reliability of TP assessment. The need to develop a system for moderation across courses to ensure consistency and address variability in the marking of assessment was identified as an action in the 2012 NIE report but the Panel did not find evidence of this being addressed. The Panel recommends that the College should adopt a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of the internal moderation of student assessment to ensure consistent grading of student achievement.

- 3.6 As noted in the SER and during interviews, BTC acknowledges that it has no system in place for the external moderation of assessment, although this is recommended in the UoB's Assessment and Moderation Policy. In 2009, it was agreed by the Governing Council that a Board of External Examiners should be established although this has not been followed up. The 2012 NIE report noted the variation in the requirement to achieve a passing grade. While BTC states that this will be addressed in the Fall semester 2016, the Panel found no evidence of any steps being taken towards implementing a system for the external moderation of assessment. The Panel recommends that the College should develop and implement procedures to support the external moderation of assessment and the external scrutiny of the level of achievement of graduates.
- 3.7 As noted in Paragraph 3.2, the B.Ed programme was considered by NARIC UK amongst 29 other initial teacher training programmes and ranked in the top ten countries in terms of its alignment with equivalent UK programmes. While BTC presents this as an indicator that the level of students' achievement aligns with international expectations, the review itself did not consider student assessed work. As BTC itself notes, 'the standards achieved by students are probably in line with national and regional expectations but substantially below international expectations' although no formal regional or international benchmarking has taken place. During the site visit, the Panel was provided with an extensive sample of different types and levels of students' work. The Panel notes that scrutiny of students' work from a range of courses indicates an appropriate range of achievement for undergraduate students on an initial teacher training programme. Moreover, assessment tasks become incrementally more challenging and complex over the four years and are clearly aligned to the achievement of CILOs and PILOs. Samples of assessed work show that CILOs are assessed through a range of appropriate tasks including group presentations and reports; demonstration of mind mapping and reflective writing; mid-term tests with multiple choice, matching, and reading comprehension tasks (with limited requirement for extended writing). Teaching faculty members provide comprehensive and detailed feedback, based on the assessment rubric, and expectations set out in the course outline and assessment

documentation. There is a clear association between theory and what students had learnt from teaching practice and teaching observation. Moreover, all courses include a common thread of reflection, which is submitted in the e-Portfolio; the samples of student reflections from across all four years indicate the incremental development of students' critical thinking skills and growth in self-awareness. In terms of grading, BTC states that it monitors grade inflation each semester through the course coordinators, academic Group Heads and the Examination Board to ensure the consistency and validity of grading procedures. While the SER states that the Academic Board studies module results, this is not a standing item in Academic Board meetings. BTC recognises that grade inflation is an issue and addressing this is one of the objectives included in the BTC Strategic Plan. However, teaching faculty and external stakeholders expressed confidence that the level of students' achievement is appropriate for an initial teacher training programme for primary school teachers in Bahrain. While the Panel confirms that the level of student achievement favourably compares with the achievement of students from similar programmes delivered regionally, BTC is urged to carry out international benchmarking to monitor the assessment and compare the level of its student achievement (see recommendation in Paragraph 3.2).

- 3.8 The SER states that BTC monitors the level of achievement of graduates in line with programme aims and intended learning outcomes through the coursework component, assessment of teaching practice and the student e-Portfolio. The Panel notes that the assessment of e-Portfolios is clearly linked to monitoring the overall student achievement of graduate competencies and the PILOs. A review of submitted e-Portfolios through 'Moodle' indicates that these are a significant achievement by students and useful step to the development of a commitment to lifelong learning. As noted in Paragraph 3.11, a formal approach to the internal moderation of students' achievement as reflected in e-Portfolios is yet to be developed and implemented; also, there is no external independent scrutiny of students' assessed work, as noted in Paragraph 3.6. While the employment of all graduates by the MoE is seen as an indicator of the student success in the achievement of teacher competencies, BTC has identified a number of challenges in relation to the assessment of graduate achievement, namely: grade inflation (see Paragraph 3.7); rigour needed for the effective evaluation of student performance (which has led to the introduction of an increased number of summative assessments); and the need to monitor graduate effectiveness in the classroom once they have been employed by the MoE. The Panel agrees that these areas need to be addressed and encourages the College to develop action plans to tackle the identified challenges in order to successfully measure graduate achievement. Evidence indicates that all teaching faculty members are expected to monitor student achievement against CILOs and PILOs and these results are considered by the Exam Boards. The Panel notes that between 2012 and 2015, 57% percentage of students

