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Education & Training Quality Authority
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Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

Bachelor in Tourism

College of Arts

University of Bahrain

Kingdom of Bahrain

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Acronyms

| | |
|-------|--------------------------------------------|
| BQA | Education and Training Quality Authority |
| CGPA | Cumulative Grade Point Average |
| CILOs | Course Intended Learning Outcomes |
| DHR | Directorate of Higher Education Reviews |
| HEC | Higher Education Council |
| HoD | Head of the Department |
| ILOs | Intended Learning Outcomes |
| ITC | Information Technology Center |
| MIS | Management Information Systems |
| NQF | National Qualifications Framework |
| PILOs | Programme Intended Learning Outcomes |
| QAAC | Quality Assurance and Accreditation Center |
| QAC | Quality Assurance Committee |
| QAO | Quality Assurance Office |
| SER | Self-Evaluation Report |
| 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 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 5-9 November 2017 for the academic programmes offered by the College of Arts, these are: Bachelor in Communication, Bachelor in Tourism, Master in Communication, Bachelor in Sociology, Bachelor in History, Master in Psychological Counselling and Master in Measurement and Evaluation.

This Report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Bachelor in Tourism programme based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and appendices submitted by UoB and the supplementary documentation made available during the site visit, as well as interviews and observations made during the review site visit.

UoB was notified by the DHR/BQA on 6 March 2017 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College review of its College of Arts with the site visit taking place in November 2017. In preparation for the review, UoB conducted its college self-evaluation of all its programmes and submitted the SERs with appendices on the agreed date on 8 June 2017.

The DHR constituted three panels consisting of experts in the academic fields of the programmes and higher education who have experience of external programme quality reviews. The Panels comprised 12 external reviewers.

This Report records the evidence-based conclusions reached by the Panel of the Bachelor in Tourism programme based on:

- (i) analysis of the SER 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 in Tourism. 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 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 in Tourism.

C. Overview of the College of Arts

The College of Arts was originally established as a part of the University College of Arts, Science, and Education, which was founded by the Amiri Decree number 11 in 1978. In 1986, the Amiri Decree No. (12) was issued to establish the UoB by merging the Gulf Polytechnic and the University College of Arts, Science and Education. The UoB included at this time: the College of Arts and Science, College of Education, College of Business Administration, and College of Engineering. In 1990, the Board of Trustees of UoB issued a decision to divide the College of Arts & Science into two separate colleges: the College of Arts and the College of Science. Currently, the UoB includes ten colleges. The College of Arts includes five departments, which are: the Department of Arabic languages and Islamic Studies, Department of English Language and Literature, Department of Social Sciences, Department of Psychology, Department of Mass Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts. The College offers Bachelor degree programmes across its five departments alongside postgraduate programmes at the master level. The mission of the College is focused on preparing intellectual and enlightened leaders equipped with mental and critical competences that strengthen their Arab and Islamic identity, the climate of freedom, cultural pluralism and respect for citizenship, and help in building knowledge, technology,

culture and practical skills, as well as, supporting scientific research and community services. At the time of the site visit, the College was employing (128) full-time faculty members, (69) part-time members, supported by (29) administrative staff. The total number of enrolled students was (5719) students.

D. Overview of the Bachelor in Tourism Programme

The Department of Mass Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts has been established in 1998-1999, including the Bachelor programme in Mass Communication and Public Relations, alongside the Bachelor programme in Tourism and Hotels. The programme of Bachelor in Tourism was first offered in the academic year 2000-2001, and then it has been modified in 2007. In 2012, the Department has reviewed the study plan of the programme to be aligned with the mission of the College, which aims to provide scientific capabilities and experiences, as well as, meeting the needs of the Kingdom of Bahrain and its institutions for specialists and researchers in the various fields of tourism. The current study plan of the programme offers a number of tracks, namely: Management of Tourism Agencies, Tourism Guidance, and Hotel Management. At the time of the site visit, the total number of the registered students was (161), and the total number of graduates was (150). There are two academic members working full-time and contributing to the delivery of the programme, supported by one part-time academic member and (7) administrative staff, in addition to the contribution of professors from other departments to teach some required courses.

E. Summary of Review Judgements

Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor in Tourism Programme

| Indicator | Judgement |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1: The Learning Programme | Satisfies |
| 2: Efficiency of the Programme | Satisfies |
| 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates | Does not satisfy |
| 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance | Satisfies |
| Overall Judgement | Limited 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 Bachelor programme in Tourism has a clear framework, which is based on the strategic plan of the College and the University that includes a set of procedures aiming to ensure the quality of the academic programmes. Additionally, the objectives of the Bachelor in Tourism programme are consistent with its type and level, such as: meeting the needs of the kingdom of Bahrain and its institutions for specialists and researchers in the various fields of tourism, developing foreign language skills (e.g. English and French), building academic competencies for research, and providing community service. These objectives reflect the mission of the College of Arts, which emphasizes the need to provide students with knowledge, scientific and professional skills that enable them to integrate into the labour market and contribute to its development. The objectives of the programme also are consistent with the strategic goals of the College, which are based on three main pillars: education, scientific research, and community engagement. The programme contributes to the achievement of the objectives associated with teaching and learning, referred to in the System of Study and Examinations of the University of Bahrain, and the University's Development Plan for the years 2016-2021. Hence, the Panel appreciates the existence of a clear academic planning framework for the programme, whose objectives are consistent with its type and level and are linked to the mission of the University and the College.
- 1.2 The Bachelor of Tourism programme has a study plan available on the university's website and requires students to pass 128 credit hours divided as follows: (11) credit hours for the university requirements, (18) credit hours for the college requirements, (39) hours for the department compulsory requirements, and (30) for the department elective requirements. According to the SER, students must pass an additional (30) credit hours in one of the following sub-tracks: Management of Tourism Agencies, Tourism Guidance, and Hotel Management. The study plan is designed to offer the programme over four academic years, during which the student must study and pass (5) to (6) courses in each semester to finish the study plan on time. The Panel is of the view that the academic workload throughout the semester is suitable for students, and that the curriculum of the programme is organized in a way allowing smooth progress year by year. The requirements of the Department include a number of theoretical courses (e.g. 'Introduction to the Industry of Tourism and Travel' (Tour 101), and 'Public Relations of Tourism' (Tour 220)). In addition to some practical courses (e.g. 'Internship (1)' (Tour 399), 'Internship (2)' (Tour 499) and 'Graduation Project' (Tour 498)), there are also some courses that combine theoretical and practical hours (e.g. 'Civil Aviation Systems' (Tour 445), and 'Tourism Companies and Travel Agencies'

(Tour 340)). Through interviews with the faculty members, alumni and students, it was illustrated that teaching practical hours in these courses is done through some practical exercises, or using the case study method. Therefore, the Panel appreciates that the curriculum of the programme is organized in a way allowing smooth year by year progress, including the core courses of the discipline, and the academic workload is suitable for students. However, the Panel noted, during the interviews and the examination of evidence, that the number of theoretical hours is higher than the number of actual practical hours in the programme, which adversely affects the professional skills required for the student to acquire, in order to achieve the objectives of the programme (e.g. capacity building, practical experience in tourism, communication skills development, and the art of dealing). The revised study and improvement plans includes some modifications to improve the balance between theory and practice. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should expedite the implementation of the revised study plan and strengthen the practical aspects in the curriculum to balance between theory and practice, knowledge and skills, in order to ensure that the intended objectives of the programme are achieved.

- 1.3 The Panel reviewed the course files, which include course specifications with detailed information about the programme objectives, course learning outcomes, methods used in teaching, assessment tools, weekly lecture topics, and selected books, periodicals and academic journals. In addition, samples of student work, midterm examinations, final examinations, model answers and the course assessment form filled by the faculty member were available. By reviewing course specifications, the Panel found that these specifications are appropriate for the courses in terms of breadth and depth, the level of courses, outcomes, used educational resources, and modern professional requirements, such as the courses of 'Tourism and Environment' (Tour 331), 'Tourism Monuments and Museums' (Tour 380), 'E-Tourism' (Tour 390) and 'Architecture and Heritage Arts' (Tour 483). However, the Panel urges the College to introduce electronic reservation systems (e.g. Amadeus or Saber) in the 'Civil Aviation Systems' (Tour 445) course to ensure the utilization of practical hours within the College. The Panel also noted the absence of evidence for the use of new research findings, as well as, recent and current professional practices in teaching courses. Therefore, the Panel advises the College to benefit from the research findings and the current professional practice in teaching courses to enrich the content.
- 1.4 The Bachelor in Tourism programme has a specification form that includes the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) which comprise the ability to communicate, dealing in good manners with tourists and visitors, preparing students to operate and manage reservation systems for tourism and travel agencies, airlines and hotels, as well as, working in various administrative departments in hotels and tourism resorts. The Panel is of the view that the PILOs meet the required categories, such as knowledge and skills related to the discipline, critical thinking and general

skills, which are appropriate to the programme level. The PILOs also contribute to the achievement of the objectives related to providing students with knowledge, historical sciences, tourism geography, communication skills, and the art of dealing with tourists and visitors, as well as, developing the skills of the students in some foreign languages, and enhancing their practical experiences in various tourism areas. However, the Panel noted that there is an inconsistency in writing the PILOs as some of them are written in a form of objectives that are difficult to measure, in addition to the significant similarity between the programme outcomes A, B, and C. During the site visit, an additional copy of the programme specifications including PILOs was submitted to the Panel. However, the Panel found that this copy is not approved by the University Council. The Panel also noted the inconsistency in the documents submitted by the College, including the SER. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should review the PILOs in order to be measurable, and ensure the availability of an approved copy that is known by the students and faculty members.

