

الهيئة الوطنية
للمؤهلات وصمان جودة التعليم والتدريب
National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training



Directorate of Higher Education Reviews Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

**Bachelor of Science in Business Management
College of Business Administration
University of Bahrain
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 1 – 3 December 2014

HC045-C2-R045

Table of Contents

Acronyms.....	2
1. The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process	4
2. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme	8
3. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme	14
4. Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates	21
5. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance	28
6. Conclusion.....	35

Acronyms

AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
AIMS	Assessment Information Management System
AoL	Assessment of Learning
BSBM	Bachelor of Science in Business Management
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcomes
CoB	College of Business Administration
DAC	Departmental Accreditation Committee
DAR	Deanship of Admission and Registration
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
MCQs	Multiple Choice Questions
MIS	Management Information Systems
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OBE	Outcome Based Education
PAC	Programme Advisory Committee
PCAP	Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice
PEO	Programme Educational Objectives
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcomes
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Center

QQA	National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training
SAC	Students Advisory Committee
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
UILO	University Intended Learning Outcomes
UoB	University of Bahrain

1. The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process

1.1 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 National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training (QQA) has developed and is implementing two external quality review processes, namely: Institutional Reviews and Programmes-within-College Reviews 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 QQA, the Higher Education Council (HEC), students and their families, prospective employers of graduates and other stakeholders) with evidence-based judgements on the quality of learning programmes
- to support the development of internal quality assurance processes with information on emerging good practices and challenges, evaluative comments and continuing improvement
- to enhance the reputation of Bahrain's higher education regionally and internationally.

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

Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

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

Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

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	

1.2 The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process at the University of Bahrain

A Programmes-within-College review of the college of Business Administration was conducted by the DHR of the QQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place on 1-3 December 2014 for the academic programmes offered by the College, these are: Bachelor of Science in Accounting (BSAC); Bachelor of Science in Banking and Finance (BSBF); Bachelor of Science in Marketing (BSMK); Bachelor of Science in Business Management (BSBM) and Master in Business Management (MBA).

This report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Bachelor of Science in Business Management (BSBM) based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and appendices submitted by the University of Bahrain (UoB), 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/QQA in May 2014 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College reviews of its College of Business Administration with the site visit taking place on 1-3 December. In preparation for the review, UoB conducted its college self-evaluation of all its programmes and submitted the SER with appendices on the agreed date in September 2014.

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

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

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

It is expected that the UoB will use the findings presented in this report to strengthen its BSBM. 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 in the BSBM.

1.3 Overview of the College of Business Administration

The College of Business Administration (CoB) was reconstituted in 1991 after the reorganization of the Gulf Polytechnic (founded in 1981) into a number of departments. Currently there are four departments within the College: Department of Accounting, Department of Economics and Finance, Department of Management and Marketing and the Department of Islamic Banking which was recently established in November 2014. The College offers six academic programmes; these are the Bachelor of Science in Accounting (BSAC), Bachelor of Science in Banking and Finance (BSBF), Bachelor of Science in Business Management (BSBM), Bachelor of Science in Marketing (BSMK), Bachelor of Science in Islamic Banking and Finance (BSIBF) and the Master in Business Administration (MBA). For the academic year 2014-2015, there are 88 academic staff members supported by and 26 administrative staff members. The number of students enrolled in the College, in the first semester of the academic year 2014-2015, totaled 5,227 students. The College of Business Administration is currently in the final accreditation stage of Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International). Annual visits have taken place

by the assigned mentor for evaluation purposes and advice since 2011. An evaluation visit by the AACSB is scheduled to take place in 2015-2016

1.4 Overview of the Bachelor of Science in Business Management

The year 1981 marks the establishment of the Business and Management Department within the newly reconstituted Gulf Polytechnic. The Department was given a mandate to upgrade and diversify its curriculum to meet the mounting needs of the rapidly expanding business community. By Fall 1982, the Department of Business and Management had already completed the design and installation of a credit-hour-based programme reflecting a one-track, two-tier philosophy. The year 1998 saw the addition of the Marketing programme and the establishment of the Management and Marketing Department. The Bachelor of Science in Business Management programme was first offered in 1982 by the Department of Management and Marketing. The number of students enrolled in the programme during the first semester of the academic year 2014-2015 totaled 1267. To date, there are 853 graduates of the BSBM programme.

