



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

# **Directorate of Higher Education Reviews**

## **Programmes-within-College Reviews Report**

**Master of Design Management  
College of Art and Design  
Royal University for Women  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 31 October – 2 November 2016**  
HC090-C2-R090

## Table of Contents

---

Acronyms.....	2
The Programmes-within-College Review Process.....	4
1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme .....	8
2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme.....	14
3. Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates.....	22
4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance.....	28
5. Conclusion.....	33

## Acronyms

BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
CAC	College Advisory Committee
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
DMS	Document Management System
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEC	Higher Education Council
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
MDMT	Master of Design Management
MIS	Management Information System
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OSA	Office of Student Affairs
PGS	Postgraduate Studies Committee
PILOs	Programme Intended Learning Outcomes
QAAU	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Unit
RUW	Royal University for Women
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SIS	Student Information System

WVU	West Virginia University
-----	--------------------------

## 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 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 <b>Indicator 1</b> is not satisfied	

## **B. The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process at the Royal University for Women**

A Programmes-within-College review of the programmes offered by the College of Art and Design of the Royal University for Women 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 31 October -2 November 2016 for the academic programmes offered by the College, these are: Master of Design Management; Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design; Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design and Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design.

The Royal University for Women was notified by the DHR/BQA on 17 April 2016 that it would be subject to Programmes-within-College reviews of its College of Art and Design with the site visit taking place in October/November 2016. In preparation for the review, the Royal University for Women conducted self-evaluation reviews of all its programmes and submitted the Self-evaluation Reports (SERs) with appendices on the agreed date in June 2016.

The DHR constituted a panel consisting of experts in the academic field of Design Management, Fashion Design, Graphic Design, Interior Design, and in higher education who have experience of external programme quality reviews. The Panel comprised eight reviewers.

This Report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Master of Design Management 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 Royal University for Women will use the findings presented in this Report to strengthen its Master of Design Management. The DHR recognizes that quality assurance is the responsibility of the higher education institution itself. Hence, it is the right of the Royal University for Women to decide how it will address the recommendations contained in the Review Report. Nevertheless, three months after the publication of this Report, the Royal University for Women 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 Royal University for Women 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 College of Art and Design.

### **C. Overview of the College of Art and Design**

The College of Art and Design is one of the four colleges of the Royal University for Women (RUW), which was established in 2002. RUW currently offers Edexcel BTEC level 3 Foundation Diploma in Art and Design, four undergraduate programmes along with two postgraduate ones in a range of disciplines. The mission of the College is aligned with the vision and mission of RUW, which seeks to offer students 'a rewarding and challenging multi-cultural learning environment that cultivates strong, well-rounded personalities, encourages leadership, and builds character, social consciousness and community.' Currently, the College offers four bachelor degrees and two Master degrees through two departments: the Department of Design and the Department of Architecture. The statistics provided by the College during the site visit indicate that the total number of academic staff was 22; 17 of them are full-time and five are teaching on a part-time basis.

## D. Overview of the Master of Design Management

The Master of Design Management (MDMT) was first offered in the academic year 2012-2013 as a part-time programme, its first graduating batch was in the academic year 2015-2016 and comprised four students. The MDMT programme was validated at its initial stage by West Virginia University (WVU), RUW's strategic partner. The programme is offered through the Department of Design; and currently there are six full-time and one part-time faculty member contributing to the programme. According to the statistics provided by the institution, during the time of the site visit, there were 23 students registered in the MDMT programme and four students have graduated since the commencement of the programme.

## E. Summary of Review Judgements

**Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Master of Design Management**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
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
<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Confidence</b>

## 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 RUW has mission and vision statements which are provided on the current website, in the Strategic Plan 2011-2016 document and in the Master of Design Management Handbook. RUW's vision states 'to offer students a rewarding and challenging multi-cultural learning environment that cultivates strong, well-rounded personalities, encourages leadership, and builds character, social consciousness and community.' The Programme Approval and Modification Policy demonstrates a clear academic planning framework and implementation of all RUW's programmes and takes into consideration RUW's mission and vision. As described in the MDMT programme specification, the programme aims at developing 'students' knowledge and skills in a wide range of interdisciplinary studies such as design, management, marketing, media and communication, and information technology'. These general aims are in line with RUW's mission and vision, and particularly underscore the multi-cultural and interdisciplinary approach and the will of building a leadership culture for women. Moreover, the objectives of the MDMT programme are geared to provide 'students with the in-depths knowledge in their field of study,' 'to critically apply methods of scientific research of their field of study,' and 'to exercise initiative and responsibility'. The Panel appreciates that there is a clear academic planning framework of the MDMT programme that contributes to the accomplishment of RUW's mission and vision.
- 1.2 The MDMT programme study plan is outlined as a two year part-time postgraduate programme taught in English and consists of a total of 36 credit hours as shown in the MDMT Programme Handbook and in the MDMT Curriculum Plan 2015-2016. The programme provides an expected and appropriate preponderance of theoretical knowledge and includes practical skills of applying theoretical knowledge to real life problems. During the first year, students take four compulsory and two elective courses while during the second year they take one compulsory course, two electives and the thesis. There is no differentiation made between elective and compulsory courses with respect to the allocated credits as all of them are three credit hours apart from the thesis, which is allocated nine credit hours. Compulsory courses include: Research Methods, Design Theory and Application, Design Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Design Creativity and Innovation, and Human Factors Engineering. Electives courses focus on Design Practice and Strategic Design and Marketing, Applied Anthropology, Business Practice in the Gulf Area and others. In interviews with senior management, the Panel was informed that the MDMT programme has been informally mapped to Bahrain's National Qualifications Framework's level descriptors for a master degree (NQF's-Level 9). The Panel studied

the curriculum and acknowledges that it is in general suitable for the qualification it awards. The Panel also noted that a significant number of the courses have practical aspects, that reflect real life experience, embedded in their specification. Examples include Sustainable Practices in Design (DMT 558), Marketing: Advertising and Promotion (DMT 553) and Human Factors Engineering (DMT 525). Moreover, the Panel notes that the MDMT theses topics are related to the local community and address actual work-based problems. Interviewed students confirmed these findings. The Panel appreciates that practical aspects that reflect real life experience are embedded in the programme and provide an opportunity to link students learning experience to actual work-based problems. Nonetheless, the Panel notes that the Design Leadership and Team Building course (DMT 554) is an elective course and recommends that the College should change it to be mandatory rather than elective in order to meet the university's vision of providing students with learning environment that 'encourages leadership, and builds character.'