- 1.5 The Panel reviewed a sample of course files and observed that the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) are consistent with the content and level of most of the courses and a matrix outlining the mapping of the CILOs to the PILOs was properly prepared to ensure their alignment. During the interviews conducted in the site visit, it was clarified that each faculty member fills the course evaluation form at the end of each semester to ensure that the CILOs were achieved. The Department also depends on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to ensure that the CILOs are aligned with the course level, as per the quality manual of the University. Moreover, the students interviewed by the Panel are aware of the CILOs as they receive the course specifications from their instructors at the beginning of each semester. However, the Panel noted that the CILOs of a number of courses measure only knowledge and understanding (e.g. 'Introduction to Tourism and Travel' (Tour 101) and 'Geography of Tourism (1)' (Tour 231)). Moreover, the CILOs in a large number of courses are difficult to be measured, as they are written in a form of topics within the course content (e.g. 'Principles of the Hospitality Industry' (Tour 102), 'Tourism Economics' (Tour 211), 'Public Relations of Tourism' (Tour 220) and 'Tourism Statistics' (Tour 418)). In addition to the inconsistency of the CILOs in the 'E-Tourism' (Tour 390) course with its content. Furthermore, by reviewing the matrix of the PILOs and CILOs, it was noted that the mapping has been implemented, but not in a precise manner. For example, CILO (1) of the 'Introduction to Tourism and Travel' (Tour 101) course, CILO (2) of the 'Principles of Hospitality Industry' (Tour 102) course, CILO (6) of the 'Tourism Economics' (Tour 211), and the CILOs of 'Tourism Marketing' (Tour 213), are all not compatible with the PILO (C). Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should review the CILOs and the mapping of these CILOs to the PILOs to ensure the alignment of the CILOs with the course objectives and content, as well as, their contribution to achieving the PILOs.

- 1.6 The Bachelor in Tourism programme includes two work-based courses: 'Internship (1)' (Tour 399) and 'Internship (2)' (Tour 499). The Department Internship Office coordinates the training of the students in a tourism institution in the Kingdom of Bahrain under the supervision of the course instructor. There are three credit hours dedicated to the 'Internship (1)' (Tour 399) course spread over three working days per week, besides the usual days of study at the College, and (60) credit hours of the programme requirements must be completed as a pre-requisite for this course. As for the 'Internship (2)' (Tour 499) course, the student must complete (99) credit hours of the programme requirements and pass the 'Internship (1)' (Tour 399) course as pre-requisites. It is also generally required that the student has a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) not less than (2.0). The training lasts for a full semester, in which the student is dedicated only to the internship, and is not allowed to register in any other courses alongside this course except for the senior project course (Tour 498). During the interviews with the faculty members and students, it was revealed that there is an appropriate published and approved policy to evaluate the internship in the Department of Mass Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts. The policy is supported by a guidebook for the internship that outlines the mechanisms, procedures, trainers' tasks and evaluation methods. The assessment of trainee students is implemented as follows: (70%) of the final grade is assigned to the internship supervisor and the academic staff member, who evaluates the student based on the weekly reports and the final report submitted by the student after completing the training, which counts for (30%) of the final grade. Moreover, the examination of the provided evidence and the SER reveals that there are specific intended learning outcomes (ILOs) for the two internship courses, and these ILOs are to some extent aligned with the PILOs. During interviews with the students and internship supervisors, the Panel learned that students are aware of the ILOs through the course specifications, which are distributed to them at the beginning of each semester. Moreover, the faculty members, students, and training bodies were of the view that the two internship courses contribute to the development of the practical skills of the students through the implementation of virtual reservations, and some actual reservations for airline tickets by using 'Saber' System for e-booking, under the supervision of the training supervisor. The Panel appreciates that there is a component of work-based learning in the study plan of the programme that has clear learning outcomes and an appropriate assessment policy.
- 1.7 The UoB has an appropriate policy for teaching and learning, which is consistent with the nature of the programme and includes many teaching and learning methods (e.g. direct and indirect instruction, interactive learning, and self-learning). Additionally, the course specification includes a timetable for the topics of the lessons, and the used teaching and learning methods, which contribute to the CILOs achievement. Moreover, the provided evidence and meetings with faculty members, students, employers and alumni reveal to the Panel that the programme encourages student-centered learning by allocating individual and group classwork for them in most

courses. In addition, the teaching and learning methods used in the programme's courses are varied and include practical hours that are dedicated to exercises and practical trainings, site visits, case studies and brainstorming. The Panel appreciates the diversity of teaching and learning methods of the programme, in addition to encouraging student-centered learning in most courses. According to the SER, and what was mentioned during the site visit, e-learning is considered as a part of the education and learning policy that mainly depends on Zain E-Learning Center and using the Blackboard programme, which is provided by UoB for its students. The Panel noted, however, the ineffective role of the e-learning within the educational process, as its role is limited to being a mean of communication between the faculty members and the students, by providing the scientific material of courses, as well as, sending notifications to students about the dates of submission for their individual and group assignments. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should implement the procedures that contribute to the use of e-learning in an appropriate and effective manner, as per the University's teaching and learning strategy in order to achieve the ILOs and measure its effectiveness.

- 1.8 There is a clear and defined policy for student assessment that is aligned with the programme type and level, and represented in the final evaluation of the student, which is based on: (60%) for formative assessment represented in assessment activities that are required from the student throughout the semester (e.g. assignments, quizzes, homework, etc.), and (40%) for the final examination. This policy states that students have to be provided with feedback within three weeks of an assessment and that the objective questions should not exceed (50%) of the total grade of an examination paper. It also states the actions taken against academic plagiarism, cheating and how to address them, as well as, the procedures related to the student right to submit an appeal against the results of any course, and to review the grades again. The course specification also includes the assessment methods, grade details, the way of the grade is distributed on the various assessments and the mapping the assessment methods to the lesson topics. The Panel is of the view that these procedures are appropriate to the Bachelor in Tourism programme. During the site visit, it was also clear that students and faculty members were aware of the assessment policy and mechanisms through the course specifications, which are distributed to students at the beginning of the semester, and through the student's guidebook alongside the University's website. In addition, the available evidence and the interviews with faculty members, students and alumni confirmed to the Panel that students are provided with feedback on the formative tests either verbally or through the electronic system. As for student work, it is returned back to them after marking and writing some notes, so students can benefit from the feedback about their performance. However, by examining the class work of the students, it was found that some of their work was not provided with feedbacks and others were not evaluated. The SER also indicates that fairness in grading and marking examinations is achieved through preparing a model answer for

all the examinations of the different courses, as well as, identifying marking criteria. Moreover, the assigned Head of the Department (HoD) approves the final grades that are entered by the course instructor into the online system of the Admission and Registration Deanship. The Panel notes the existence of mechanisms to ensure transparency and fairness in grading, which is achieved by ensuring that students in different sections are subject to standard examinations throughout the semester, that are collectively prepared by the instructors of the multi-section courses and publishing the formative grades of the coursework by the course instructor. Furthermore, about (60%) of the final grades are granted to the students before the final examination and the students are allowed to submit an appeal against the course results within two weeks after the announcement of the final examination results. The appeals are raised to the Department in the form templates prepared for that purpose and are examined by a special committee, where the instructor of the course does not participate in, and finally the HoD and the Dean must approve the result of the appeals. Therefore, the Panel appreciates that there is a clearly identified policy at the university level for assessing the students, which is aligned with the programme type and level, well-known by the students and the faculty members, and includes fair procedures for the appeal process. The Panel noted, however, that the mechanisms taken against academic plagiarism are not applied. Therefore, the Panel urges the College to apply the mechanisms against academic plagiarism in students work (see paragraph: 3.3).

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

- The programme has a clear academic framework, including objectives that are related to the mission of the College and the University.
- The curriculum of the programme is designed in a way allowing year by year progress, including core courses of the discipline, and the academic workload is appropriate.
- There is a component for work-based learning in the study plan, with clear and appropriate assessment policy and learning outcomes.
- There are various methods of teaching and learning in the programme, in addition to encouraging student-centered learning in most courses.
- There is a clearly identified policy at the university level for assessing the students, which is aligned with the programme type and level, well-known by the students and the faculty members, and include fair procedures for the appeal process.