graduated with GPAs equal to or above 3.0 and 10% with GPAs less than 2.5, an indication of grade inflation. As indicated in Paragraph 3.13, alumni satisfaction is sought on the extent to which graduate competencies have been met (82% satisfaction on average between 2013-2015). Moreover, according to the SER, a formal approach to eliciting feedback from the MoE is still being developed. Nonetheless, evidence showed that in 2015 the MoE provided satisfaction figures on graduate performance which indicated satisfaction levels for Boys being 66% and Girls 64%. On consideration of the evidence, the Panel concludes that graduate achievements meet the programme educational objectives, the MoE competencies and the programme intended learning outcomes.

- 3.9 As noted in Paragraph 2.1, students are admitted to the B.Ed programme through the MoE. Diagnostic testing takes place once students have joined BTC and the majority of entrants join the one-year Foundation Programme. The Panel was informed that around 36% of students fail or drop out of the Foundation Programme (due to poor language skills or lack of interest in becoming teachers). However, average data from academic years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 show that around 97% of students who do enter the B.Ed programme successfully graduate. A motivating factor is that students have signed an agreement with the MoE, are paid a monthly stipend and, if successful, are guaranteed employment as teachers in the future. Student cohorts indicate that, between 2010 to 2012, on average 8% of the students enrolled in the 4 years B.Ed programme withdrew from the programme or were dismissed after being enrolled. Almost all students complete their degree within the four years (eight semesters); due to the nature of the block schedule, students may have to undertake an extra year of study in order to retake failed courses (or students can take them as independent study). The graduation data over the last three years indicate suitable student achievement in term of GPA. However, the Panel notes a slight fall in the average GPAs which could be a result of addressing grade inflation (see Paragraph 3.7). The Panel appreciates that almost all of the students successfully complete their programme in a timely manner.
- 3.10 As noted in Paragraph 1.6, all students on the B.Ed programme are required to undertake Teaching Practice (TP). There are four TP courses during the programme, with the final TP taking place over a whole semester. Teaching practice is supervised by BTC supervisors and students work alongside co-operating teachers in the public primary schools in Bahrain. Each TP normally takes place at a different school and students are provided with orientation before commencing TP. The assessment tasks vary depending on the purpose of the TP and students are provided with clear expectations in terms of assessment outlines and rubrics against which their achievement will be evaluated. TP1 is assessed through student completion of an observation log, which records the student's observation of professional teachers. A review of these indicates that students are encouraged to develop as reflective

practitioners as well as show an understanding of classroom practice. While students interviewed expressed the usefulness of the observation, a number highlighted the fact that professional practice observed did not always reflect what was being taught in the B.Ed programme. TP2 takes place once students have been placed in either Cycle 1 or Cycle 2 and students are expected to focus on lesson planning and developing lesson objectives. TP3 focuses on planning and management of the learning environment; TP4 builds on all the skills and knowledge that the trainee teachers are expected to demonstrate in the classroom. Students are given the opportunity to videotape their lessons to reflect on their classroom practice. The Panel notes that it is clear from a review of TP assessment tasks, sample TP assessments from across the four years, and feedback from students, staff and those working in schools that TP is well-managed and seen as an invaluable part of the student learning experience in order to prepare student teachers for the future in the primary classroom. According to the SER, the MoE is responsible for the provision of teaching practice opportunities; however, the Panel notes that no evidence was viewed for the criteria for the selection of schools for TP. Moreover, during interviews, students spoke highly of their teaching practice experiences but a few teaching practice students voiced concerns over their experience specifically the selection of teaching practice schools. The variation in quality of TP context is acknowledged by BTC, although it is seen as an opportunity for students to experience the reality of teaching in schools and during interview sessions the Panel was informed that students are not sent to the most challenging schools. The MoE has recently introduced a coordinator role in schools to support the liaison between the school, student and BTC and improve communication. Feedback from interviews suggests that this is a positive improvement. BTC recognises that students are not always able to implement all what they have been taught during TP as cooperating teachers might not be aware of these strategies and the approaches are not always easy to apply because of the culture of the school. Moreover, there are some things that cannot be covered in TP such as project-based teaching. The Panel was informed that teaching faculty compensates for this through the provision of micro-teaching opportunities at BTC and this was confirmed in the sample of course folders reviewed. The Panel notes that these alternative approaches are able to support teachers in helping the candidates achieve the intended learning outcomes of the teaching practice. The Panel appreciates that the TP component of the programme is managed properly to ensure that the overall learning experience is suitable to meet the specified learning outcomes.