- 1.3 Course-by-course progression is maintained through a defined set of pre-requisites, which are clearly stated in the MDMT Handbook and the Postgraduate Studies Regulations and are appropriate to the exigencies of the programme. However, in order to enhance academic progression, the Panel suggests that the College investigate the possibility of creating elective follow-up courses for the courses currently included in the curriculum. For example: the mandatory Design Innovation and Entrepreneurship course (DMT 523) could be meaningfully complemented with an elective in the highly-specialized area of Innovation Management. While all courses are awarded 3 credit hours, the notional hours expected from students to fulfil a course are not provided clearly. Moreover, interviews with students gave the Panel a comprehensive image of the noticeable additional workload in almost all courses. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should monitor students' overall workload and to introduce a policy to govern the expected amount of student work beyond the contact hours.
- 1.4 The course syllabi of the MDMT programme are descriptive, have good breadth and mostly sufficient depth, and are consistent with similar programmes. All course syllabi are available on the Self-service, and in the MDMT Programme Handbook. The syllabi provided to the Panel utilise a template indicating the course descriptors and Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs), course specification, weekly topics, assessment description, learning and teaching methods, and a list of text books and other reference materials. Practical aspects of the curriculum are incorporated in most of the MDMT courses and assessed as part of the CILOs. This is evident clearly for example in the Sustainable Practices in Design course (DMT 558) with a focus on local practices and necessities. Students work on real/actual cases in Bahrain during which they are required to conduct visits, surveys and interviews and are asked to provide appropriate solutions for real-life contexts. The Panel scrutinized samples of the course

specifications provided and notes with appreciation that the syllabi provide good breadth and depth needed for this type of programme. However, the Panel notes that the term 'innovation' occurs in two of the offered courses the Design Innovation and Entrepreneurship (DMT 554) and Design: Creativity and Innovation (DMT 524) with no clear distinction on how it is tackled. Therefore, the Panel suggests that the programme team screen the titles of the two courses to clarify to the students how the two courses are different. The Panel also notes from interviews that the staff could do more to enhance the delivery of syllabi by incorporating more research findings related to the design management field. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should enrich the syllabi with current research findings within design management to meet the rapid evolving nature of this field.

- 1.5 The MDMT Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) are clearly stated in the programme specification. The PILOs mainly comprise identifying design problems, articulating ideas in a variety of forms and situations, researching relevant material, and utilizing information in design management processes. The Panel was also informed by faculty members and senior management about the on-going process of mapping the PILOs onto the NQF's-Level 9 level descriptors. From interviews, the Panel noted that faculty had a comprehensive understanding of the existing PILOs and how these will ensure the delivery of the programme aims. The Panel notes that PILOs are appropriate in general, for the graduate level and the type of programme, and are linked to the MDMT programme goals and cover all objectives in a measurable way. The Panel appreciates that the Programme has clearly stated PILOs that facilitate the delivery of the programme aims and that interviewed staff members revealed a distinct understanding of these PILOs and their role in the learning process.
- 1.6 The CILOs are clearly indicated in all course syllabi and, similar to the PILOs, are drawn from four categories which are (1) knowledge and understanding, (2) subject-specific skills, (3) critical thinking skills, and (4) general and transferable skills. The curriculum skills map shows the alignment of the courses onto the PILOs. In addition, within course specifications, assessment tasks are designed to achieve the CILOs. According to RUW norm, each course has a maximum of six CILOs. This norm is met in the Sustainable Practices in Design course (DMT 288) while seven CILOs appear in the specification of the Marketing: Advertising and Promotion course (DMT 553). Courses like Design Theory: Visualization and Application (DMT 522), Marketing: Advertising and Promotion (DMT 553) and Seminar in Design Practice (DMT 592) are good examples of the CILOs identifying design problems, critical thinking skills, and the verbal and visual articulation of ideas. Different bodies ensure the appropriate definition and consistency of all CILOs and their linkage to the PILOs. These bodies include the College Council, Curriculum Revision Workshop, Graduate Studies Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee, College Advisory Committee, and Quality Assurance and Accreditation Unit (QAAU). The yearly checks and approval

processes on the course descriptors are conducted to ensure that the delivery of each course is directly aligned to the MDMT programme aims and is linked to the PILOs. The Panel notes with appreciation the participation of several bodies in ensuring the definition and appropriateness of the CILOs to the aims and levels of courses.

- 1.7 RUW has a comprehensive and general Teaching and Learning Policy for all programmes offered which is in line with its mission, vision and strategic plan. This plan encourages the use of a diversified and appropriate set of teaching methods and strategies, enhancing students' learning experiences, encouraging multicultural learning, lifelong learning, the use of blended and e-learning and students' responsibility of their own learning. Teaching methods are included in the course specifications, mapped to the CILOs, and conformed to the Learning and Teaching Policy. Examples given in course specifications include individual assignments, group projects, presentations of poster competitions and papers, group discussions, case studies, guest lectures, field visits and critique sessions. Independent learning is encouraged in all courses, specifically in courses like Seminar in Design Practice (DMT 592) and Sustainable Practices in Design (DMT 558), and in the thesis. Interviewed students expressed their satisfaction with the variety of teaching methods utilized and appreciated particularly the critique sessions and the possibility to share previous professional and educational knowledge experiences among themselves. Moreover, students are regularly exposed to professional practices through site visits, guest lectures and the encouragement to apply their theoretical knowledge to local and regional real-life problems in their course work, as almost all of them are employed while studying. The Panel is highly satisfied that all the above mentioned enable the achievement of the PILOs related to analytical and critical thinking, and subject specific skills. Furthermore, the Panel was informed that Research Forums are conducted once a week, in addition to workshops on employability, which are provided to students and staff and evidence was provided on students' participation. The Panel appreciates the variety of the teaching and learning methods utilized in the programme, specifically the critique sessions and knowledge exchange, which are highly valuable for the programme and its delivery.
- 1.8 The MDMT programme follows RUW's Assessment Policy that details the procedures applied to all bachelor and master programmes. The Assessment Policy is based on the Guidelines for Governance and Quality Management. It gives clear information on the purposes and principles of assessment, assessment design and criteria, moderation and marking, and roles and responsibilities. This Assessment Policy is complemented with generic marking criteria, generic grading rubrics for essays and presentations, and with a master-specific grading rubric for the thesis. RUW's assessment documents are available to students and staff on the Document Management System (DMS), in hard copies and on the Self-service. The Panel notes that model answers are provided for question papers and quizzes. However, to encourage innovation and creativity, the