1.5 Summary of Review Judgements

Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor of Science in Business Management

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

2. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

- 2.1 The University of Bahrain's vision statement places an emphasis on the value of 'excellence in student learning', and the mission statement further states a commitment to 'excellence in teaching and learning'. Similarly, the College of Business Administration's (CoB) mission statement reads 'Our mission is to create and disseminate knowledge by qualified faculty and to equip graduates with skills, values and competencies needed to prepare them to succeed in the dynamic, global business environment'. It is within this context that the BSBM programme is constructed around a logical downward progression from a set of predetermined University Intended Learning Outcomes (UILOs), departmental Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs) and a set of outcome domains, which then provide the focus for the Programme and individual Course Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs and CILOs) derived from and aligned with them. The Panel finds the logical structuring of PEOs to PILOs and of PEOs to the University strategic goals through the process termed as 'mapping' to be generally sound. The Panel appreciates that there is a sound academic planning framework for the BSBM programme with clear aims that are aligned to the college and institution mission and strategic goals.
- 2.2 The BSBM curriculum comprises 128 credit hours divided into university requirements (11 credits), general education requirements (30), college requirements (42 credits), major requirements (30 credits) and minor requirements (15 credits). Students who do not choose a minor track are required to take 45 credit hours as single track requirements. In its interviews with faculty members, the Panel learned that the revised curriculum was implemented in the academic year 2013-2014 to include the opportunity for students to elect to move away from the single track major and opt for fewer management courses and a set of optional courses focussed in a separate disciplinary minor in either Accounting, Economics, Finance, Marketing or International Business. The adoption of the new curriculum is appreciated by the Panel. As global circumstances change and the 'world of work' evolves ever more rapidly, allowing students access to a range of disciplinary specific courses can only enhance their employment prospects. The Panel appreciates that the intellectual structure of the curriculum offers a sound balance between discipline specific courses within the field of management studies and the necessary ancillary courses of economics, accounting and finance. Furthermore, the university requirements Human Rights Principles (LAW 107) and Modern History of Bahrain & Citizenship (HIST 122) are appreciated for equipping graduates with the language, and social and legal awareness required to operate within Bahrain and the Gulf region. The Balance between theory and practice is built into the curriculum through individual

or group assignments and projects involving real business cases and industry site visits (e.g. Total Quality Management MGT 433). Moreover, by virtue of the Internship (MGT 299), practical experience is built into the curriculum, which add value to the programme and help to address the needs of employers. The workloads apportioned to students, in terms of the number of courses attended per semester, is appropriate. Moreover, the inclusion of specified prerequisite courses that the student is required to obtain prior to advancing to further studies is sound and well documented. The Panel appreciates that the curriculum provides an appropriate academic progression and a balance between theory and practice. In terms of the skills developed in the curriculum, areas such as quantitative skills, oral communication and teamwork are well catered for, whereas written communication needs to be enhanced (Course Portfolios MGT 131; MGT 236; MGT 460). The Panel encourages the Department to increase the amount of written work required to be performed by students, to encourage their familiarity to express themselves in the language of business through the means of Arabic and English.

- 2.3 The SER states that the BSBM programme has been specifically aligned with the AACSB Criteria for Business Studies Programmes 2013-2014. The Panel appreciates that the curricular content, level and outcomes generally meet the norms and standards expected of an undergraduate programme in Business Management. Upon examining the course portfolios during the site visit, the Panel acknowledges that the syllabus is overall accurately and fully documented and finds its depth, breadth and relevance to be appropriate. From the review of the course descriptions in a selection of course files, the Panel noted that in some courses, the choice of textbook alone determines the curriculum, rather than being chosen to augment and support an independent curriculum. The Panel also noted a heavy reliance on international textbooks, although evidence of the regionalisation of certain textbooks was presented (e.g. Macroeconomics ECON 140). During interviews, faculty members indicated that they attempt to make course content relevant to the requirements of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Gulf region. The Panel encourages the Department to make it a priority requirement that faculty integrate and explain the local relevance of disciplinary content to their students.
- 2.4 The BSBM programme has six PILOs that are clearly expressed in the programme specifications and are appropriate to the level of the degree. In its interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the PILOs were benchmarked against AACSB-accredited regional and international universities. The mapping of the PILOs was examined by the Panel and found to be well-aligned in terms of the Programme Educational Objectives and the University Intended Learning Outcomes. There is evidence of the linkages intended to ensure that the programme achieves a wide range of intellectual skills along with the accumulation of knowledge and

understanding. The Panel appreciates that PILOs appropriate to the level of the degree are in place and are well-aligned with the programme aims and objectives.