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

- expedite the implementation of the revised study plan and strengthen the practical aspects in the curriculum to balance between theory and practice,

knowledge and skills, in order to ensure that the intended objectives of the programme are achieved

- review the intended learning outcomes of the programme in order to be measurable, and ensure the availability of a certified copy, that is known by the students and faculty members
- review the course intended learning outcomes of some courses and the mapping of the course intended learning outcomes to the programme intended learning outcomes to ensure the alignment of course intended learning outcomes of these courses with the course objectives and content, as well as, their contribution to achieving the intended learning outcomes of the programme
- implement the procedures that contribute to the use of e-learning in an appropriate and effective manner, as per the University's teaching and learning strategy in order to achieve the intended learning outcomes and measure its effectiveness.

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 UoB has a clear admission policy, which is published on its website and requires that the applicant must have a secondary school certificate or its equivalent with a minimum score of (70%), provided that no more than two years have passed since the applicant obtained his/her secondary school certificate. The applicant should also pass the interview conducted by the University and those who have scored (90%) or above in their secondary school certificate, or (500) in TOEFL, or (5.5) in IELTS are exempted from the orientation programme for English. The students, who have scored between (89.9%-80%) in secondary school, take the test of the orientation programme exemption. At the department level, it is required to pass written Arabic and English examinations, the interview, and the art literacy test of the Department. It was confirmed, during the interviews with the faculty members that the Department has suspended, for a while, the interviews and the art literacy test for applicants. This was justified by the ongoing increase in the numbers of students who applied for the programmes of the Department for Mass Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts in recent years. The admission requirements of the Department are limited to the written test of general information in Arabic and English, which includes various questions. Moreover, the senior management confirmed that the students have been distributed centrally to the different colleges at the University, according to their preferences and performance. The Panel also noted during interviews and the site visit tour, the awareness of different stakeholders of the admission policies of the programme. Thus, the Panel appreciates that there is a clear admission policy, published at the university level, and known by all stakeholders.
- 2.2 As per the provided evidence, the Panel notes that the profile of the admitted students is compatible with the admission criteria indicated in the above paragraph, as the admitted students undertake the general aptitude test and the university interview, in addition to a written test at the department level. As per the admission policy, the programme accepts students who are good at using basic tourism concepts whether in Arabic or English and students who have scored (90%) or above in their secondary school certificate are exempted from the English orientation programme. However, it was revealed to the Panel during interviews with the faculty members, alumni, students and employers that some students have low English language proficiency. However, it is also worth to note the individual efforts of some faculty members to guide students who have low capabilities in English to join the National Geographic Centre that was opened on 6 November 2017, to develop their language skills in reading, listening, and using the computer to browse websites in English. Thus, the Panel urges that the College to adopt mechanisms for tracking the academic progress

of the students in the light of available data about the profile of the admitted students and their academic progress (paragraph: 3.9). Furthermore, the Panel noted the lack of systematic mechanism to review the admission requirements or to evaluate their effectiveness as indicators of identifying the success the programme, in addition to the lack of benchmarking for the admission requirements. Accordingly, the Panel recommends that the College should, in coordination with the University, verify the implementation of the admission policy within the programme in an integral manner and develop an appropriate mechanism to evaluate the appropriateness of the admission criteria in order to improve the level of the admitted students in line with the programme objectives and requirements.

- 2.3 There is an organizational structure for the College of Arts and the Department of Mass Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts, which includes the Dean as the head of the administrative hierarchy, the College Council and committees, the HoD and the Department Council and committees. In addition to allocating the faculty members to different academic and administrative committees at the beginning of every academic year, a coordinator is identified for every section of the three sections of the Department namely: Mass Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts. During the site visit, it was revealed that the HoD of Mass Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts is responsible for the programme management, making the necessary administrative decisions and raising what is essential to the Dean. The academic decisions are taken by the Department Council and are then raised to the College Council. As per the available evidence and during interviews with the faculty members, the Panel found that the role of the committees is not activated within the programme, and the responsibility of managing and coordinating all programmes is only assigned to the HoD, in addition to the ambiguity of authorities, prerogatives, and the job description of the programme coordinator. The Panel advises the College to activate the role of the programme coordinator, clearly define his responsibilities and monitor the committees to ensure that meetings are conducted periodically and effectively.
- 2.4 There is a specialized academic member in tourism geography and marketing disciplines contributing to the delivery of the Bachelor in Tourism programme, in addition to a retired academic member who teaches (12) credit hours in the programme. As indicated during interviews with faculty members, the programme draws on instructors from other departments to teach some required courses in the programme. At the time of the site visit, the number of students was (161); consequently, the number of full-time academic members to the number of students is (1:80), which is a large ratio. Through examining the CVs of the academic staff members, interviews, and provided evidence, the Panel found that the faculty members have strong professional experience, including: teaching, academic advising, scientific research, committee work, and the community services, but the main focus is on teaching. The UoB Regulation of Faculty Members that was published in the Official Gazette on 8 March 2006, includes the formal requirements of the working

hours at the University, stating that: 'the hours of work per week is (40) hours for every faculty member, including (12) or (15) class hours assigned to the Ph.D. holders. The remaining hours are allocated by the HoD for the following tasks: (1) research, (2) student guidance, and (3) revisions for the students'. The Panel observed that the faculty members teach about (7-8) courses in each semester, and the teaching workload may reach (21) credit hours, in addition to (9) credit hours for the supervision of the Master thesis, which is not compatible with the regulations. There is also a significant lack in the number of academic members, which leads to teaching some courses outside of their specialization. Moreover, the University supports the faculty members in conducting scientific research through some policies, such as rewarding active researchers financially and morally, and enabling them to use its laboratories and hardware in conducting their scientific research. However, during interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the increase in the teaching workload has affected heavily the ability of faculty members to conduct scientific research and participate in community services. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should develop a plan to increase the number of academic staff members whose specializations are appropriate to the programme, in order to decrease the academic workload and provide them with the needed time to conduct their research and serve the society, in accordance with the objectives of the College and the University.

- 2.5 UoB has official, published and implemented procedures for the recruitment of faculty members, as per the University Regulation for Teaching, and the policies of the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The recruitment procedures are transparent, as the faculty members confirmed that these procedures are initiated in the Department, which submits an application for recruiting new academic members based on its needs, then advertising about job vacancies *via* the university website. After that, the employment committee studies the submitted applications and arranges interviews for the candidates who are suitable for the job requirements, and finally the nomination of the Department Council is raised to the College and the University for final approval of the recruitment. Nevertheless, the Panel did not find that there is an appropriate plan in place to ensure the adequacy of the number of academic members in the programme (see the recommendation above). During the meeting with the faculty members, the Panel was informed that the HoD evaluates the faculty members annually, according to the applied and approved criteria by the university council decision number: 528/2016. These criteria include: the teaching activities, the scientific research, the university service, the training courses of professional development and others, that are published *via* the university website. Furthermore, the faculty members referred to the system of evaluating the academic staff by the students, which is applied electronically at the end of each semester. The Panel observed through the provided documents and interviews with faculty members that the retention rate is high and it may reach (10) years. Thus, the Panel appreciates that there are clear and transparent procedures for the academic staff

recruitment, as well as, the evidence on a high retention rate in the programme. There is a clear and defined policy for academic promotion, which is endorsed by the university council decision number: 9 for the year 2012. This policy contains the criteria of establishing the committees for academic promotion at the department, college, and university levels, as well as, the working mechanisms of these committees, and the academic promotion requirements. However, the Panel noted the delayed promotion among faculty members in general, as the faculty members remained at the same academic degree throughout their service in the University. During interviews with the academic members, the Panel was informed that they delayed applying for promotion, due to the heavy academic and administrative workload assigned to them, as well as, the lack of expedition of the promotion procedures. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should implement a clear plan to support the faculty members to apply for promotion. With regard to introducing the new academics to the University, its system, services and resources, the Panel was informed during interviews with faculty members that this activity is implemented informally at the department level. The Panel recommends that the College should organize a formal induction programme for new academics at the department, college, and university levels to introduce them to the policies, regulations and resources of the University and its various services, and evaluate the effectiveness of the induction programme.