Panel suggests to reduce the use of detailed model answers. The Panel notes that all assessment tasks are part of the course specifications which are given to students at the beginning of the semester and interviews confirmed that the assessment policies are well known to staff and students. Teaching staff are obliged to pass their feedback on students' assessed work in the upcoming lecture. During interviews, students confirmed that they are provided with written and verbal feedback, either in class, during face-to-face meetings or by posting it on the Self-service. The Panel appreciates that RUW has a comprehensive assessment policy to ensure fairness and rigor; and assessment procedures are transparent, fair, well-documented, and available to staff members and students. The Panel notes that students and staff are fully-aware of RUW's Plagiarism Policy which demands the use of 'Turnitin' and states clearly the consequences of plagiarism in writing. However, visual plagiarism is not formally handled in the policy. Moreover, automated ways of detection do not exist. The Panel recommends that the College should revise the plagiarism policy to include provision for detecting visual plagiarism.

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

- There is a clear academic planning framework of the MDMT programme that contributes to the accomplishment of RUW's mission and vision.
- Practical aspects that reflect real life experience are embedded in the programme and provide an opportunity to link students learning experience to actual work-based problems.
- The syllabi provide good breadth and depth needed for this type of programme.
- The Programme has clearly stated programme intended learning outcomes that facilitate the delivery of the programme aims and that interviewed staff members revealed a distinct understanding of these programme intended learning outcomes and their role in the learning process.
- The course intended learning outcomes are developed through participation of several bodies to ensure their appropriateness to the aims and levels of courses.
- The variety of the teaching and learning methods utilized in the programme, specifically the critique sessions and knowledge exchange, which are highly valuable for the programme and its delivery.
- The University has a comprehensive assessment policy to ensure fairness and rigor; and assessment procedures are transparent, fair, well-documented, and available to staff members and students.

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

- change the Design Leadership and Team Building course (DMT 554) to be mandatory rather than elective in order to meet the university's vision of

providing students with learning environment that 'encourages leadership, and builds character

- monitor students' overall workload and introduce a policy to govern the expected amount of student work beyond contact hours
- enrich the syllabi with current research findings within design management to meet the rapid evolving nature of this field
- revise the plagiarism policy to include provision for detecting visual plagiarism.

### 1.11 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 RUW has a clear admission policy and entry requirements which are based on previous work experience, interview results and English language proficiency. Information regarding admissions, registration, student form and fee structure are available on the RUW website. Moreover, the MDMT Programme Handbook, and the Post Graduate Study Regulations show admission and registration procedures that include admission policy, admission requirements, procedures, documents required, financial aid, and credit transfers. The admission policy also provides details for accepting students transferred from other programmes and there is a standard procedure for the transfer of credits from similar programmes. Applicant must be holding a recognized bachelor degree either from the design discipline or from any non-design related field. RUW's admission policy places a minimum level for English language proficiency (IELTS overall band of 6; TOFEL: paper-based 550, Computer-based 183, and Internet-based 65). In event that the English requirement is not met, the College offers a foundation course in English (PMAD 500). The SER clarifies that all students admitted to the programmes have to sit for an interview and submit a portfolio if available. However, it is unclear to the Panel how interviews are conducted and how the College measures the practical skills of management, problem solving and analytical competences when interviewing students to be admitted to the MDMT programme. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should revise the mechanism used for conducting interviews and specify clear criteria to ensure equity in the selection process; and detect the best possible prospective students suiting the type and nature of the programme. In interviews with staff, the Panel was informed that RUW policies, including the admission policy, are being revised regularly every three to five years – which is stated in the Postgraduate Studies Regulations and was confirmed through evidence provided. The Panel acknowledges that there are formal admission policy and procedures for the MDMT programme and that there is a provision for the review of the admission criteria.
- 2.2 The profile of the admitted students was provided to the Panel during the site visit and in general, it matches the programme's aims and objectives. The Panel found the admission policy for the MDMT programme is being applied to ensure that students who are admitted to the programme are at required entry standards. According to the MDMT Programme data, the number of students accepted in the MDMT programme each year has risen from one to eight per academic year between the academic years 2012-2013 and 2015-2016. The students admitted come from Bahrain and regional countries. The Panel notes that the majority of students who have no design background apply with a degree in business administration. Students holding a non-

design undergraduate degree have to complete two foundation courses (PMAD 501 and PMAD 502) which provide a sufficient basis of preparation for them. The cohort analysis shows a match of the student profiles with the MDMT programme requirements as apparent from the student average length of study and retention rate. From interviews, the Panel learnt that students generally enjoy the MDMT programme and do not have major concerns about the programme and what is expected from them. The Panel met some students with a strong entrepreneurial focus, as almost all of them work part-time in relevant design and design management areas. The Panel is satisfied that the profile of the MDMT students suits the programme level and needs.

- 2.3 The RUW provided an organizational chart that outlines the structure of the College of Arts and Design and the chain-of-command for the College. It also demonstrates the cross work of some faculty who teach in multiple programmes. At the management level, the Dean has an overall responsibility for the College and is supported by two Head of Departments (HoDs). One of the HoD is responsible for the design programmes including the MDMT programme and the other one is responsible for the Bachelor of Architecture and he is also the programme coordinator for the two postgraduate programmes; namely: the MDMT and Master of Fine Art in Drawing and Painting. The masters' programmes are also overseen by the College Postgraduate Studies Committee (PGS). Faculty members contribute in committees at the college level to support the delivery of the programme and interviewed staff members showed full awareness of their academic and non-academic duties; and interviewed students knew the hierarchy of the College and whom to approach once needed. During the site visit, the Panel reviewed the job descriptions of the Dean and the HoD, and in meetings with senior management, the Panel learnt about the Deans' duties and responsibilities. Senior managers knew their responsibilities and were very clear on the expectations of their performance. The Panel was pleased that the teaching assistants are well-informed about all the programmes because of their involvement in teaching the foundation courses across all design majors. The College also has *ad hoc* committees such as Alumnae Committee, Library Committee, and Web and Educational Committee. Interviewed students were aware of the hierarchy of the College and whom to approach whenever needed. Administrative and support staff are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibilities. The Panel appreciates that reporting lines are clearly outlined and effective; and all staff members are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities. Nonetheless, the Panel is concerned with the wide range of responsibilities exerted on the HoD and the programme coordinator who perform at different levels within the College and urges the College to address this issue (See recommendation under Paragraph (4.2)).
- 2.4 There are six PhDs holders (two Associate and three Assistant Professors along with one Assistant Professor who works as a part-time faculty) contributing to teaching the major requirement courses of the MDMT programme. The SER states that the ratio of