- 3.11 Students are required to complete an e-Portfolio as a final graduation project requirement, which is seen as part of the students' professional development and reflection over their course of study. Guidance on the e-Portfolio is provided in the Student Handbook and in formal courses on the management of learning. Information for teaching faculty on e-Portfolios is provided in the Faculty

Handbook. For each course within the programme, students are expected to select assignments to be included in the e-Portfolio and include a reflective piece (which can be in any format) indicating why those assignments have been included and how these relate to the students' achievement of the PILOs. The e-Portfolio is managed through a module on 'Moodle'. Students are also encouraged to record extra-curricular activities. Students finalise the work on their e-Portfolios in their final semester, where they are required to deliver a 20-minute oral presentation in front of at least two judges from the programme. There is a common rubric for all staff assessing the presentations and the Panel found that this is being consistently implemented. A review of samples of e-Portfolios indicates a range of student achievement and development in terms of students' ability to reflect and critically analyse their learning, and feedback is provided to students to support year on year progress. It is evident from interviews with staff and students that e-Portfolios are seen as an authentic and useful task, supporting students in developing skills useful in a future professional environment of lifelong learning. Moreover, students and alumni consider e-Portfolios as an empowering experience as it captures the key elements of students' achievement over the four years and allow students to review their progress and development. The Panel appreciates that the policies and procedures supporting the management of e-Portfolio and its assessment are effectively implemented.

- 3.12 According to the UoB's Quality Process Framework, all programmes are expected to have a Programme Advisory Committee to provide professional feedback on the programme and the market needs. The Panel notes that BTC has a Professional Advisory Council (PAC) but is no longer active. Evidence indicates that PAC meetings are limited to a few records of meetings from 2014 and 2015, and this was confirmed during interview sessions where the Panel was informed that the PAC has not met since 2015. The BTC has established two Committees in order to liaise with the MoE; the Strategy and Policy Committee (which has not met recently according to interviews with governance bodies) and an Operational Committee, which is chaired by the MoE Assistant Undersecretary for Human Resources and Services and meets on a monthly basis. During interviews, the Panel was informed that these two committees have been combined into the Strategic and Operational Committee but this has not yet met. As noted elsewhere in this Report, the Panel is concerned at the lack of externality in relation to the ongoing management and review of the programme. While it is acknowledged that the MoE is a principal stakeholder (as the future employer of the students), the Panel is of the view that BTC would benefit from building on its initial international perspective to include a number of discipline experts outside the MoE. The Panel recommends that the College should establish an independent Programme Advisory Board comprised of appropriate experts and that is effective in providing external input into programme decision-making.

- 3.13 All successful BTC graduates are employed by the MoE to work in government primary schools. Alumni who have graduated over the last three years have been asked to carry out a self-assessment by QASP Office. The self-assessment covers areas such as organisational skills, building positive relationships, engagement and enjoyment; building thinking skills and applying and deepening learning and professional growth. Analysis of the results from the cohorts of 2014 and 2015 show a self-rating between 74-83% which indicates, overall, that graduates are confident about their abilities in the classroom (although no KPI has been set by the College in relation to self-rating scores). The SER indicates that as BTC has only graduated four cohorts of B.Ed students to date, and it has not been possible to carry out formal employer satisfaction surveys. Nonetheless, the Panel was informed that anecdotal evidence is gathered from BTC staff who visit schools (such as TP supervisors) on the positive satisfaction by the MoE with graduate performance. Moreover, MoE stakeholders and alumni interviewed during the site visit confirmed their general satisfaction with the standards of B.Ed graduates. This is confirmed by the outcomes of the alumni satisfaction surveys. The Panel is satisfied that there is evidence of employer and alumni satisfaction with the standards of the graduate profile.
- 3.14 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Academic Standards of the Graduates, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- Graduate attributes are expressed as clear competencies, which are well understood by staff and students and reflected in the delivery and assessment of the programme.
 - Assessment is clearly aligned with CILOs and PILOs in support of academic standards.
 - Almost all of the students successfully complete their programme in a timely manner.
 - Teaching Practice component of the programme is managed properly to ensure that the overall learning experience is suitable to meet the specified learning outcomes.
 - Policies and procedures supporting the management of e-Portfolio and its assessment are effectively implemented.
- 3.15 In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the College should:
- implement a formal, documented and systematic use of external benchmarks and reference points in order to determine and verify the equivalence of academic standards in line with the University of Bahrain's Benchmarking Policy
 - adopt a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of the internal moderation of student assessment to ensure consistent grading of student achievement