- 2.5 The SER indicates that the Course ILOs were developed in line with the university's internal quality assurance guidelines and Assessment Strategy and are set out in detail in the Course Description document included in each course portfolio. A review of a selection of course files confirmed that CILOs are generally appropriate to the levels of the courses for which they were written and are appropriately mapped to the programme ILOs. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel indicated that the CILOs are developed in light of the institutional quality assurance guidelines to ensure that the level of complexity in terms of the knowledge, skills, and competences achieved is appropriate to the level of courses. The Panel appreciates that appropriate CILOS are in place and are mapped to the programme ILOs.
- 2.6 The Internship course (MGT 299), which is compulsory for all students in their final year of study, provides the work-based learning element in the curriculum and contributes to the achievement of the programme ILOs. Students interviewed by the Panel indicated that the Internship provides them with the opportunity to apply what they learned in a real work environment. At the meeting of external stakeholders, employers confirmed that they put considerable effort into providing students with meaningful training so that the students get acquainted with real business problems and experiences. The Panel appreciates that a work-based component is included in the BSBM curriculum and acknowledges the importance of the practical training in achieving the programme PILOs. The Panel notes, however, that the Internship is not awarded credit and is not formally assessed for the purpose of assigning a grade. The practical training is evaluated as either Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory or Incomplete. The Panel learned in its interviews with a considerable number of faculty and senior management that the matter of awarding credit for this two month period of work in the final year of study is problematic. The range of work experience between individual students, varied with the consequence is that the adoption of a standard assessment and the awarding of credits will not suggest a uniform process for all students and could disadvantage some for whom the experience was less fulfilling. The Panel recommends that the College further explore available options for overcoming abovementioned challenges so that the Internship be made credit-bearing to better reflect its key role in the curriculum.
- 2.7 The Department does not have a teaching and learning policy. The Panel was provided with a copy of the 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at University of Bahrain' which is available to all Departments within the CoB. The main guidelines of this strategy include the use of a variety of teaching methods that support attainment of learning outcomes, the utilization of blended learning and the

encouragement of personal responsibility for learning by the students. From interviews with faculty members it is clear that there is a considerable range of teaching methods adopted and that several faculty members are successfully breaking away from a teacher-tell approach to student learning. However, this is not the teaching approach adopted by all faculty members. It follows that it is only when students are responsible for their own learning that the capacity for them to develop a deeper understanding of the material (knowledge) and critical thought becomes possible. In the view of the Panel, there is a need to push for the adoption of e-learning as an ancillary to current teaching methods to provide learning support to a generation of students who have grown up teaching themselves in front of computers and mobile phones. The adoption of good electronic textbooks creates a far more interactive learning environment for students. Similarly, making readings available on Blackboard or Moodle as prerequisite reading around which the following day's lecture is constructed and drawing the students into a discussion where groups of students can be set problems to test their reading and the group provides an answer, rather than the individual, will quickly stimulate discussion and effectively build critical thinking into the curriculum. Although the Panel is encouraged that individual faculty members are given the freedom to adopt teaching styles they deem appropriate to the material to be presented, this needs to occur within the parameters of an Outcome Based Education (OBE) approach if this is the intended teaching and learning philosophy of the College and University. This transition to the adoption of a range of teaching and assessment methods is to be encouraged by its written inclusion into a teaching and learning policy for the College. The Panel recommends that the Department develop and implement a teaching and learning policy, appropriate to the adopted philosophy and pedagogy of Outcomes Based Education and ensure that all staff are trained and assisted in the implementation of this policy.

- 2.8 According to the SER, the 'Assessment, Grading and Moderation Policy' stipulates that a variety of assessment methods, both formative and summative, are employed to evaluate the achievement of learning outcomes. However, from the interviews with faculty members, the Panel noted that the distinction between these two forms of assessment is not clear in their minds. Upon probing the nature of feedback provided after assessments, students in such circumstances generally are more interested in the overall result of such tests and assignments, rather than in the specifics of how they might improve their performance. The Panel is of the view that, if assessment is to be used as a mechanism *for* learning it needs to be applied more widely than in feedback sessions following tests, quizzes, examinations and other assessment exercises geared to test the level *of* (past) student learning – that is what the student has already learned for such summative assessment tasks. The Panel is pleased to note that the Department is recognizing the importance of formative assessment and is planning to conduct workshops for faculty members on the use of

varied and creative formative assessment techniques, as part of its programme improvement plan. The Panel recommends that the Department provide faculty members with appropriate training in the implementation of formative assessment in order to facilitate student learning and understanding along with the attainment of CILOs and PILOs. The University Council Decision mandates, all assessments should be returned to students with clear comments and a model answer. Moreover, in terms of the Assessment Strategy, all assessment results should be returned to students within two weeks from the date of the assessment activity. Students interviewed by the Panel confirmed that assessments were returned 'within a week', and that they can request a re-mark of the final examination. The Panel notes that, in the Course Description provided to each student, the types of assessment and their weighting are set out clearly, enabling students to gauge their own performance. Moreover, all assessment instruments include clear criteria for marking and each assessment is accompanied by a rubric. In addition, an anti-Plagiarism Policy is in place and is published through the Deanship of Students Affairs booklets and posted in the College hallways. Students interviewed by the Panel indicated that they are informed about assessment and plagiarism policies during the induction programme. The Panel appreciates that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure the reliability and fairness of grading students' achievements.