students to staff within the programme is 10:1. However, these faculty members are also responsible for teaching courses that belong to other programmes. During the site visit, the Panel reviewed the CVs of the faculty members. The CVs indicate that academic staff do have a broad range of international teaching and professional experience and appropriate academic qualifications. However, to stay up-to-date in a rapidly evolving professional field there is a need for additional and occasional 'teaching personnel/practitioners' from the areas of design management such as design thinking methodology, process management, innovation management, brand management, new and user-centred business models and strategic communication. The Panel recommends that the College should ensure further diversity of faculty members especially in relation to the specialized areas above. Moreover, the Panel learnt during interview sessions that academic staff are required to attend professional development seminars and workshops and they found these activities informative and well organized. Following RUW's mission statement, faculty members and students engage regularly in local activities and related research activities, such as the publication of research papers and conference proceedings. Therefore, it will be very useful for faculty and students to conduct more applied research in the field of strategic design management in local and regional business context in order to enhance this crucial area of knowledge.

- 2.5 RUW has very clear and well-documented policies for staff recruitment, promotion and appraisal. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the College communicates its staffing needs for each academic year to the Human Resources (HR) Department. The recruitment process starts from the college level and ends with the approval of the Appointment and Promotion Committee which is chaired by the President. Interviewed staff members were aware that they stay on a probation period for three months as per RUW's regulations. According to the SER, the average of staff retention rate in the last three years was 91%. All staff must complete a two-day induction programme when they begin their work and complete a questionnaire about it. However, during interview sessions, the Panel was informed that some staff members did not attend the induction programme as they arrived late in the semester. Therefore, the Panel advises the College to ensure that staff members who missed the induction programme are provided with alternative formal arrangements. From interviews, the Panel learnt that there is an unofficial mentorship programme to newly appointed staff to be mentored by senior staff members to allow for their smooth integration into the University. Interviewed staff show clear understanding of the promotion processes although none of them has been promoted recently. Moreover, the Panel is satisfied with the annual appraisal system which starts with a self-appraisal, Dean and HoD's feedback, academic staff appraisal committee and ends with either appreciation or concern letters from the President. To ensure consistency across the colleges, RUW established the Academic Appraisal Committee in the academic year 2013-2014. The Panel noted from interviews that the staff have a clear

understanding of the HR Department processes. The Panel appreciates that all staff members are well-aware of the HR processes adopted by the University. All RUW's policies, procedures, handbooks, manuals and administrative templates are located on the Document Management System. PowerCampus consists of two systems; a Student Information System (SIS) and the Self-service System. The PowerCampus has been used for online registration and for teaching and learning since 2012-2013; and proves to be comprehensive with evidence of its functionality and usage, from registration, attendance, academic instructional material, grading, communication, academic performance monitoring etc. This was also collaborated during the site visit tour and interviews with senior management, academic staff and students. The Panel appreciates that there are extensive information systems to facilitate informed decision-making and monitor at-risk students for early intervention.

- 2.6 RUW has a clear policy for security of learner records that stipulates the steps taken to safeguard students' records. These steps include maintaining hard and soft copies of these records in secure locations on- and off-campus. RUW's Disaster Recovery Policy also aims to protect essential data at RUW in case there is a damage to its central IT environment in the event of fire or other major incidents. Furthermore, RUW has a Grade Approval Policy, which defines clearly the responsibilities of the instructors, the HoD, the Dean, the Academic Vice President and the Registrar. The Panel acknowledges that there are appropriate policies and procedures that are consistently implemented to ensure the security of learner records and accuracy of results. The Panel also acknowledges that there is an adequate risk-management plan where backup is stored on multiple platforms including the Cloud as indicated during the interviews and the site visit tour.
- 2.7 During the site visit, the Panel conducted a comprehensive tour of the physical premises of RUW, with a focus on those utilized by the MDMT programme. The Panel toured staff offices, classrooms, design studios, the library, computer laboratories, the exterior of student housing facilities and gymnasium. Staff offices are adequate for them in order to work with students and conduct research. In addition, the number of classrooms and laboratories is adequate for the current number of students. Although the Student Dorm and gym were not toured but the Panel was informed by students that the gym and the Dorm facilities are accessible by both on-campus and off-campus student residents. The Panel also noted that RUW is a source of community engagement as they allow women in the community to use the gym whether they are RUW students or not. Interviewed students and staff clarified that in general they felt that their facilities were adequate to their needs and that RUW allows them to make suggestions on how to improve their facilities. The Panel appreciates that the general and recreation facilities available are suitable for the needs of the programme and enrich students' experience. While touring the IT laboratories, the Panel was informed that currently, the RUW provides students with the following software packages:

Windows 10, Office Professional 2013, JCreator, DevC++, Visual Studio Community 2015, Graph yEd, Adobe Design and Web Premium CS 6, AutoCAD Architecture 2015, Autodesk 3ds Max Design 2015, Avast, Quicktime, and VLC Media Player. The Panel also toured the library and was informed by the students interviewed during the site visit that the library physical space and layout of the library is adequate for their study and meetings needs and that the opening hours were adjusted based on their feedback to their needs being part-time students. Nonetheless, the Panel noted that the library could benefit from purchasing more printed periodicals, as the design management field collection is lacking advanced books, journals and media systems that students should be reading. The library staff indicated that the budget was tight and it was hard to justify purchasing certain items because the number of students is small. The Panel is of the view that the library should offer more up-to-date information on media systems, design driven creation of value, design science and methods, design research, design related business models, design consultancy, design thinking, and design leadership and design policy. This is essential to enrich the academic standard in the MDMT programme. The Panel recommends that the College should purchase updated subject-specific publications to enrich the students' learning experience.