- develop and implement procedures to support the external moderation of assessment and the external scrutiny of the level of achievement of graduates
- establish an independent Programme Advisory Board comprised of appropriate experts and that is effective in providing external input into programme decision-making.

3.16 **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 institutional policies and regulations that guide the operations at BTC. Also, the SER mentions that 'BTC works in unison with the MoE regarding the Ministry's policies, procedures and regulations'. The policies and regulations are disseminated *via* the UoB's website as well as some printed publications, such as the Student Handbook and the Faculty Handbook. Furthermore, there are various policies in regards to students' admission, progression, and transfer; study and examination regulations; programme quality assurance and enhancement; academic course and programme development; assessment, grading and examination moderation; and benchmarking. Moreover, policies and regulations relating to the academic and administrative staff include areas such as hiring and retention, promotion, training, and appraisal. Student policies and regulations cover plagiarism, societies and clubs, and student conduct and rights. In addition, policy review is specified within UoB policies. To ensure consistency in the implementation of the policies among the four programme academic groups, BTC has a Divisional Accreditation/Academic Committee (DAC) in every academic programme. These committees ensure the involvement of staff members and the effectiveness of the application of the policies. During interviews, the Panel noted that the faculty was involved in the Quality Assurance (QA) process. Furthermore, the QASP office within the College oversees the consistent implementation of the policies across the BTC programmes. The Director of QASP is a member of the UoB QAAC, and this membership facilitates the communication and alignment of the policies and procedures between the BTC and the UoB on all related issues. Interviewed staff were well-aware of these policies and their roles and responsibilities with regards to implementation. The Panel appreciates that there are formal policies and procedures that are consistently implemented, and that the faculty and support staff are involved in the quality assurance management process.
- 4.2 The BTC has its organisational structure illustrated on its website as well as in other documents. According to the SER, the lines of responsibility and accountability are based on a hierarchy with the acting Dean reporting directly to the President of the UoB. In the BTC Organisational Chart however, the Dean's position in the hierarchy is below the BTC Governing Council. Moreover, in addition to the internal BTC management of the programme, significant programmatic policies and procedures derive from two vital decision-making bodies, the BTC Governing Council and the BTC Policy and Strategy Committee. During interviews, the Panel concluded that neither of these bodies has an effective role in the leadership of the programme.

Furthermore, the Panel was informed during interviews that the programme is currently managed by the acting Dean, with the help of the Director of the QASP and the four academic Group Heads. The BTC has been managed by acting Deans Since July 2013 and the two Associate Dean positions, indicated in the BTC organisational structure, have been vacant for some time. Moreover, the BTC Governing Council and the BTC Advisory Board have not had regular meetings at least over the past year. The Panel is concerned that the programme management does not have discipline-specialized guidance at the Dean's level and above. The Panel recommends that the College should establish independent and specialized leadership of the College for the efficient administration of the programme.