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

- There is sound academic planning framework for the programme with clear aims that are aligned to the college and institution mission and strategic goals.
- The curriculum provides the opportunity for students to elect to move away from the single track major and opt for fewer management courses and a limited set of optional courses focussed in a separate disciplinary minor.
- The university requirements are welcomed for equipping graduates with the language, and social and legal awareness required to operate within Bahrain and the Gulf region.
- The curriculum provides an appropriate academic progression and a balance between theory and practice.
- The curricular content, level and outcomes generally meet the norms and standards expected of a programme in Business Management.
- Appropriate Course Intended Learning Outcomes are in place and are carefully mapped to the programme ILOs.
- Programme Intended Learning Outcomes appropriate to the level of the degree are in place and are well-aligned with the programme aims and objectives.
- A work-based component is included in the curriculum and the practical training contributes to the achievement of the programme intended learning outcomes.

- Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure the reliability and fairness of grading students' achievements.

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

- explore available options so that the Internship be made credit-bearing to better reflect its key role in the curriculum
- develop and implement a teaching and learning policy, appropriate to the adopted philosophy and pedagogy of Outcomes Based Education and ensure that all staff are trained and assisted in the implementation of this policy
- provide faculty members with capacity-building opportunities on the use of formative assessment.

2.11 **Judgement**

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

3. 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.

- 3.1** Admission to the BSBM programme follows the university-wide admission policy for undergraduate studies. The admission policy is published on the university website and university Catalogues. In terms of the policy, admission to BSBM requires a minimum score of 70% in high school. Students who have a secondary school grade of less than 90% in English are required to complete a one-semester English language orientation course before joining the programme. The Panel appreciates that a General Aptitude Test is conducted as part of admission requirement. This is particularly important since the University admits students from 11 different types of high school. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the university admission policy is periodically reviewed based on students' performance in the academic programmes. The Panel appreciates that the admission policy and procedures are clear, widely published and periodically revised.
- 3.2** The Panel notes from the SER, and from the extra evidence provided onsite and confirmed during interview sessions with the staff responsible for the BSBM programme, that the profile of students who are admitted matches the programme aims. The university requirements of a 70% or higher pass rate on the high school diploma, the language requirements and an aptitude test are considered adequate by the Panel to recruit appropriate students for the BSBM programme. Evidence of the appropriateness of the students' profile to the BSBM programme may be concluded from the employment rate of 85% based on the student tracking survey. Other evidence was obtained from the scheduled and random meetings with the students in which they confirmed that they have no specific problems with the programme. The Panel notes, however, that some students in the first year of the programme still have some difficulty with English texts. The Panel believes that the large diversity in the type of student accepted (type of school, language, education system, and student evaluation system), provides a sound reason for the adoption of a university basic education (preparation) year that includes Language, Mathematics, Computer skills, and other self-development courses for students who show weaknesses in the skills required for programmes presented by the College of Business. The Panel learned during interviews that the University, as part of its strategic planning initiatives, has established a committee to develop a foundation year programme to prepare students for university programmes. The Panel welcomes the implementation of this initiative.
- 3.3** The BSBM programme has clear procedures and a distribution of responsibilities within the hierarchy of the department. The Department's Chairperson holds overall

responsibility for the management of the programme and basically spearheads assigned responsibilities within the department through 11 different committees which meet on a regular basis. Major decisions are made by the Department Council, not the Department Chair, which are then forwarded to the College Council and finally to the University Council. The responsibility at each level is well defined and monitored by the higher level. This was confirmed during site visit interviews with faculty members. The Panel appreciates the clarity of the lines of accountability in the management of the programme. The Panel also notes the existence of coordinators for academic issues such as courses and textbooks, to enhance the management of the programme. However, the Panel finds that too great a number of departmental committees can involve individual faculty in time that could be spent more productively. Nevertheless, recognizing the importance of some committees, the Panel suggests that the Department investigate as to whether the roles and duties of certain committees could be merged. The Panel also notes that the role of the Departmental Chairperson appears onerous for one individual to carry unaided, despite the level of delegation of responsibility to the chairpersons of the departmental committees. This is even more difficult to achieve in a department offering two academic programmes. The Panel recommends that the College lighten the managerial role of the Chairperson, for example through the appointment of an additional senior level administrator to assist the Departmental Chairperson in the coordination and management functions of the Department. This will free up time for the Chairperson to cope more effectively with strategic decision-making and the coordination and implementation of directives from the College and University, as well as those from the departmental committees.