- 2.8 There are robust systems in place for tracking usage of resources and facilities. The Self-service is used for tracking registration, attendance, grades, financial hold and other functions. To ensure the implementation of eLearning, each college submits a report on its usage on a semester basis and the Teaching and Learning Committee has recently developed Guidelines for Blended Learning. The Librarian also issues monthly reports to monitor the usage of the library, electronic databases and 'Turnitin'. Outcomes of such reports are used to inform decision-making. For example, the Deans Council and faculty members are working to improve the usage of electronic databases by setting assignments that require research and usage of RUW databases. Furthermore, there is appropriate student support available in terms of library, laboratories, e-learning and e-resources, guidance and support care. The Panel appreciates that the tracking system is effectively employed to maximize efficiency on different levels, from registration, academic performance, library resource to students' attendance.
- 2.9 During the tour of RUW, the Panel noted that students at RUW have appropriate support in all areas of the physical facilities such as the library induction, academic advising as well as career advising., laboratory and studio spaces. The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) offers care beyond curricular matters as non-academic concerns are forwarded to the clinic or social worker. It was discussed during the Panel tour that the Registrar is also very involved in students' success as well. All students are assigned an advisor as per the advising policy, and are encouraged to communicate with their advisors either face-to-face or *via* email. Furthermore, the University provides financial aid to eligible students including postgraduate ones. There is also a

clear policy for students with special needs. Interviewed students praised the MDMT staff members for their ongoing help and encouragement and highlighted that the University organizes an annual career fair to expose them to potential employers. The Panel appreciates that the College provides a comprehensive system of academic and non-academic support to facilitate students' learning experience at RUW.

- 2.10 RUW has an induction programme for its newly enrolled students, which is conducted twice a year at the beginning of each semester. The OSA arranges the induction programme which consists of a tour of the library and other facilities in addition to information about the use of Self-service and RUW regulations. The College also arranges specific induction sessions for its postgraduate students to inform them about its specific requirements and give them the opportunity to meet with the Dean, faculty members and their advisors. Both the University and College give Powerpoint presentations for the students to become acquainted with the University and its facilities. All students receive a copy of the Postgraduate Studies Regulations. Interviewed students confirmed their attendance of the induction programme and appreciated its arrangements; they also highlighted that during it they are made aware of their advisors and other issues related to the MDMT thesis. They indicated their general awareness of the policies and procedures pertaining to the programme. For those who missed the induction, the Dean provides a one to one induction session and introduce them to their advisors. The Panel appreciates that there is a well-structured induction programme in place at both institutional and programme level.
- 2.11 RUW has transparent procedures and regulations for academic support in place and the Panel was satisfied with the rigorous and robust policy for identifying students at risk of academic failure. RUW Academic Advising Policy states that students should meet their advisors at least four times each semester, which was confirmed by students during interview sessions. Furthermore, all RUW students have support for personal and psychological issues, special needs health and safety issues, financial issues, and social and behavioural issues (both inside and outside the classroom). Staff at RUW use PowerCampus to monitor students' performance and their grades. Faculty members and advisors are made aware of at-risk students *via* this system. During interview sessions, the programme team confirmed that once they receive information on students being at risk of academic failure, regular meetings are arranged with the student to identify the problem and propose solutions. Staff confirmed that they apply RUW's 'open door' policy, in order to ensure adequate support for students at-risk. Nonetheless, interviewed staff clarified that so far none of their students have been categorized as at-risk. The Panel viewed all the provided evidence and is satisfied that RUW has standardized processes that are applied systematically. The Panel acknowledges that the arrangements for identifying students at-risk are well-documented to ensure that students are supported in a timely manner.

2.12 Students in the MDMT programme are supported by different means of informal learning. All students participated in series of workshops, conferences, festivals and design exhibits where they exhibit their work, research and thesis projects. All the above examples were supported in interviews with the staff and students who verified that they have many opportunities for informal learning. Other facilities supporting informal learning and enriching students' experiences include Student Affairs, Student Clubs and Sports Clubs. Moreover, both students and staff members stated during interviews that there is a theme of 'empowerment of women' at RUW, which is infused in all the above opportunities. The Panel encourages this to continue as both students and faculty are very proud of this and it appears to be what makes RUW unique as a university in Bahrain. The Panel appreciates that the learning environment is conducive to support informal learning and enrich students' experience.

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

- Reporting lines are clearly outlined and effective, and all staff members are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities.
- Staff members are well aware of the Human Resources Department processes adopted by the University.
- There are extensive information systems to facilitate informed decision-making and monitor at-risk students for early intervention.
- The general and recreation facilities available to students are suitable for the needs of the programme and enrich students' experience.
- The tracking system is effectively employed to maximize efficiency on different levels, from registration, academic performance, library resources to students' attendance.
- A comprehensive system of academic and non-academic support is in place to facilitate students' learning experience at RUW.
- There is a well-structured induction programme in place at both institutional and programme level.
- The learning environment is conducive to support informal learning and enrich students' experiences.

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

- revise the mechanism of the interviews conducted to admit students by specifying clear criteria to ensure equity in the selection process; and detect the best possible prospective students suiting the type and nature of the programme
- ensure further diversity of faculty members in relation to specialized areas related to the design management field
- purchase updated subject-specific publications to enable students to enrich their learning experience.

## 2.15 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 Graduate attributes are defined in the Postgraduate Studies Regulations. These graduate attributes are embedded in the intended learning outcomes and objectives of the programme. The Panel is satisfied that there is a mechanism to ensure alignment of assessment with intended learning outcomes in order to achieve the Student Experience Strategy where general attributes of RUW graduates are reflected in its goals (multi-cultural, encourage leadership, build character, build social consciousness and community, have lifelong habits of learning, creative, confident and forward thinking). Interviewed staff showed a clear understanding of these attributes, their validation through assessment policy and their implementation. The Panel appreciates that graduate attributes are clearly stated at a master level and faculty members are well- aware of these attributes.
- 3.2 The MDMT programme was first offered in 2012-2013. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the programme was validated at its initial stage by West Virginia University (WVU), RUW's strategic partner. According to the SER, an agreement with Dar El-Hekma University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia has been prepared and is pending on HEC's approval. The Panel notes that the MDMT programme has not been revised, since the first cohort of MDMT programme which graduated in 2015; and there was no evidence of formal benchmarking to clearly state that the academic standards of the MDMT programme are consistent and similar to other programmes offered by other institutions. In its preparation for the upcoming programme periodic review, the Panel recommends that the College should conduct a formal benchmarking for the MDMT programme with suitable peer institutions and expand the benchmarking activities to include different aspects of the programme such as admission, academic standards and resources.
- 3.3 The Assessment Policy of RUW was last revised in 2015-2016. The policy includes main aspects of the assessment such as assessment purpose, planning, rating, moderation, and feedback. These assessments are scheduled, overseen and documented by the Deans' Council, the College Council, and the Teaching and Learning Committee. The HoD 'reviews course specifications and the assessment briefs to ensure consistency and alignment with the CILOs and the level of the courses' as stated in the SER. From interviews, the Panel learnt that mid-term and final examination papers are reviewed and approved by the HoD and Dean to ensure consistency of assessment across all courses. Furthermore, to ensure fairness in grades firstly, 30% of the MDMT coursework and all of the theses are externally verified and double marked, either by faculty members or external examiners. Secondly, final

grades are discussed first by the HoD and Dean and then approved at College Council before posting students' final grades. According to the assessment policy, each semester the instructors review the assessments in the course specifications and revise these as needed. For example, the Design Management Thesis Research course (DMT599) was revised in 2015-2016 during which course specification, grade distribution, assessment requirements and criteria were amended accordingly. The Panel appreciates that the assessment methods and procedures are transparent, well-documented, monitored, and subject to regular reviews.