- 2.6 According to the SER, the University has a number of new effective systems for information management, for example: the online registration system, the academic advising system, timetables, and human resources. During the site visit, it became clear to the Panel that the University provides academic and administrative staff with online access - *via* its website - to information regarding salary slips, attendance reports, overtime hours of administrative staff, and other information of the administrative and academic staff needs. Students also can register their courses, and pay tuition fees through this system. Moreover, there is an available access to the records of the enrolled students in the programme, their timetables, and the names of their academic advisors at the beginning of each semester. In addition to this, interviews with the faculty members revealed the availability of recording students' absence and monitoring their grades online. Despite the availability of the Information Management System (MIS), and its suitability for the programme's aims and requirements, as well as, its use on a limited basis in the management of the programme, students, and various resources, the Panel found no evidence on using the MIS holistically and strategically to enhance the decision - making process. Thus, the Panel appreciates that there is an adequate MIS that is suitable for the programme's aims and needs. The Panel also advises the College to further utilize the MIS, in order to promote the decision-making process on a strategic level for the programme.
- 2.7 UoB has clear policies and effective procedures that are applied periodically, to ensure the security of students' records, examinations, and results by safeguarding data centrally. The Information Technology Center (ITC) of the University implements

strict procedures to ensure confidentiality of student data and records of instructors through a multistage system that restricts access to data by requiring ID user and changing password every (120) days. With regard to the process of entering grades, it is assigned only to the course instructor and the HoD approves the entered grades, which can only be changed formally - if necessary - after the approval of the HoD and the Dean. During the site visit tour, the Panel was informed that the programme management keep the answer papers of the final examinations and the final projects of the students, for two semesters, in a locked room with restricted and secured access. In addition, there is a risk management plan implemented by the ITC in case of disasters or emergency events, including electronic regular recovery for data. Moreover, there are servers for data backups that are kept safe both inside and outside the campus. The Panel appreciates that there is a rigorous system for risk management, maintaining the security of records and the accuracy and integrity of information for learners and staff, and the accuracy of the results of the programme.

- 2.8 During the site visit tour of the College and the University, the Panel noted that there are (17) classrooms equipped with projectors provided by the College for the programme, as well as, the College laboratories, which include equipment and basic hardware that are adequate to the student number in the programme. There are also two laboratories dedicated for the use of students to do their projects outside the lectures' timing, in addition to the useful capabilities provided by Bahrain Credit Media Centre, including its Radio and TV studios and theater. However, the Panel is of the view that the College should consider introducing some electronic systems in the laboratories of the Bachelor in Tourism programme, such as the Sabre programme to book airline tickets electronically, which will enhance the professional skills of the students. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should provide electronic systems that are appropriate to the programme. Furthermore, the University provides spaces for the student inside its campus, in addition to several places for student activities such as the club of arts, music, theater, chess, gym, and wellness center. Moreover, there are sufficient individual offices for the academic members that are equipped with computers and adequate for work and meeting with students. There are also online systems (Blackboard & Moodle) provided by Zain E-learning Center, which enable professors to present some parts of their courses online, in addition to providing the internet service, (Wi-Fi), and emails. During interviews, the students and academic staff members expressed their satisfaction with the available facilities and services provided by the University. However, it was noted that the faculty members of the Bachelor in Tourism programme do not benefit from the website pages of the faculty members on the University website, which allows them to create a web page to include their profile, research and educational resources. While the library provides many scientific resources including Arabic and English hard copies, some of these resources are not updated. It was also noted, however, the availability of many special services provided by the library such as: electronic databases in English and

Arabic: (Business Source, Thompson Reuters and EBSCO), loan services, imaging center, library guidance, and library directors. In addition, a separate room is dedicated to people with special needs and the library catalogue can be used *via* the mobile phones, and other services available in the library. Thus, the Panel appreciates that there are learning resources and sources that are appropriate to the programme and meet the learning needs of both students and faculty members. The Panel also encourages the College to update the hard copies of scientific resources and references related to some fields of tourism such as tourism marketing, the electronic tourism, research approaches and sustainable development.

- 2.9 The UoB has a tracking system to track the use of different resources and the Panel observed during the site visit that the timetables for the use of classrooms and laboratories are posted at the doors. Furthermore, the Information Technology Center of the University provides the technical support for the laboratories and the staff, and the requests for technical support are received and tracked by the e-help desk system. Zain E-Learning Center also provides a platform for e-learning courses, where the system collects data about the use of its resources and generates various reports on the size and forms of use. Furthermore, the library has a rigorous system for monitoring the size of operators and visitors of the library, as well as, users of the global databases, and the loan process. The Panel acknowledges that there are tracking systems to evaluate the utilization of different resources, but no evidence was provided related to the usage of these systems by the programme managers to inform the decision-making process in a regular and periodical manner. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the College should further utilize the tracking reports and the updated data of the tracking systems to enhance the decisions taken to contribute in enriching the educational process.
- 2.10 During the site visit and from the provided evidence, the Panel was informed that there is appropriate support for the students including the support provided in the laboratories, library, and e-learning, through the infrastructure, available computer applications, or human resources support such as the support provided by laboratory technicians and specialists in the Library. As for the academic advising, there is a system to identify the student preferences and help him/her in choosing the appropriate subjects for them. Each academic advisor must also present an annual report to the HoD of Mass Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts. In addition, supports are provided to students with special needs such as helping them in course registration, providing them with equipped car and support services by volunteer students, as well as providing them with a handbook for students with special needs. The library also offers special services for them by providing a room for visually impaired students with a computer especially equipped for them. The Career Guidance Office of the Vice President for Community and Graduate Services prepares the students for the challenges of the labour market by providing them with several services such as the 'Career Day', CV submission, nomination service, and the

employment service on campus. Moreover, the Department of Advice and Guidance of the Deanship of Student Affairs provides guidance and advice to students by social workers. It was revealed, during the interviews with students, their satisfaction with the different support services provided to them. While the Panel was reviewing the satisfaction surveys of the expected graduates, it was noted the lack of evidence on the use of these surveys in improving different services provided to student support. Hence, the Panel appreciates the various support services provided by the University to the students, and suggests that the University expand the satisfaction surveys about support services to include all undergraduate students and to make use of the results in improving the available support in the programme in a periodic and regular manner.

- 2.11 According to the SER, the Department of Advice and Guidance of the Deanship of Student Affairs in coordination with the colleges of the University organize the 'Induction Day' programme, which is an orientation activity for the newly admitted students. Through the induction programme, the students are introduced to the places and facilities of the colleges, the available services at the University and different offered academic programmes, as well as, the policies and regulations of the University, in addition to some other services offered by the Deanship of Students Affairs. Moreover, there are guidebooks distributed to them, which include the student handbook, students' rights and duties, and the regulation of academic misconduct, and at the level of the College of Arts, they are introduced to different departments and programmes, in addition to explaining the study system of each programme separately. During interviews with the faculty members, it was noted that there are no arrangements for the induction of students who are transferred to the programme. The faculty members, however, indicated that all information about introducing the programme are available on the website for any student who did not attend the induction programme. The students - during interviews - also expressed their satisfaction with the role of the Student Council in introducing the new students who could not attend the 'Induction Day' to the different services and activities in the University. During the interviews, the Panel also learned that there are no surveys dedicated to evaluate their satisfaction with the 'Induction Day', but they are generally satisfied. The Panel appreciates the arrangements that are taken by the University to introduce the newly admitted student to the programme and the provided services. Nevertheless, the Panel advises the College to measure and track the satisfaction of the new students about the effectiveness of the 'Induction Day' systematically, to utilize the results in improving the induction programme for the students.
- 2.12 During the site visit, it was indicated that the UoB has an academic advising system, where students are distributed to their academic advisors at the beginning of the academic year, in addition to identifying the office hours to meet with students, and the timetable is posted on the doors of the faculty offices. The system of warning and academic dismissal is applied and the advising system monitors the at-risk student

whose CGPA is less than (2.0). The at-risk student must meet with his/ her academic advisor to help him/her by giving the appropriate advice to raise his/her CGPA. Moreover, the faculty members explained, during interviews, that the at-risk student is blocked from the online registration in new courses if he/she does not seek the advice of the academic advisor to overcome the reasons behind his/her academic failure. During interviews with students and faculty members, the Panel also learned that the academic advising is limited to helping at-risk students to register in courses. Furthermore, the Panel noted the high number of students who are allocated for each academic advisor, about (80) students, in addition to the lack of evidence of tracking the progress of the at-risk students in the programme by the Department. As stated in the SER and according to interview sessions with the faculty members, the Department of Student Training and Development offers a peer-teaching programme in each semester, through which the students at risk of academic failure who need the help of their accomplished academic peers are provided with teaching sessions. Despite of the usefulness of the programme of peer teaching, the Panel did not note - through the provided evidence or the student meetings - the student participation in that programme whether as learners or teachers. It was also revealed for the Panel that various academic supports are available for the students who have an academic failure in English *via* the National Geographic Centre for Learning Resources, which has been recently opened at the University. Accordingly, the Panel acknowledges that a system of academic guidance for students is in place, as well as policies identifying students at risk of academic failure; however, the Panel recommends that the College should implement a clear plan for providing adequate academic support for students at risk of academic failure to help them to succeed and measure its effectiveness periodically.

- 2.13 As stated in the SER, the documents and the available evidence, the students of the programme have several opportunities to expand their knowledge and experience through the support activities. These include the participation in the Bahrain Summer programme, student activities and exhibitions, in collaboration with the college associations and clubs, as well as, visiting institutions both inside and outside the Kingdom of Bahrain, in addition to their involvement in the organization of conferences, workshops, and seminars in the Department. During the site visit and interviews, it was clear to the Panel that students are allowed to participate in a wide range of informal learning activities organized by different entities at the University, which include cultural and social activities, sports events, seminars and various workshops organized by the University in addition to the 'Career Day', and the peer-teaching programme. Furthermore, the organizational knowledge of the students and their communication skills are enhanced through accomplishing their graduation projects and learning work ethics during the internship. During the interview sessions, students expressed their satisfaction with the opportunities offered by the University and the College, as well as the Facilities Information Center to expand their learning experience. The Panel appreciates that there is a learning environment in the

University contributing to expanding the knowledge and experience of the students, which supports informal learning activities.