- 3.4 The BSBM programme is supported by 39 faculty members; 34 full-time and five part-time staff. They have diverse yet relevant background in the different fields of Business, Management, Logistics, Industrial and Social Psychology, etc. From provided CVs and site visit interviews, the Panel notes with appreciation that the academic staff are suitably qualified and have an appropriate range of specializations to teach on the BSBM programme. However, the Panel notes that the ratio of staff to students is 1:40 which is higher than the 1:35 standard set by UoB. During the interview with senior management, the Panel learned that the Department of Business Management and Marketing, along with the other departments in the CoB, faces a shortage in its staff complement. The Panel was advised of the dilemma faced by the University in the ability to offer competitive remuneration packages for potential candidates. Nevertheless, the Panel was informed that the Department is in a continuing process to hire more qualified academic staff with three new members joining in September 2014 and two who are currently on scholarship completing their doctorate degree. Whilst the Panel acknowledges the recruitment difficulties that the Department is facing, the Panel is of the view that the Department should urgently investigate available options on how the shortfall in academic staff might be

overcome in the short and medium run. The Panel recommends that the Department introduce the use of e-learning to lighten the teaching load of faculty and alleviate the shortage of faculty members. The Panel also suggests that the Department invite industry experts to participate in part-time teaching in their areas of expertise, in order to secure robust professional experience. The list of faculty publications indicates that 15 faculty members are actively publishing in regional and international journals. The Panel recognizes that in view of the relatively heavy teaching load of faculty, to expect a very active research and publishing record would be unreasonable. The profile of recent and current academic research of the faculty is therefore fairly satisfactory. However, the Panel recommends that the Department introduce a supported research plan to motivate faculty members to continue their research effort and to encourage (through some type of recognition) the faculty members who publish their research in high impact international journals.

- 3.5 The Department of Management and Marketing has a well-established, systemic approach for recruitment, selection, appointment and induction of new staff. The Department has two committees, a Faculty Selection (Recruitment) Committee and an Academic Promotions Committee, exclusively for taking care of these activities. During interviews, the Panel learned about the stringent short-listing process involved in the appointment of new faculty members and for the attainment of tenure. It is clear that the CoB maintains high standards in the appointment of its staff and expects a high level of commitment from them. There are comprehensive written and approved 'Academic Promotion Regulations' of the University Council Resolution, which make promotion in the University a structured process. The Panel has viewed sample meeting minutes of the Recruitment Committee, from which the Panel can safely conclude that the process is transparent. The promotion system, as explained in the SER starts with the College Promotion Committee and ends with the University Council and is appropriate and has built-in safeguards. The Panel has seen a sample of the College Promotion Committee minutes and is satisfied with the process. However, the Panel suggests that feedback about the evaluators' reports (if negative) should be made available to the applicant in order to provide grounds for improvement. For the academic year 2013-14 the College had five promotions from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor position. The Panel appreciates that clear and transparent procedures for the recruitment, promotion and retention of academic staff are in place and are implemented consistently. Staff appraisals currently involve only student evaluations on a semester basis. The Panel learned in its interviews with faculty members that a comprehensive evaluation of academic staff performance is done only at the time of promotion, and contract renewal for non-Bahraini staff members. There is thus scope for the introduction of a system of annual appraisals of all faculty members. The Panel recommends that the Department develop and implement formal mechanisms for the annual appraisal of

academic staff, including a system for peer-reviews. The feedback from this appraisal can be used to support an appeal for promotion, the development of a teaching portfolio as well as the identification of professional development needs.

- 3.6** The University has a functioning Management Information System (MIS) with components for Online Registration, Timetable Preparation, Online Advising, E-learning, Human Resources and Quality assurance. The SER describes the Online Registration System in detail, and during the on-site visit, staff in the Deanship of Admission and Registration Section described the registration process and the processes for maintaining student records with respect to admissions and registrations, faculty time-tabling, examination marks entry and processing of results. During interviews, the Panel learned that, subject to password compliance, faculty members are able to extract the information needed to manage the learning process, including timetabling, the submission of marks and student advising. Students interviewed by the Panel confirmed that they have restricted access to the system *via* a secured login protocol and are able to register online. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel confirmed that the reports they receive from the system allow for effective communication and decision-making. The Panel appreciates that the Management Information System is effective for the purpose of informed decision-making and is subject to appropriate controls to ensure the security of the system.
- 3.7** The SER describes the procedures in place to ensure the security of learner records. The University has appropriate policies and procedures to ensure the security of records. The Panel notes that both hard-copy and electronic copies of all critical records are maintained at different levels by the Deanship of Admission and Registration and in the Department. This was also confirmed during site visit interviews and the campus tour. In its interviews with the IT Centre staff, the Panel was assured that records are password-protected and access to the records and the authority to add to or alter records is strictly limited to appropriate parties. There are prescribed retention periods for records and back-ups are done automatically on a monthly basis. Moreover, the University has a Disaster Recovery System. In addition, the Information Technology Centre executes an electronic back-up every semester. The Panel is satisfied that, on the basis of the written evidence, a review of relevant files and the on-site visit, learner records are secure and results are accurate.
- 3.8** UoB has a purpose-built campus that meets the needs of staff and students and supports their academic activities. The facilities available to the College include classrooms, computer laboratories, staff offices and multipurpose halls. The University library is adequately resourced with reading spaces, computers, books, online catalogue and digital library. During the tour of the facilities the Panel visited two lecture venues and noted that the equipment required for lectures is adequate.