- 3.4 The Assessment Policy of RUW requires that assessment tools are appropriate for the learning outcomes and that the awarded marks reflect the academic standards achieved by students. Each course specification has a table showing the alignment of assessment with CILOs. In its attempt to strengthen the link between theory and practice and assess students' higher order thinking, assessment tools used within the MDMT programme put more emphasis on critical thinking skills. Capacity building workshops on the issues of assessment design and rubrics are offered to faculty members. The SER gives a comprehensive explanation of the systematic process which is used by academic staff to align the assessments with CILOs; and examples of courses have been presented including Design Theory-visualization and application (DMT522), Human Factors Engineering (DMT525) and Design Innovation and Entrepreneurship (DMT 523). These examples illustrate how CILOs such as critical thinking, analysing problems and transferable skills are aligned to assessments. Moreover, as part of the internal and external moderation process alignment of the assessment to learning outcomes is verified and commented on as detailed in the paragraphs below. The Panel acknowledges the efforts of the programme team to align intended learning outcomes with the utilized assessment tools.
- 3.5 The RUW Assessment Policy shows a brief documented outline of the internal moderation process. In the MDMT programme all courses with presentations, final examinations, and projects are subject to pre-assessment internal moderation along with second marking. Faculty members from the Design Department are preferable to conduct the internal moderation. However, there are cases when faculty from other departments are assigned as internal moderators. Interviewed internal moderators clarified that the process includes checking the structure of the given assessment, its marking rubrics, and ensure that each question covers at least one of the CILOs. The process is overall checked by the HoD and Dean during which they review and approve all assessment methods, model answers and rubrics to ensure consistency and alignment with the CILOs and the level of the course. Since the academic year 2015-2016, all course folders of the MDMT programme are internally checked/audited by the QAAU. The feedback of this process is submitted to the course instructor who, in turn, is responsible for incorporating and altering course specifications before distributing them to the students. The Panel acknowledges that the internal

moderation covers different types of assessments and is consistently implemented and encourages the College to assess its effectiveness.

- 3.6 The programme team implements RUW's external moderation system, which is conducted at the end of every semester for each academic year. External examiners are usually renowned professionals from industry and/or from academia and they are approved by the Postgraduate Committee and the College Council prior to being appointed. A description of the role of the external examiners is outlined in the RUW's assessment policy. Interviewed staff members clarified that there are two types of external moderation; external moderation for course assessments, and for final presentation of projects in some courses and thesis. Faculty members highlighted that 30% of the MDMT courses are externally examined and a comprehensive report on the programme and course specification, the linkage between the course and programme ILOs is produced. Any suggestions, improvements or alteration from the external examiners are considered in the following academic year after discussing it at department level. Furthermore, from the SER and interviews, the Panel learnt that external examiners also participate in assessing final year projects of some courses, such as the Human Factors Engineering course (DMT 525), where they give their feedback and mark as co-examiners. As mentioned in Paragraph (1.8), all the MDMT theses are externally verified/examined and double marked, either by faculty members specialized in the field or external examiners. The Panel studied samples of the external examiners reports and notes that comments were valid and interviewed external examiners confirmed that the programme team took their comments seriously. The Panel appreciates the well-implemented arrangements of the external moderation processes.
- 3.7 During the site visit, the Panel was provided with samples of students' assessed work from different courses, which were closely examined by the Panel. The samples included students' projects, course assessments, and final examinations. The Panel is satisfied that students' work is generally well-executed and documented and in most cases appropriate to a master level and the grades awarded reflect the level of student work and is similar to programmes offered regionally and internationally. However, in a few projects the Panel noted that the level of complexity (the range of problems and issues/topics related to certain projects) needed more elaboration; for example, the project on public transportation system in Manama could have been more comprehensive and analytical if aspects of user experience and usability and process management were tackled in more details. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the College should make the projects more challenging to students by increasing the required analytical aspects within the project.
- 3.8 The SER states that to ensure the level of MDMT graduates' achievement, the programme team makes great efforts to fulfil the objectives of the programme and

enhance its delivery. As a direct measure, there are generic grading rubrics for oral presentations, written assignments, thesis and *viva*; and students' assessment results are utilised to measure the level of the achievement of the CILOs and hence the PILOs as detailed in Paragraph (3.4). These results are discussed with the HoD, Dean and programme team to ensure fairness in the grades and to address any area for improvement. Indirectly, alumnae and student exit surveys are utilised to obtain feedback and their outcomes are analysed and developed into formal reports. Although the MDMT programme currently has four graduates, an employer survey was conducted and analysed. Another mechanism the College employs to evaluate graduates' achievement is the external examiners who look at the MDMT programme as mentioned in Paragraph (3.6) earlier in order to ensure that the level of the graduates is comparable to graduates in regional or international institutions. Moreover, the Curriculum Skill map clarifies how the assessment tasks are mapped to achieve PILOs. The Panel appreciates that the College employs both direct and indirect mechanisms for evaluating graduates' achievement.