- 4.3 There are formal internal QA policies and procedures at various levels, where they are consistently implemented and are in line with UoB's quality assurance procedures. The QASP Office, the BTC Quality Assurance Committee, and the DAC implement the UoB QA framework and its procedures for the management of the B.Ed programme's academic quality and standards. The acting Dean and the QASP Director oversee and monitor the quality of all academic programmes and administrative operations. The Group Heads monitor the teaching and learning, and assessment processes and academic peers take part in the annual appraisal of the faculty. Faculty members are informed of their students' perspectives on the teaching/learning environment at the end of every semester. Furthermore, the Student Advisory Committee (SAC) provides feedback to BTC on areas of strengths and challenges in the programmes. The Panel noted from interviews that staff is well informed of their role in the implementation of QA policies and procedures. The Panel appreciates that there is a clear quality assurance management system that meets the programme needs.
- 4.4 Both the QAAC and the QASP office have contributed to creating a quality culture at the BTC through conducting regular events and capacity building workshops annually and throughout the academic year to acquaint staff with the institution and the College's QA system. For example, the Director of QAAC at UoB along with the Director of QASP at BTC conduct workshops and presentations on the policies and procedures related to quality assurance on an annual basis. During interviews, the staff and faculty showed a clear understanding of the quality management arrangements and their role in ensuring the quality of the provision. The Panel notes that awareness of the QA system takes place through workshops, weekly internal Brown-Bag faculty PD sessions and through e-communication, where these events are well attended. Interviews and evidence revealed that faculty members are aware of various aspects of the QA policies and procedures, and their role in ensuring effectiveness of provision. The Panel appreciates the commitment of the faculty and staff to ensuring the effectiveness of programme provision as a result of clear communication of the quality assurance systems.

- 4.5 The BTC follows UoB's policies on creating new programmes and considers the needs of the MoE on initiating new programmes to ensure that its programmes are relevant to the College mission, the stakeholders' needs, fit for purpose, and comply with existing UoB regulations. The policy covers the introduction and development of programmes and courses, as well as their discontinuation and suspension. Furthermore, forms are included for each of the concerned tasks. The policy further specifies the detailed requirements of a feasibility study when introducing a new programme, where a proposal for introducing a new programme is initiated by the department and raised by the Dean to the University Council for approval. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the policies had been implemented in line with the UoB procedures for the introduction of the Foundation Programme in September 2012. The Panel is satisfied with the arrangements in place for the development of new programmes.
- 4.6 The BTC submits annual programme self-evaluation reports to the UoB QAAC according to UoB's Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy. The first annual self-evaluation review report was submitted to the QAAC in June 2012. Furthermore, the BTC conducts an annual evaluation that involves the internal review of the curriculum, which includes course review procedures and timings. Furthermore, the review includes survey data that is received from the stakeholders such as the PAC, the alumni, the SAC and students about to graduate. However, the Panel did not find evidence of programme review meetings with PAC that consists primarily of employers. Nevertheless, the aforementioned evaluations produce various reports including the annual programme self-evaluation reports that incorporate suggestions for programme improvement. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the findings of some of these reports are discussed, and action plans are drawn up. The Panel is pleased with the efforts of the BTC in conducting annual internal programme evaluation and producing action plans. Nonetheless, the Panel is of the view, and as noted in 3.12, that an independent Programme Advisory Board such as the PAC, which is noted in Paragraph 4.10, comprised of appropriate experts to provide external input into annual programme reviews would enhance effective decision-making.
- 4.7 The UoB's Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy stipulates that periodic programme reviews should be conducted with focus on the 'validity and currency of PEOs, PILOs and CILOs, the extent to which intended learning outcomes of the programme are being achieved by the learners, and the effectiveness of curriculum and teaching, learning and assessment methods in the actual achievement of PILOs', and to 'make use of external stakeholder participation at key stages of monitoring and review process'. Revisions to the programmes take place based on a 5-year curriculum review plan. Moreover, the BTC has conducted reviews where internal and external reviewers provided feedback and made

recommendations to improve the programme. The first general (non-programme specific) external review at the macro-level was conducted in October 2012 by external consultants from the NIE. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the programme has not had a systematic external review but that general aspects of the BTC were reviewed with a recommendation to administer systematic reviews every five years. The BTC implemented its first B.Ed curriculum internal review during 2014-2015. Although the Panel acknowledges the efforts of the BTC in conducting the internal review of its B.Ed curriculum, the Panel advises that input from a specialty professional association would further enhance the programme. The Panel recommends that the College should include wider aspects of the programme in its reviews to encompass not only curricular details but also a more comprehensive approach covering other aspects of the programme, such as admission, registration, learning resources and market demands.