The Panel also visited a computer laboratory and noted that the College of Business has four computer laboratories, with 145 computing stations equipped with suitable hardware and software. The Panel finds the computer requirements of students to be adequately addressed. The visit to the library also confirmed that an appropriate range of textbooks, journals and e-resources are available for the programme. The Panel appreciates that the UoB campus and the College of Business Administration building provide an excellent learning environment. However, from the information provided, and during the campus tour, it is clear that there is a need to expand the available lecture venues. The problems relating to the ability to expand capacity due to the limited budget were explained to the Panel during different interviews. The current constraints facing the College of Business, where funding for infrastructural expansion and the employment of additional faculty is limited, gives an added incentive in the eyes of the Review Panel for a serious shift and engagement with e-learning (see section 3.4).

- 3.9** The SER documents the tracking system for the usage of laboratories, e-learning and e-resources. At a meeting with administrative staff, it was confirmed that detailed tracking records are available and reports are generated relating to the usage of these facilities. The Panel found evidence of an effective monitoring system that provides data on the usage of laboratories; the College keeps a daily schedule of every laboratory's usage as they are normally used for computing sessions for most of the courses. The e-learning centre is responsible for tracking the use of e-resources and reports are provided for departments upon request. The Panel acknowledges that the tracking system is adequate for the evaluation of the utilization of the Department's resources.
- 3.10** The range of support services available to students is detailed in the SER. Student guidance and support is provided through the Deanship of Student Affairs including training and development workshops in diverse areas such as leadership, computer literacy, scientific report writing and peer learning. The Student Advice and Guidance Department provides a number of services through its 28 staff members, including social, psychological and career counselling, disciplinary matters and character building. The UoB Library contains 59 staff members (14 are professional librarians) of which 31 staff members are located at the Central Library. The computer laboratories also have dedicated technicians who are assigned to support students with the use of the web portal where essential e-resources are housed. This was confirmed during the site visit by the Panel. Laboratory support is appropriate to the needs of staff and students, including a help-desk, as documented in the SER and confirmed in interviews with administrative staff. The Panel learned during interviews that students are generally complimentary about the support systems in place. The Panel appreciates that appropriate student support is in place to provide extensive support to students and enhance their learning experience.

- 3.11** The Deanship of Student Affairs organizes an induction day for the newly-admitted students at the beginning of each academic year. The induction programme includes an overview of the academic programmes, rules and regulations and the social and educational services, as well as the location of buildings and facilities. This was confirmed during onsite interviews with staff and students. Students interviewed by the Panel reported favourably on the value of the induction day, and that it was very helpful in preparing them for their studies. The Panel notes that a survey conducted by the Deanship to evaluate the effectiveness of the 2012-2013 induction day revealed overall satisfaction with the orientation programme. The Panel also notes that students made several recommendations to improve the induction day, many of which were implemented in the 2013-2014 academic year. The Panel appreciates that a well-developed induction programme is provided for newly admitted students.
- 3.12** The Department implements the institutional Academic Advising Framework that details the responsibilities of academic advisors and the processes for tracking the students' academic progress. During interviews with academic advisors, the Panel was informed that all students are assigned an academic advisor at the beginning of their studies, and are required to meet with their advisors at least once every semester. The tracking of students' progress is done by the Department in collaboration with the Deanship of Admission and Registration, to timely identify and provide support for at-risk students. Students with a GPA lower than 2.0 are identified and requested to meet with their advisors who recommend a number of intervention measures such as help sessions, peer-tutoring sessions and extra-tutorial classes. In addition, the Counselling and Guidance Unit (under the Deanship of Student Affairs) offers several programmes to support the students' academic progress and social welfare. The Department has set up a committee (in September 2014) to follow-up and recommend solutions for at-risk students. The Panel acknowledges that the Department has an adequate system and processes in place to identify and support at risk students.
- 3.13** The Panel notes with appreciation the extensive array of informal out-of-class activities that the university has in place to expand student experiences and knowledge, including the many student societies, the career day and the regular workshops on a wide range of topics. The student societies and clubs, cultural and social activities, sports and art fall under the auspices of the Student Activities Department (within the Deanship of Student Affairs), while the Training and Development Department conducts a wide range of workshops on Saturday mornings. Students interviewed by the Panel indicated their satisfaction with the opportunities provided to them to engage in informal learning experiences beyond the classroom. The Panel appreciates that a wide range of activities and resources for informal learning are provided to the programme students to expand their knowledge and experiences.