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

- There is an admission policy at the university and the department levels, which is clear and published.
- There are clear and transparent procedures for the recruitment of faculty members, and there are arrangements to enhance their retention.
- There is a management information system adapted to the needs and aims of the programme.
- There are policies and procedures in place to maintain the security and integrity of information for learners and staff, the accuracy of the results of the programme, in addition to a rigorous system for risk management and maintaining the security of records.
- There are adequate learning resources and sources for the programme that meet the learning needs of both students and faculty members.
- The University provides various physical support services for the students.
- There are arrangements in place to introduce new students to the academic programmes, and to various regulations, services, and activities provided by the University.
- The learning environment at the university contributes to expanding the knowledge and experience of the students, which supports the informal learning activities.

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

- verify the implementation of the admission policy within the programme - in coordination with the University- in an integral manner and develop an appropriate mechanism to evaluate the appropriateness of the admission criteria in order to improve the level of the admitted students in line with the programme aims and requirements
- develop a plan to increase the number of academic members with academic specializations that are suitable for the programme to decrease the academic workload of the faculty members in the programme
- adopt a clear plan to support the faculty members to apply for promotion
- organize a formal induction programme for the new academics at the department, college, and university levels to introduce them to the policies, regulations and resources of the University and its services, and evaluate the effectiveness of the induction programme
- provide electronic systems that are appropriate for the programme

- further utilize the tracking reports and the updated data of the tracking systems to enhance the decisions taken to contribute in improving the educational process
- implement a clear plan for providing adequate academic support for students at risk of academic failure to help them to succeed and measure its effectiveness periodically.

2.16 **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 UoB identified the ILOs at the university level, which include communication skills, technical information skills, analytic and critical thinking skills, knowledge skills, professional ethical responsibility and continuous self-learning. Furthermore, the graduate attributes at the level of the programme are illustrated within the PILOs, including communication capability, dealing properly with tourists, managing travel and tourism agencies, conducting scientific research, knowing the essential touristic concepts in Arabic, English and French, which are consistent with the learning objectives of the programme. According to the SER, students' final marks are used as an initial indicator to ensure meeting graduate attributes. During the interviews with the faculty members and by examining the course files, the Panel learned that every faculty member evaluates the achievement of the CILOs by using a course assessment form and performance indicators that are mapped to each course, to measure the achievement of each PILO. The Panel appreciates that there are identified graduate attributes at the university level and in the PILOs, and there are specific procedures to assess graduate attributes during the evaluation processes. Nevertheless, the Panel has a concern that the adopted mechanisms are not implemented in a proper manner that ensures efficiency in measuring the attainment of the ILOs and graduate attributes, which will be discussed in details in the following paragraphs of this indicator.
- 3.2 There is a formal policy for benchmarking at the university level, which was approved in 2015, and includes suitable procedures for benchmarking activities and its scope of implementation. During the site visit interviews, the Panel noted that the benchmarking is implemented informally and the programme was benchmarked against similar programmes offered by a number of regional universities. The Panel observed that the implemented benchmarking process did not follow what was mentioned in the university benchmarking policy, as it was not clear for the Panel the basis for selecting the programmes incorporated into the benchmarking process, that were limited to programmes offered by regional institutions. Moreover, the study did not include the different features of the programme such as the academic standards, and the equivalency of the ILOs of the Bachelor in Tourism programme with the ILOs of the other programmes included in the benchmarking process. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should implement the university benchmarking policy, conduct a formal benchmarking for all the aspects of the programme against similar programmes, and benefit from its results in developing the programme.
- 3.3 The University has a clear specific policy to evaluate students, which is compatible with the programme type and level. It includes formative assessment approaches represented in the assessment activities required from the student throughout the

semester such as assignments, tests, other tasks. The students confirmed, during interviews, their knowledge of the new approaches of assessment through the course specifications that are distributed to them at the beginning of each semester. The faculty members also publish the results of assessments and student work before the final examinations, to allow the students to discuss these results, as well as, submitting an appeal against the grades in line with the appeal procedures of the University. During interviews with the faculty members and according to the provided evidence, it was revealed that most of the assessment policies and procedures are applied in a regular and clear manner. The course instructor is responsible for ensuring its efficiency, with the exception of the appeal against the final examination. In addition to this, the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Center (QAAC) of the University and the Quality Assurance Office (QAO) of the College carry out the internal moderation of courses at the end of the assessment process, and put forward recommendations for periodical improvement. However, by studying the provided evidence, the Panel found that the range of applying the recommendations mentioned in the internal moderation report is very limited. It was confirmed to the Panel that there is neither internal moderation implemented for examinations before the assessment process nor external moderators nor examiners employed by the Department. Moreover, the feedback written on the marked examinations is very limited, which was corroborated during the interviews with students. The Panel also noted that the policy and penalties of academic plagiarism at the level of the University are not effectively applied, which was confirmed by the internal audit report of the College. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should implement effective mechanisms to ensure the implementation of all the policies and procedures of the University in relation to the assessment of student achievements at the programme level, such as providing students with feedback, detecting academic plagiarism, and moderation, to ensure that the graduates meet the academic standards of the programme.

- 3.4 According to the SER, the alignment between the assessment and the ILOs of each course is conducted through the CILOs assessment form, as the faculty member links the assessment tools with the CILOs by filling that form. The results of the CILOs assessment are then used to measure the extent to which the ILOs are achieved at the level of the programme. Consequently, the Panel appreciates that there is an appropriate mechanism to align the assessment process with the ILOs. However, the Panel notes through examining the evidence, the deficiency of the applied mechanisms in ensuring the alignment between the assessment and the CILOs, and it depends mainly on faculty members. By reviewing the final examinations of courses, it was clear that a number of them measure the intellectual knowledge and skills only. Examples of these courses are 'Tourism and Environment' (Tour 331), 'Mass Communication and Tourism Advertising' (Tour 323), 'Tourism Monuments and Museums I' (Tour 380), 'English Language for Tourism II' (Tour 463), 'Civil Aviation System' (Tour 445), 'Tourism Companies and Travel Agencies' (Tour 340), and

'Tourism Public Relations' (Tour 220). Moreover, the final examinations of some courses measure knowledge, such as 'Tourism Legislations' (Tour 345), 'Introduction to Tourism and Travel' (Tour 101). It was also clear that the final examination of the 'E-Tourism' (Tour 390) course is not consistent with its outcomes. Accordingly, the Panel urges the College to implement the internal and external moderation processes for assessment tools (see paragraphs: 3.5, 3.6), and conduct a thorough review of the course files to identify cases of misalignment between the assessment and the ILOs and take appropriate actions in this regard.

- 3.5 The UoB has a moderation system for examinations and students assessment, including moderation requirements, an internal pre-moderation for examinations, in addition to a post - moderation for the course grades. As indicated in the SER, one coordinator is assigned for multi-section courses to hold meetings to coordinate and set a standard final examination as per the university laws, and the QAO of the College reviews the course files including model answers in each semester; to ensure the alignment of the examination questions with the learning outcomes. After reviewing the course files and based on the interviews with the faculty members, it was clear that those procedures are not applied regularly. Due to the limited numbers of instructors and students, different sections of the same course are taught by one instructor and subsequently, he/she identifies individually the used assessment approaches, additionally; most courses do not include model answers for the examinations. Moreover, the members of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) are responsible for the internal moderation of courses at the university and the college levels, while most of them if not all are not specialists in the field of tourism. Consequently, the Panel is of the view that the applied mechanisms for the internal pre and post moderation of assessment are inadequate and do not properly ensure the attainment of the intended academic standards. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should implement the university procedures of internal moderation for the assessment tools at the programme level, evaluate their effectiveness, and conduct the internal moderation process in a periodic and regular manner by academics from the same field of specialization.
- 3.6 UoB has a moderation policy for examinations and students assessment that was approved by the University Council in 2015. It includes internal moderation requirements, an external moderation, and pre and post-moderation mechanisms for examinations. The Panel learned during the interviews and from the SER that the programme is subject to a review by the Quality Assurance Center of the University and the faculty members of the Department review the CILOs to ensure conformance to the requirements of the NQF. However, external moderation procedures are not implemented at the level of the programme, as the Panel was not provided with any evidence referring to approved and documented procedures of external moderation for assessment tools and students assessed work, although the university policy stipulates periodical internal and external moderation for the academic programmes.

Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should implement formal procedures related to external moderation that include specific criteria for selecting external moderators, as well as, procedures for contracting with them; to benefit from the feedback of external moderation reports in developing the programme and improving the courses.