- 3.9 The Office of the Registrar, the Postgraduate Committee, and the Academic Advisors, monitor the year-on-year progression of the students. Statistics provided by RUW indicate clearly, that all students graduate after three years, which is due to the part-time status of MDMT students. Withdrawal rate is very low as only one student withdrew since the programme inception in the academic year 2012-2013. According to the SER and the statistics provided, 25% of students are self-employed, 50% work in private sectors and the remaining 25% work in government entities. From interviews, the Panel learnt that recently two graduates were employed by RUW. The Panel is of the view that since there are four graduates so far, employment data is statistically insignificant. Nonetheless, the Panel is satisfied with the current ratios of admitted students and successful graduates, including the rates of progression and retention.
- 3.10 The Design Management Thesis Research (DMT 599) course is allocated nine credit hours, and is intended to be completed over two semesters. An extension could be granted upon the approval of the Postgraduate Committee. Besides, students must have completed 18 DMT credit-hours with a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 to propose the thesis. As per RUW's Postgraduate Studies Regulations, the supervisor should be from the University and a co-supervisor from related industry could be utilized provided that he/she is an expert in the field with at least five years of experience or has a managerial position in industry. Students have to conduct 2-3 progress seminars in front of the College Postgraduate Studies Committee to monitor students' progress in order to finish in two semesters. The evaluation of the thesis covers a written part and a defence that is conducted in front of a *viva* committee that has to be approved by College Council, Academic Vice President and the President. The Panel appreciates that there are well-executed policies and procedures for

conducting the thesis. The *viva* committee consists of 3-4 members including one internal examiner, one external examiner and the supervisor/co-supervisor. The Panel was provided with a sample of students' theses and noted that all the topics of the theses are related to the local community and addressed actual work-based problems. The Panel notes with appreciation that the topics of the theses are related to real-life projects, either with the support of or in co-operation with local agencies from industry.

- 3.11 The College established its College Advisory Committee (CAC) in the academic year 2010-2011 after the approval of the Board of Trustees. The CAC includes the Dean, HoD, three members from each specialisation: Fashion Design, Interior Design and Graphic Design along with seven external members as per the provided evidence. The Panel met with the CAC members and discussed their involvement in the programmes. During interviews, the CAC members stated that they meet twice a year. However, the Panel was not able to find any member to represent the MDMT programme in the CAC. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should expand the CAC members by ensuring that there is at least one external member specialised in the design management field.
- 3.12 A feasibility study for the MDMT programme indicates great potential for regional economic development. As mentioned earlier, alumnae and student exit surveys were distributed and results were circulated to the concerned parties as per the SER and the provided evidence. Though the MDMT programme currently has only four graduates, during interview sessions they were very enthusiastic about the programme and indicated that although some are still employed by others; yet they want to start their own business. They highlighted that now they are better prepared after getting their master's degree. As indicated earlier, there are four graduates of the programme, two of whom are employed by RUW. However, the Panel was not provided with opportunity to meet with these two graduates' employers. Hence, the Panel is unable to provide a statement on the employers' satisfaction with the graduate profile.
- 3.13 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Academic Standards of the Graduates, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- Graduate attributes are clearly stated at a master level and faculty members are well-aware of these attributes.
  - Assessment methods and procedures are transparent, well-documented, monitored, and subject to regular reviews.
  - The arrangements of the external moderation processes are well-implemented by the college.
  - The college employs both direct and indirect mechanisms for evaluating graduate achievements.

- There are well-executed policies and procedures for conducting the thesis and the topics of the theses are related to real-life projects, either with the support of or in co-operation with local agencies from industry.

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

- conduct a formal benchmarking for the MDMT programme with suitable peer institutions and expand the benchmarking activities to include different aspects of the programme such as admission, academic standards and resources
- make the projects more challenging to students by increasing the required analytical aspects within the project
- expand the College Advisory Committee members by ensuring that there is at least one external member specialised in the design management field.

### 3.15 **Judgement**

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

## 4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance

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

- 4.1 The University has a Document Control Register, which includes a comprehensive set of policies, strategies, guidelines and academic handbooks, mandates, programme handbooks, academic procedures and academic templates. The QAAU is the custodian of these policies. Issues related to management and other administrative aspects occur in the Guidelines for Governance and Quality Management documents. The Panel notes that the above mentioned documents are well- formulated and well-organized. Interviewed staff clarified that the policies are reviewed every three years or earlier once needed. Staff explained that at the beginning of each academic year, the QAAU contacts the owner or the concerned body and inquires if any updates/changes are needed. Once all the approvals are received, QAAU updates its system and inform all the concerned parties *via* email. From interviews, the Panel notes that academic and administrative staff members are fully aware of all these policies, procedures and guidelines. Interviews with staff revealed that they are inducted about policies and procedures related to their work when they are employed. The Panel acknowledges the existence of a comprehensive set of policies and procedures that is generally implemented and revised; and that academic and administrative staff are fully aware of the policies related to their work.
- 4.2 The Panel was provided with RUW's organizational chart that outlines the structure of the College. The chart clearly outlines the organization of the College and the chain-of-command and demonstrates the cross work of some faculty members who teach in multiple programmes. The management structure within the College includes the Dean and two HoDs. The Panel noted that both HoDs have administrative and academic responsibilities and their work cross over the two Departments. For example, the Head of the Department of Architecture is also the coordinator of the MDMT programme which is managed under the Department of Design. The Panel is concerned that both the HoD and the programme coordinator are overloaded with academic and administrative duties, which might hinder their ability to provide proper leadership. The Panel recommends that the College should ensure that the academic and administrative responsibilities of both the HoD and programme coordinator are revised to ensure that they can provide proper leadership. RUW has a clear quality assurance management system, which is used to govern the programme and its administration. Moreover, a framework for Academic Quality has been utilized since the academic year 2014-2015 to maintain and monitor the academic standards. The QAAU is supported by different governing bodies in the University along with university- and college-level committees. Evidence was provided to the Panel during

the site visit to demonstrate how the Departments fits in the quality assurance system in its daily activities. Interviewed staff confirmed that they are involved in applying all quality processes related to their job and participate in disseminating quality culture to each other and to their students. The Panel appreciates that the system of quality management is well-structured, transparent and facilitate the enhancement of the programme delivery.