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

- The admission policy and procedures are comprehensive, clear, widely published and periodically revised.
- A General Aptitude Test is conducted as part of admission requirement
- There are clear lines of accountability and wide participation of faculty members in the programme management.
- The academic staff are suitably qualified and have an appropriate range of specializations to teach on the programme.
- Clear and transparent procedures for the recruitment, promotion and retention of academic staff are in place and are implemented consistently.
- The Management Information System is effective for the purpose of informed decision-making and is subject to appropriate controls to ensure the security of the system.
- The University provides excellent and sufficient facilities to fulfil the teaching and learning needs of the faculty and students.
- Appropriate student support is in place to provide extensive support to students and enhance their learning experience.
- A well-developed induction programme is provided for newly admitted students.
- A wide range of activities and resources for informal learning are provided to the students to expand their knowledge and experiences.

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

- lighten the managerial role of the Departmental Chairperson to ensure effective programme management
- urgently introduce the use of e-learning to lighten the teaching load of faculty and alleviate the shortage of faculty members, as well as support the students' learning experience
- introduce a supported research plan to motivate faculty members to continue their research effort and to encourage those who publish their research in recognized international journals
- develop and implement formal mechanisms for the annual appraisal of academic staff.

3.16 Judgement

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

4. Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

- 4.1 The SER identifies graduates attributes as a set of PEOs and associated PILOs and CILOs, which are assessed, and *via* which, the aims of the programme are to be achieved. According to the SER, the Department employs a range of direct and indirect assessment methods to evaluate the achievement of programme outcomes. In a series of interviews, faculty members informed the Panel that they conduct direct assessments of student learning using examinations, quizzes, assignments and projects. The Panel also learned that Performance Indicators (PIs), as well as a definition of acceptable performance levels are assigned for each intended outcome in order to assess the students' performance against the intended learning outcomes. In addition, indirect assessment methods are conducted *via* surveys and evaluations, through which feedback about students' knowledge, skills or competence is mapped to directly to the PEOs. The Panel is of the opinion that assessment methods currently in place are appropriate and capable of reliably assessing graduate attributes stated as PEOs and PILOs. The Panel appreciates that appropriate graduate attributes are in place and their achievement is reliably assessed through direct and indirect assessments.
- 4.2 The SER states that the CoB and Department's approach for benchmarking is to utilize the AACSB accreditation process to determine and verify the equivalence of BSBM academic standards with other similar programmes in Bahrain, regionally and internationally. From the interviews conducted with both senior management and faculty members, the Panel confirmed that the chief motivation behind recent benchmarking is closely related to the pursuit by the CoB for accreditation from the AACSB, both in terms of overall programme structure, policies and individual course content. This motivation has caused the College to look to various universities operating within the Gulf region which already have AACSB accreditation as examples for guidance in accomplishing this task. These include the University of Qatar, King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals and King Saud University. In addition to this, the Department seeks to comply with the requirements of the QQA National Qualifications Framework as external reference points for academic standards. The Department identifies the need to 'establish a policy and procedure for formal benchmarking to improve the academic standards of the graduates. The Panel concurs and recommends that the Department develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures for the formal benchmarking to determine the equivalence of BSBM programme academic standards with reputable regional and international programmes.