- 3.7 The Panel has examined the courses at different levels and found that class work represents (60%) of the full marks of the course, most of which are represented in individual or group assignments of students. By reviewing these assignments, it was found that most of them depend on memorizing and copying skills (e.g. 'Tourism Monuments and Museums' (Tour 380) and 'Tourism and Environment' (Tour 331)). The assignments of a limited number of courses are based on higher skills and capabilities such as creativity, criticism and analysis, in courses (e.g. 'Tourism and Environment' (Tour 331) and 'Mass Communication and Tourism Advertising' (Tour 323)). By examining a sample of students' internship reports, the Panel noted that the level of writing those reports does not indicate that the students acquired the intended training skills (see paragraphs 3.10). Moreover, the Panel noticed that the class work of some courses has not been assessed and there is a lack of clear assessment criteria in a number of the assessed class work. The Panel is of the view that the level of difficulty of examinations in some courses is not appropriate and does not measure the required skills. The level of students' work is also inappropriate in some courses and there is an inflation in the grades given to the students, which does not reflect their actual level. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should implement strict arrangements to ensure that the examinations measure critical thinking skills alongside memorizing and recalling skills, and that the level of assessment tools and the student achievements are appropriate for the objectives and the ILOs of both the programme and the courses.
- 3.8 According to the SER, the compatibility of the graduate achievements with the programme aims and outcomes is evaluated directly, through measuring the results of the examinations and projects, using the course assessment form. Moreover, the evidence indicates the normal distribution of the graduate marks, although there is an inflation in the grades (as mentioned in paragraph 3.7). The Panel learned during the site visit, that the programme also evaluates the compatibility between the graduate achievements and its objectives and outcomes indirectly through the surveys of the employers and the alumni satisfaction. However, the decreasing rate of responding to these surveys limits the value of the results and the ability of the programme to benefit from these surveys. The Panel also noticed the dissatisfaction of the employers and the alumni, who were interviewed by the Panel during the site visit, with the programme outcomes (see paragraph 3.10). Furthermore, it was also noted the lack of implementation of the university policies related to the internal and external moderation of the programme assessment tools (see paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6) and the noted variation of the level of students' projects (see paragraph 3.11). Therefore, the

Panel is concerned about the compatibility of the graduate achievements with the programme objectives. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should implement clear procedures including internal and external moderation to verify that the graduate achievements meet the programme objectives and ILOs.

- 3.9 The quality manual of the QAAC stipulates analyzing student cohorts in the academic programmes through the self-evaluation process which is conducted every two years. The Panel examined the data presented by the Department about students and graduates statistics, and found through the raw form of the presented data that these statistics are not revised or analyzed. During interviews with administrative and academic staff, the Panel learned that the Department is able to get precise analysis from the Deanship of Admission of Registration about the students and graduates statistics; however, the department did not provide any evidence of doing that. By examining the course files, the Panel noted that the rates of failure in courses are acceptable. The Panel also noticed that the number of accepted students from 2011 to 2016 is increasing and the number of students that have withdrawn from the programme is relatively stable (about 6 students per year). However, the number of students, in general, is small, as the students of the programme represent about (7%) of the students of the Department of Mass Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts. Moreover, the Panel learned, during the interviews, that the graduates of the programme get convenient jobs. The Panel observed that the period of time that students need to graduate from the programme is not compatible with neither its studying plan, nor with similar programmes at the regional and international level, as the vast majority of students can meet graduation requirements after at least 5 years of study. In addition, there is no evidence that the results of student cohort analysis, including the rates of the graduates to the admitted students, the dropout and retention rates, year-by-year progression, the length of the study, and the first destination of the programme graduates in the past years, were formally studied and the data was utilized in improving the programme. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should conduct a comprehensive study and a systematic analysis of the student cohorts of the programme, to follow their progression on a yearly basis, identify the reasons for the long study period needed to graduate, conduct a comparison with similar programmes, and use the results to improve the programme.
- 3.10 As stated in paragraph 1.6 of this Report, there are policies and procedures to manage and assess the process of work-based learning, which is an adequate process to achieve the learning outcomes, and it is applied through the two compulsory courses of the internship ('Internship (1)' (Tour 399), and 'Internship (2)' (Tour 499)). As per the SER and site visit interviews, the trainee students are evaluated by the supervisor of training in the work field (70%), and the academic staff member based on the student's weekly reports, as well as, the final report submitted by the student after completing the training (30%). The academic staff member follows up the commitment of students by visiting the place of training. The student is committed to looking for training

organizations, and getting a written approval from them to train him/her. The Panel recognizes that the work-based learning contributes to achieving the PILOs, particularly, the practical skills. It was noted that the students, training place supervisors, and academic staff members supervising the training were all satisfied with the arrangements of managing, monitoring, and supervising the training process of the students. They also praised the student practical training and its benefits in providing students with some professional skills that are needed to work in the field of tourism, in addition to a number of general skills such as time respect, acceptance of constructive criticism, and team-work. Thus, the Panel appreciates that students, employers, and faculty members are satisfied with the arrangements for managing the work-based component in the programme, and its contribution to providing students with professional skills needed to work in the field of tourism, in addition to a number of general skills. However, the Panel observed by examining some reports submitted in the 'Internship (1)' (Tour 399) course file, the lack of information about the professional skills gained during the training, in addition to training the students – sometimes - in a way that is not consistent with the type of the student profession after his/her graduation. Moreover, the Panel was not provided with evidence indicating that the programme measures students and employers' satisfaction with the internship, and the results are made use of in improving the programme. The Panel, hence, advises that it is necessary to develop the required mechanisms to ensure that students are trained by relevant organizations, in order to, ensure the attainment of the programme objectives, and to measure the students' satisfaction with the internship in a periodic and regular manner.

- 3.11 The programme's chart includes the 'Capstone Course' (Tour 498), which is offered in the eighth semester, with three credit hours allocated for it, and the student can register in this course after completing (99) credit hours of the programme requirements. By reviewing the course file, the Panel noted a form that includes the assessment criteria of the project, and it was clear the use of the scientific approach properly in research writing by the student, in addition to the comparability of the level of some students' projects with their peers in other regional universities. Nevertheless, the Panel noted through scrutinizing the project samples provided during the site visit that some of these projects did not include the different aspects that are needed to conduct a scientific research such as the methodology of the project, the research problem, the research recommendations, as well as, the lack of references documented in a proper scientific manner. This refers to the inefficiency of the mechanisms applied in the internal moderation for these projects. During the meeting with faculty members and students, the Panel was informed that an academic staff member is responsible for the supervision of the student's capstone project, and he/she should - in turn - inform the students about the assessment criteria at the beginning of the semester, and identify two office hours weekly to track their work. Despite the satisfaction of students with the skills and experience gained through the capstone

projects, during the site visit interviews, the Panel noted an inconsistency in the effectiveness of the followed systems for supervising capstone projects, as the style of supervision differs from one academic supervisor to another. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should develop and implement a policy and procedures for supervising and assessing the capstone project, as well as identifying and documenting the responsibilities and duties of both the student and the supervisor.

- 3.12 As indicated in the quality manual of the University QAAC, the academic programmes should have advisory councils to support them. The tasks of these councils are clearly stipulated in the quality manual including the submission of feedback about the professional needs, and the labour market needs related to the programme. As per the SER, the Department established two councils for the programme, one for the employers consisting of a representative sample of employers in the tourism sector of Bahrain, and the other is for the students. The provided evidence indicates that the two councils were established in the academic year 2011-2012, and re-established again in the academic year 2016-2017, to give feedback about the programme's revisions and ILOs. However, by studying the minutes of the provided meetings, the Panel noticed that the meetings of the two councils are not conducted regularly, as affirmed by the SER of the programme, indicating that there were no meetings conducted with stakeholders of the programme. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should ensure an active role for the employers' advisory council to benefit further of its proposals and recommendations in the decision-making process of the programme improvement.
- 3.13 The SER indicates that the College relies on the results of surveys to evaluate the satisfaction of alumni and employers with the level and attributes of the programme graduates. The SER also indicates that the forms of the employers' survey were distributed during the first semester of the academic year 2011-2012, and in the second semester of the academic year 2016-2017, these forms were re-distributed again to four employers in the field of tourism. This shows that these surveys are conducted irregularly, and due to the limited size of the sample, its results cannot be counted on, especially, with the fact that most of the employer responses were neutral concerning the programme's role in supporting knowledge and developing the practical, linguistic and communication skills of the students. Furthermore, there was no response to the question asking about the achievement of the programme's objective related to developing the research skills of the student. In addition, the forms of the survey have been distributed and answered by (20) graduates of the programme. It was illustrated through these surveys that only (20%) have agreed that the programme contributes to providing the students with theoretical and practical experience in the field of tourism work. About (40%) have agreed that the programme contributes to developing their linguistic skills, and (10%) have considered that the programme contributes to developing the communication skills and the art of dealing with tourists. During interviews with alumni and employers, the Panel also noted their

dissatisfaction with the attributes of the programme graduates, particularly in relation to practical skills. This is because of the small number of practical courses, as indicated in paragraph (1.2), as well as, the low proficiency level of the graduates in the foreign languages, whereas it was agreed on the availability of some general skills such as the communication skills and time respect. The Panel urges the College to implement effective periodical procedures to measure the satisfaction of both the alumni and employers with the level of the programme graduates, and how it contributes to achieving the programme objectives, through a representative sample, to utilize the results in improving the programme (see the recommendation in paragraph 4.8).