- 4.3 From interviews, the Panel notes that academic and support staff have a comprehensive understanding of the internal quality assurance system and the role they play in ensuring the implementation of the quality assurance policies related to their duties. Interviewed academic and administrative staff clarified that several training and capacity building workshops are regularly conducted by QAAU to ensure a shared understanding amongst staff members and that participants' feedback is always collected to measure the level of their satisfaction. Furthermore, as part of disseminating good practices, all staff members are assigned to different committees either at the college or institution level. From interviews, the Panel noted that staff are well-acquainted with their role in the internal quality assurance system. The Panel appreciates that staff members are well-informed about quality assurance issues related to the programme and its delivery.
- 4.4 RUW has a Programme Proposal and Modification Policy which clearly outlines the procedures for modifying existing programmes or introducing a new one as per HEC's regulatory guidelines. According to the policy, several parties are involved in the process such as College Council, Department Council, Standing Committees, University Senate, University Board of Trustees and ends with the HEC's approval. It was stated in the SER that the HEC approved two postgraduate programmes, the Master in Design Management and the Master of Fine Arts in Drawing and Painting in 2012 while the Bachelor of Architecture was approved in 2014. Interviews with senior management and staff clarified that these programmes were introduced to cater for market needs which indicates the college's adherence to relevant policies and procedures. The Panel acknowledges that there are suitable arrangements for introducing new programmes.
- 4.5 There is a policy for annual internal programme evaluation which includes a review of the curriculum plan, programme specifications, course specifications, Programme Handbook, textbooks, references, needed software and human resources. Interviewed staff clarified that the MDMT programme was internally reviewed when the programme team prepared the SER for this review. From interviews, the Panel learnt that the internal programme evaluation considers students and alumnae surveys, external examiners' reports and staff surveys. During interviews, staff clarified that the result of the annual internal evaluation is discussed at the College Council before incorporating any changes in the programme. However, no evidence was provided

on action taken as a result of such review. The Panel acknowledges that there is a clear procedure for the annual internal evaluation of the programme and advises the College to maintain documented evidence of the process.

- 4.6 RUW has a Periodic Programme Review Policy, which was approved in 2015 to formalize the internal periodic review process. According to the policy 'the University will carry out external and internal periodic reviews of all its taught programmes at a minimum once every 4 years'. The periodic review aims to utilize different kinds of feedback received from course evaluation, faculty members' personal reflections, external examiners and external verifiers, CAC and subject experts as per SER to improve the programme. This process is overseen by the QAAU. From interviews with staff and senior management, the Panel learnt that course specifications in terms of CILOs, assessment strategy and teaching and learning methods have gone through substantive changes. Moreover, all programmes offered by the College were reviewed by West Virginia University in 2012-2013 and recommendations will be considered in 2016-2017 when the MDMT programme goes under its first periodic review. Moreover, the Panel was informed that currently, the College is working on embedding employability skills in the curriculum of all its programmes. The Panel is satisfied that the process for the periodic review is rigor and encourages the College to ensure its continuity in relation to the MDMT programme.
- 4.7 Interviews with senior management and staff verified that RUW has a policy called 'Survey Policy (OS)' which stipulates the formal mechanisms for collecting structured comments from internal and external stakeholders. Examples include students survey, alumnae survey, exit survey of masters' students and employers survey, in addition to the reports of external examiners. Interview sessions with students verified that 'Course and Teacher Evaluations' surveys are received for every single course at the end of the semester. The Panel notes the analysis of the alumnae and student surveys and acknowledges that the College responded to their comments. Despite the above mentioned, the Panel notes that there is no mechanism to collate the outcomes of these surveys systematically and comprehensively to inform decision-making. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should implement formal mechanisms to ensure that all the comments collected from meetings and surveys are analysed effectively; and that the outcomes are used to inform decisions and stakeholders are informed about actions taken.
- 4.8 RUW has a clear Professional Development Policy which aims to encourage the career progression of its faculty members and enhance their capabilities. During interviews, senior management clarified that there are two means for professional development activities. The first is through workshops conducted in-house where RUW organizes these workshops according to identified staff's needs and the second is when staff members attend conferences or present papers outside Bahrain. Interviewed staff

members indicated that according to the policy, any faculty member is sponsored to attend up to two professional development activities outside the University each year but if the staff member is a new recruit, then he/she has to wait for one year before being eligible to be sent to any conference outside the country. Interviewed staff stated that most of them had at least attended one conference last year and shared their experience with their colleagues during the research forum. Interviewed senior management and staff clarified that the approval of staff's professional development activity is managed through various committees provided that it is in line with the general themes selected by the College Council. However, the Panel notes that the policy does not clearly specify how the 'general themes' are 'selected by the College Council.' Therefore, the Panel suggests to add clear criteria to the policy to ensure equity and transparency. Moreover, the Panel was informed during the site visit that QAAU is very active in organizing and conducting regular workshops throughout the academic year to fulfil individual staff needs related to their specialization or their personal development skills. Examples include workshops on blended learning, embedding employability skills in the curriculum, teaching methods, assessment, giving feedback, mapping the assessment methods to the CILOs and topics related to women's studies. From interviews, the Panel learnt that the QAAU collects participants' feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of these organized workshops and seminars. Moreover, staff clarified that an international conference was organized last year and delegates from Kuwait, West Virginia University and Dar Al Hekma in Saudi Arabia attended the conference and were pleased with its outcome. Furthermore, staff indicated that they are always encouraged to attend all the seminars and invite guest speakers to address topics related to their field and students find these activities beneficial to enhance their learning experience. Furthermore, class observation and research forum have recently been introduced to the professional development plan to exchange good practice and encourage innovative ideas amongst RUW's staff members. The Panel appreciates that there is an implemented professional development policy for academic staff and the process is monitored and evaluated regularly.

- 4.9 The SER states that the College depends on its internal and external stakeholders to scope labour market needs. During interviews, the Panel was informed that a feasibility study for the MDMT programme was conducted in 2016-2017 and evidence was provided on the study outcomes. The feasibility study was conducted by a consultant who tackled the local and regional needs for this type of programme. The Panel appreciates that a feasibility study was conducted to strengthen the future of MDMT programme. Moreover, the CAC members, alumnae and employers were all consulted *via* surveys. However, due to the limited number of MDMT graduates (four) to date and the absence of employers from interviews as mentioned earlier, the Panel is of the view that MDMT is still in its early stage and more time should be given to envisage its progress. Moreover, as indicated in Paragraph (2.13), the College needs to

strengthen the external representation of the design management field in the CAC to be able to assess the short term changes in the market needs.

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

- The system of quality management is well-structured, transparent and facilitate the enhancement of the programme delivery.
- Staff members are well-informed about all quality assurance issues related to the programme and its delivery.
- There is an implemented professional development policy for academic staff and the process is monitored and evaluated regularly.
- A feasibility study for the MDMT programme was conducted to strengthen its future.

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

- ensure that the academic and administrative responsibilities of both the HoD and programme coordinator are revised to ensure that they can provide proper leadership
- implement formal mechanisms to ensure that all the comments collected from meetings and surveys are analysed effectively; and that the outcomes are used to inform decisions and stakeholders are informed about actions taken.

#### 4.12 **Judgement**

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

## 5. Conclusion

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

**There is confidence in the Master of Design Management, College of Art and Design, offered by the Royal University for Women.**