- 4.8 As noted in the SER, the BTC collects structured comments from stakeholders. This includes collecting data through students' Induction Year Surveys; Senior Exit Surveys; Teaching Practice Survey; Alumni Surveys; BTC Student Evaluations and Feedback of Course Surveys; and SAC Meetings. In addition, the Panel was informed that verbal comments are also received from the employer (MoE). The Panel was able to view evidence of the analysis of some of the collected data. Furthermore, some action plans for the improvement of the programme were noted, which included the 2014 BTC's annual self-evaluation report for QAAC and the revision of the academic advising system in 2013. The Panel was informed during interviews that these action plans are forwarded for approval by the Dean and endorsement by the academic committees before disseminating the changes for implementation. For example, the Panel came to know that new classroom chairs were recently introduced based on the student requests that were raised in SAC minutes. However, interviewed students voiced concerns over their experience, specifically the selection of teaching practice schools, and that their concerns are not being addressed. Interviewed MoE stakeholders have asked for a reconsideration of the balance between pedagogy and content knowledge in the Cycle 2 programme, in order for beginner teachers to be better prepared for the classroom context, as noted in Paragraph 1.3 (which has been identified as an area for improvement by BTC). Moreover, it is not clear from the evidence provided how data from alumni surveys are used for decision-making in the College. While the Panel acknowledges that, in general, feedback is collected, the Panel notes the lack of systematic ways of addressing the findings from the data collection, analysis, and feedback from stakeholders. The Panel advises that the College should further enhance its decision making based on stakeholders' feedback and provide feedback to all stakeholders on actions taken in response to the issues they have identified.

- 4.9 According to the SER the Training and Development Office at the UoB identifies topics for workshops and seminars that are made available to UoB faculty from all colleges. Also, faculty attends seminars that their department and college offer each academic year. The SER includes a list of PD opportunities; such as the QASP Office periodic PD sessions, which include the Brown-Bag PD presentations, the University's Faculty Development Programme and the QAAC PD sessions. Furthermore, BTC faculty members are entitled to conference leave and funding for attending international conferences. During interviews, faculty expressed their satisfaction with the PD opportunities that they attended and revealed that some faculty had benefited from the university's conference support. The Panel appreciates the efforts of the BTC and UoB in providing various opportunities for the professional development of staff. However, the Panel was informed that faculty and staff appraisal is not currently linked to their PD and that faculty specify their own professional development goals (note Paragraph 2.6). The Panel, hence, recommends that the College should use the outcome of the staff appraisal process to inform the professional development of staff in a more systematic way.
- 4.10 The BTC relies on the MoE, which is the main employer of its graduates, for information on market needs related to the programme. According to the SER, the BTC has direct channels of communication with the MoE through the MoE-BTC Strategic and Operational Committees whose agendas focus on the public school's needs and how best to ensure that the BTC programmes are up to date and fit for purpose. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the BTC collects feedback on its programmes from all stakeholders to be more informed on their needs; that includes feedback from MoE senior leadership, school principals, cooperating teachers, parents, alumni, and current students, through regular surveys, meetings, interviews, and results of the MoE competency test that is administered to prospective new teachers in the MoE schools. The DAC committees oversee procedures that are used to collect and analyze comments from stakeholders such as the MoE and alumni and use the findings to revise and improve the programme. Furthermore, as noted in Paragraph 3.12, to ensure that the programme is aligned with the market needs, the College used to rely on the PAC meetings which were held once a semester. In addition, the Panel notes from interviews and the SER, that the BTC-MoE joint committees 'will need to become more active as meetings have been suspended since 2015'. The Panel advises the College to consider reactivating the role of the PAC, as noted in Paragraph 4.6, as well as implementing other effective measures, in conducting formal and comprehensive scoping of the market needs, such as scoping the needs of the B.Ed graduates who are interested in pursuing post-graduate studies. Moreover, the Panel is of the view that inviting external members with relevant expertise and passion for education to become new members of PAC would enhance the process of receiving market feedback, where

tentative members may come from the private and the public sectors representing the Bahraini educational aspirations.

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

- There are formal policies and procedures that are consistently implemented.
- There is a clear quality assurance management system that meets the programme needs.
- The commitment of faculty and staff to ensuring the effectiveness of programme provision as a result of clear communication of the quality assurance systems.
- The efforts of the BTC and UoB in providing various opportunities for the professional development of staff.

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

- establish independent and specialized leadership of the College for the efficient administration of the programme
- include wider aspects of the programme in its reviews to encompass not only curricular details but also a more comprehensive approach covering other aspects of the programme
- use the outcome of the staff appraisal process to inform the professional development of staff in a more systematic way.

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 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/BQA *Programmes-within-College Reviews Handbook, 2014*:

There is confidence in the Bachelor of Education programme of Bahrain Teachers College offered by the University of Bahrain.