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

- The graduate attributes are clearly defined at the university level, and within the educational objectives of the programme, and there are specific procedures to evaluate the graduate attributes through the assessment processes.
- There are appropriate mechanisms to align the assessment process with the learning outcomes.
- Students, employers, and faculty members are satisfied with the arrangements for managing the work-based component in the programme, and its contribution to providing students with professional skills needed to work in the field of tourism, in addition to a number of general skills.

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

- implement the benchmarking policy of the University, identify different aspects of benchmarking, and carry out a formal documented study for the similarities and differences between the programme and other similar programmes offered locally, regionally and internationally, in order to benefit from its results in improving the programme
- implement rigorous mechanisms to verify the effectiveness of all policies and procedures of the University related to the assessment of the students' achievement, such as providing the students with feedback, detecting the academic plagiarism and moderation, to ensure that the graduates meet the academic standards of the programme
- implement the university procedures related to the internal moderation of the assessment methods in the programme, evaluate their effectiveness, and implement the internal moderation process in a regular and periodical manner
- implement formal procedures related to external moderation that include specific criteria for selecting external moderators, as well as, procedures for contracting with them and a mechanism to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the moderation process
- implement strict arrangements to ensure that the examinations measure critical thinking skills alongside memorizing and recalling skills, and that the level of

assessment tools and the student achievements are appropriate for the objectives and the ILOs of both the programme and courses

- implement clear procedures including internal and external moderation to verify that the graduate achievements meet the programme objectives and intended learning outcomes
- conduct a comprehensive study and a systematic analysis of the student cohorts of the programme, to follow their progression on a yearly basis, identify the reasons for the long study period needed to graduate, conduct a comparison with similar programmes, and use the results to improve the programme
- develop and implement a policy and procedures for supervising and assessing the capstone project, as well as, identifying and documenting the responsibilities and duties of both the student and the supervisor
- ensure an effective role for the employers' advisory council to benefit further of its proposals and recommendations in the decision-making process of the programme improvement.

3.16 Judgement

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **does not satisfy** 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 UoB has policies and institutional systems covering different academic and administrative aspects. These include admission and student systems, examinations, scientific research, continuous learning, community engagement, alumni, administrative affairs, information technology, security, safety and health, faculty members, the academic promotion system, the academic advising system, scholarships, the Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice programme, and the continuous development programmes for faculty members. The policies and quality systems comprise the university policy of quality assurance, the policy of quality assurance and enhancement, the benchmarking policy, the system of offering academic programmes and courses, and others. The Panel is of the view that these policies and systems meet the programme needs, and are available for each academic member *via* the university website. During the interviews, faculty members mentioned that they are aware of these policies *via* different channels including newsletters of the university management, the college deanship, and the department leadership; in addition to that, the faculty members reported their views through the formal councils. The UoB ensures the implementation of these policies and systems through the following structure: QAAC at the university level, quality assurance offices at the colleges and department levels, alongside the quality assurance committees consisting of some faculty members in the Department of Mass Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts. The college deans, as well as the department heads, participate in applying these policies and systems at the programme level. Furthermore, the senior management stated that these policies are subject to periodical review every five years, and some faculty members participate in this review, in addition to quality assurance officials at the University, College, and Department, according to the System of Proposal, Review and Development of Policies. Thus, the Panel appreciates that the documented policies and institutional systems are in place, meeting the programme needs, well-known by faculty members, and some of them are involved in reviewing these policies periodically. However, the Panel observed that the implementation of some policies is not achieved as required, such as the policy of teaching workload, moderation, plagiarism, benchmarking, communication with alumni, advisory committees, and others. The Panel urges the College to ensure the implementation of university policies consistently on the programme level, as indicated in different paragraphs of this Report.
- 4.2 The decree of establishing and organizing the UoB regulates the management of the academic programmes at the University. Based on the SER and the organizational

structure of UoB, the HoD is responsible for the programme management, in cooperation with three coordinators from the three programmes of the Department. The decisions related to the programme management are taken through the Department Council, which raises them to the College Council, and then to the University Council for final approval. The College management is the responsibility of the Dean who is the head of its council, and there is a number of academic departments that are incorporated under the deanship, in addition to the Postgraduate Studies Office and QAO. The members of the College Council include the heads of the departments, a senior academic member from each department, in addition to three external members. According to the interviews conducted by the Panel, the academic members participate in decisions making through the Department Council, which raises its decisions to the College Council, and then to the University Council, and there are clear lines for different accountabilities. Consequently, the Panel acknowledges that there is a responsible leadership for the management of the programme.

- 4.3 There are clear policies and procedures of quality assurance at the university, college, and department levels. The QAAC of the University tracks the work of the quality assurance units of the colleges, and the QAO of the College - related directly to the Dean of the College - monitors the quality system in the programmes, in addition to the QAC at the department level that includes the programme coordinators. The Panel considers that this committee is adequate to meet the needs of the quality system in the programme. Hence, the Panel appreciates that there are formal policies and procedures that are appropriate to the quality assurance at the university and college levels. The faculty members of the programme mentioned during interviews that they participate in the quality assurance activities organized by the QAO of the College, such as: workshops, supervising the course files, and the manner in which the course assessment forms are filled. Moreover, they indicated that they introduced some improvement in the programme, for example: generating the internal audit report of the College, putting the course assessment form into practice, and enhancing the professional advising. The quality system of the programme has been monitored through a visit by a committee consisting of the QAAC of the University in collaboration with the QAO of the College of Arts; this visit was conducted in June 2016, to implement an audit process for the academic programmes of the College. However, the provided evidence refers to the inconsistency in applying policies and quality assurance mechanisms in the programme, and in spite of using the course assessment forms in most courses, there are files that do not include these forms. This in addition to, the comments made by the Panel in different parts of this Report about benchmarking and moderation, alongside what was mentioned in the report of the academic audit generated by the College in June 2016. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should improve the used approaches of monitoring and assessing the

management system of quality assurance in the programme and measure its effectiveness.

- 4.4 The Panel was informed, during the site visit, that the QAO of the College in collaboration with the University QAAC organizes workshops to build capabilities and enhance the understanding of academic and administrative staff of the quality assurance system. These include a workshop on how to write the ILOs, a training course about the assessment of objectives and outcomes, and others about the NQF, in addition to organizing workshops about how to write the SER and prepare the course files, etc. The Panel was provided with evidence on the attendance of faculty members for those workshops; however, there is no evidence on measuring its impact on the level of performance in the quality field. The Panel noted, during interviews with the faculty members, that they are aware of their role in the quality assurance within the limits of what they have known and participated in, like quality assurance events and activities, which are limited on the preparation of course specifications, course files, and the course assessment form at the end of the semester. However, the Panel observed that the academic staff are not fully aware of their roles in other fields of quality assurance in the programme such as internal review of the programme, self-evaluation, preparation of annual improvement plans of the programme, tracking graduates, and communicating with employers in different areas. Thus, the Panel appreciates the efforts of the University and the College in disseminating the quality culture among the academic and administrative staff, and advises the College to measure the effectiveness of workshops offered in the quality field.
- 4.5 UoB has the System of Offering and Developing Academic Programmes and Courses, which was approved in 2013, and is available on its website. The system includes a description of how to offer and develop the academic programmes and courses, and how to stop or suspend them; there are also forms for all the functions of this system. The Panel reviewed this system and found, after a precise examination, that developing of a new programme or improving a running programme must be through an analytical current study of scoping the labour market requirements, the future perspectives, and the strategic plans, in addition to surveying the views of concerned stakeholders, particularly, the official bodies such as ministries, institutions, government organizations, professional associations, alongside the views of the beneficiaries, such as students and others. The decision-making mechanism ranges according to this system across the Department Council, then the College Council, and finally the university level. During interviews, the Panel found that the Department applied some the procedures of offering new programmes before the System of Offering and Developing New Programmes was developed. In the academic year 2001-2002, the Department developed an initial prospective for the Bachelor programme in Tourism, which was passed across official channels of the University and approved by its council. The Panel is satisfied that the University has a

documented policy that is suitable for preparing and offering new academic programmes.

- 4.6 The UoB has policies and procedures to ensure and enhance the quality of the programmes, stipulating the submission of an annual SER to the QAAC of the University. This SER should include the assessment of students' achievements, the educational aims of the programme, and results of the alumni, employers, and the expected graduates' surveys, in addition to analysing and utilizing the feedback of stakeholders such as the advisory council of employers, as well as, the advisory council of students, in preparing an improvement plan and tracking its implementation. However, there is no evidence provided to the Panel referring to conducting an annual assessment for the programme on a regular basis. On the other hand, the QAAC of the University, as well as the QAO of the College review academic programmes of the departments. The review process includes meeting students besides other proper actions. As per the SER, there were implemented arrangements for reviewing the study plan of the programme in the academic year 2012-2013, in the light of the results of the surveys of the employers and alumni. In 2016, there was a panel, consisting of members from the QAAC, and the QAO, to review the programmes of the Department, including the Bachelor programme in Tourism, as well as, preparing an internal audit report. Additionally, the SER pointed to the high importance of reviewing the plan of the Bachelor in Tourism programme. In the light of the report results, the faculty members prepared an improvement plan for the programme. The Panel learned during the site visit interviews that the plan is in process, and the Department will submit a report about what was accomplished in December 2017. Thus, the Panel acknowledges that there are some arrangements in place for implementing annual assessment for the programme internally, including the preparation of a report about the internal audit of quality activities, an SER, and an improvement plan for the programme. The Panel advises the College to take the necessary arrangements to ensure the consistent implementation of policies, and track the effectiveness of the assessment of the improvement plan.
- 4.7 According to UoB's Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy, a periodical review for the academic programmes should be implemented to ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes, the effectiveness of the curriculum, and the utilization of the stakeholders' feedback in the review process. However, the Panel noted that this policy is not conducted in a comprehensive manner to cover all the aspects related to the Bachelor of Tourism programme, in addition to the insufficient evidence referring to arrangements of internal and external periodic review, or generating reports of the programme. It was revealed during interviews that the internal review conducted by the QAAC of the University and the QAO of the College contributes to the periodic review of the programme, in addition to the internal review of the programme that was conducted by the Department in 2012. The Department also prepared a report about opportunities for improvement in October 2016, which

covered a number of aspects in the programme. However, the Panel found that the report does not cover some relevant aspects of the programme that are implemented at the university level, such as the admission and registration, and the role of the programme in serving the profession and the society. Its focus was only on the department functions related to educational resources, facilities, laboratories, and the curriculum as examples. By studying the review reports provided to the Panel, it was clear that the review covered the opinions of the full-time students, the advisory councils of employers and graduates. However, this was implemented in a limited scope in relation to surveying opinions of external stakeholders and it is not implemented on a regular and periodical basis. The internal survey has been implemented relatively better. Furthermore, the Panel observed that the mechanisms of applying recommendations for improvement are inadequate and need to be tracked effectively. Although the Panel acknowledges that there is a policy for the internal review of the programme, which leads to producing mechanisms for improvement; yet the Panel recommends that the College should implement arrangements for a comprehensive periodic review of the programme; and develop mechanisms for tracking and monitoring the implementation of improvement plans.

- 4.8 As stated in (paragraph: 4.6), the policy of quality assurance and enhancement of the programmes in UoB stipulates that there are clear actions to collect, and analyse opinions about the academic programmes periodically, and the QAAC of the University utilizes a number of surveys for this purpose. There are also available and effective mechanisms that are applied periodically to collect the student opinions about the courses through the e-questionnaire form filled for each course by the students at the end of the semester, which is analysed and the results are provided to the faculty members and the HoD, to assist them in improving their performance. Moreover, the QAAC surveys the opinions of the expected graduates, and analyses the survey results to measure the degree of satisfaction towards the whole educational process, however, it was noted the lack of evidence indicating the regular use of results in improving the programme, as indicated in (paragraph 2.10). As stated in the SER, questionnaires were distributed to four employers and the alumni in the field of tourism, to survey opinions of external stakeholders about the success of the programme in equipping graduates with skills and capabilities that are aligned with the needs of the tourism labour market. However, these surveys have just been conducted recently, and are not implemented regularly. Hence, the results of these surveys are not sufficient to make use of or rely upon heavily. Moreover, the SER and the provided evidence referred to a number of comments raised by the employers and alumni, such as the low level of English proficiency of the graduates, the inadequate number of practical courses, and the graduates' lack of practical skills. However, the Panel was not provided with evidence about actions taken to address these shortcomings thoroughly and integrally, which interviewed students and employers confirmed during the site visit. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College

should continue to develop its mechanisms to survey its stakeholders through a larger representative sample of the labour market, and analyse the data periodically and regularly to utilize the results in developing the programme, and inform all the concerned internal and external stakeholders about the results.

- 4.9 The Evaluation System of the Academic Staff states that the academic staff member has to submit an annual report of his/her achievements, to be evaluated by the HoD. The appraisal is based on the achievements outlined in the report and his/her evaluation by the students, and accordingly, the HoD develops a plan for developing and improving the performance of the academic staff member in a regular manner. The criteria of the annual appraisal include teaching, supervising the students, research and publishing, and university and community engagement. As per the SER, the University has also developed the Unit of Excellence in Teaching and Leadership Skills to develop the academic staff professionally. This unit is accredited by the British Higher Education Academy. The unit offers a graduate programme in academic practice for new faculty members and as a part of the continuous academic development programme for senior faculty members. In addition to conducting several training courses, short workshops, lectures, specialized scientific seminars, and conferences to develop the faculty members academically and professionally, this unit provides technical advice for colleges and departments, to help in developing their faculties academically and professionally. During interviews, the faculty members confirmed the benefit gained from these programmes and suggested to offer them in Arabic and English. The Panel suggests that the College should encourage a larger number of faculty members to participate in the programmes, which are offered by the unit to further develop their skills in teaching and learning. In addition to the unit activity and as indicated in the SER, the QAO at the College in collaboration with the QAAC organize a number of workshops and training courses for the faculty members, alongside workshops that are offered by other media, government and academic bodies outside the University. It was revealed during interviews with faculty members that the QAAC communicates with the colleges and departments, to scope the needs of the academic staff. It was also revealed that the University supports faculty members to attend conferences to present research papers, in addition to granting rewards for publishing research in scientific journals. The Panel appreciates the efforts of UoB in providing several opportunities including the establishment of the Unit of Excellence in Teaching and Leadership to develop the teaching and professional practices of the new and senior faculty members. Nevertheless, the Panel noted that identifying current needs of professional development of the faculty has not been implemented in a systematic or unified manner through the University, but through separate initiatives of several parties. Moreover, the faculty's academic and professional development needs are not linked to the formal appraisal, as per the policy of the University. Moreover, no evidence was provided to show that there are tools to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of professional development activities.

Consequently, the Panel advises the College to identify the needs of professional developments for the faculty members based on the results of the appraisal, and implement an on-going evaluation for the activities of professional development in order to improve them.

- 4.10 The SER states that the Bachelor in Tourism programme relies on stakeholders' feedback to scope the needs of the labour market, and ensure that the programme meets these needs, in addition to the recommendations raised by the advisory councils of employers and students in this regard. However, these councils do not meet on a regular basis (paragraph: 3.12). Several surveys have been distributed to a sample of employers and alumni, in order to gather their feedback on the success of the programme in equipping graduates with skills and capabilities that are aligned with the needs of the tourism labour market. The survey sample includes Bahrain Museum, the National Museum, Movenpick Hotel, Bader Agency for Tourism, University of Bahrain, Golden Tulip Hotel and Al-Areen Conservation, of which a report was prepared. Nevertheless, the Panel is of the view that it is still a small sample to rely on its results as an indicator of the programme success. Additionally, the employers and the alumni referred - during interviews - that there is no corrective actions taken to address some of the points of weakness in the programme, which was indicated within the distributed forms of the survey, as mentioned in (paragraph: 4.8). The Panel also noted the lack of an approved and documented study that should be conducted periodically to utilise the gathered feedback from a representative sample of public and private agencies and institutions in the field of tourism, in order to ensure the link between the programme and the needs of the labour market. Furthermore, the Panel noted the mechanisms of surveying the views of employers and alumni about the programme are not implemented on a regular basis. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should conduct rigorous and holistic studies about the labour market, provide detailed information to enable the programme to identify current and future labour market needs.
- 4.11 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- There are documented policies and institutional regulations including various academic and administrative aspects in the University, which are adequate to meet the programme needs.
 - There are formal policies and procedures that are suitable for quality assurance at the university and the college levels.
 - There are efforts to disseminate the culture of quality among the faculty members at the university and the college levels.
 - The University provides several opportunities including the establishment of the Unit of Excellence in Teaching and Leadership to develop the teaching and professional practices of the new and senior faculty members.

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

- improved the used approaches to monitor and evaluate the quality assurance management system of the programme and measure its effectiveness
- implement arrangements for a comprehensive periodic review of the programme; and develop mechanisms for tracking and monitoring the implementation of improvement plans
- continue to develop its mechanisms to survey its stakeholders through a larger representative sample of the labour market, and analyse the data periodically and regularly to utilize the results in developing the programme, and inform all the concerned internal and external stakeholders about the results
- conduct rigorous and holistic studies about the labour market, provide detailed information to enable the programme to identify current and future labour market needs.

4.13 Judgement

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

5. Conclusion

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

There is limited confidence in the Bachelor in Tourism Programme offered by the University of Bahrain.