- 4.3 The Department implements the institutional 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at the University of Bahrain' as well as the QAAC 'Assessment, Grading and Moderation Strategy'. Course outlines, which are regularly distributed at the beginning of each semester, outline the teaching and assessment methods that will be implemented. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the responsibility for the monitoring of the implementation of assessment regulations and policies is shared by the 'Examination Moderation' and 'Grade Distribution' committees. The Panel acknowledges, from the review of course files and interview sessions, that generally assessment policies are implemented and monitored. However, the Panel noted a number of issues that are in need of attention in order to enhance the validity and reliability of individual assessment tasks. For example, the Panel noted from some course portfolios that there is more emphasis on Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs) and true or false quizzes for the proposed attainment of skills (e.g. Course Portfolio MGT 460; Human Resource and Personnel Management MGT 430). During interviews, the Panel explored the use of MCQs with faculty members who indicated that the 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at the University of Bahrain' contains a clause (61) requiring a turn-around time of 72 hours for the marked examinations to be returned to Department Chairperson. Accordingly faculty members have preference for the use of MCQs that are easy to assess mechanically, particularly considering the large number of students. Nevertheless, faculty members emphasized that whilst they use MCQs, they ensure they are designed to assess higher-order thinking such as application, analysis and evaluation. As indicated earlier, the Panel is of the view that formative assessment and feedback are critical to the improvement the quality of students' work by allowing them to learn from their mistakes. It is difficult to reconcile this approach with one in which marks have already been awarded, such as MCQ tests, as having the results already few students see merit exploring where, why and how they went wrong. The Panel is pleased to note that the College recognizes the importance of formative assessment, as stated in the Assessment Strategy 'A policy of using formative assessments should be specified and attached to this strategy'. The Panel also acknowledges the College's recent efforts to improve the assessment practices in light of AACSB feedback, such as the development of an Assessment Handbook to promote best practice in assessment, which is regularly reviewed. The Panel concurs and recommends that the Department supplement the current Assessment Strategy with appropriate policies, and ensure their implementation, to bring it into line to reflect the changed philosophy and pedagogy implicit within the adoption of Outcomes Based Education by the College, such as a shift in emphasis from norm referenced to criteria referenced assessment and the significant role of formative assessment in achieving this goal.
- 4.4 Guidelines for the alignment of assessment with learning outcomes are included in the 'Assessment, Grading and Moderation Strategy' (a) 'Assessment items including

exams, assignments, homework, projects, etc. should assess the extent to which the students are meeting the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (b) Instructors must ensure balanced and comprehensive assessment of CILOs during the semester (c) The assessment methods should be suitable to the level of the assessed learning outcomes'. The Department employs a Course Assessment Matrix to align assessment tools with the course learning outcomes. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel indicated that at the beginning of each semester, specific assessments such as an examination, case study or presentation, are specified for the attainment of each Course ILO. The Panel appreciates that an appropriate mechanism is in place for the alignment of course assessments with learning outcomes. However, the Panel noted insufficient clarity on how specific CILOs are linked to specific assessment tasks in some course outlines (Course Portfolios of, e.g. Small Business Management MGT 239, Human Resource and Personnel Management MGT 430, Current Issues in Management MGT 460); but given the relatively recent implementation of this system of adopting Outcomes Based Education (OBE) within the University, the level of success achieved here is significant. The Panel encourages the Department to give more thought towards how the student's understanding of specific knowledge and skills can be tested in an optimal way to provide the evidence that they have attained a particular outcome.

- 4.5 The SER states that the CoB has a well-established moderation system for setting assessment instruments and grading student achievement. The system whereby several instructors are associated with the delivery of any course under the guidance of a course coordinator implies an effective mechanism for the moderation of mid-term tests and final examinations. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel indicated that specific questions are submitted by each instructor and the final examination/test paper is then drafted by the course coordinator. Moreover, tasks related to the assessment instruments, for example the drafting, editing and printing of examination papers, are allocated to different faculty members. A review of course files confirmed that each file included a Moderation Report, duly signed by the examiner and the coordinator, confirming the moderation of both the setting of the final examination paper and the marking. The Panel appreciates that appropriate mechanisms are in place for the internal moderation of assessment instruments and grading students' achievements. However, it was not clear to the Panel how other 'formative' tasks such as quizzes, presentations, and the like, are moderated internally and by whom. The Panel was regularly assured by interviewees that this process is conducted on an informal basis amongst faculty colleagues who are familiar with the disciplinary course content presented.
- 4.6 The SER states that as UoB adopts an American educational system, formal external moderation is not implemented in undergraduate programmes. During interviews, faculty members confirmed that there is no system in place for the external

moderation of summative or formative assessment tasks, or of student responses in the form of examination scripts or individual student's work. However, the faculty indicated that they consider the scrutiny of students' graded work by the AACSB mentor as a form of external verification of the assessments. The Panel is of the view that if benchmarking is viewed as valuable in aligning the programmes of the College with those of other institutions in terms of curricula (what is taught), then there is an equal value to be derived from an evaluation of how effectively individual courses are taught as a quality assurance mechanism. The Panel is pleased to note that the Department has recognized the importance of using external moderators for courses. The Panel recommends that the Department expedite the implementation of processes for the external moderation of assessments. In this way academic standards are compared and further confidence is built within the University on the quality of the students it graduates.

- 4.7 During the site visit, the Panel examined a selection of different types of students' assessments, from first year to fourth year course, including samples of those with weak, moderate and high grades. The Panel finds the level of students' achievement to be satisfactory and corresponds to other institutions offering a similar qualification in the region. In its interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the average results of the students on the course in respect of each assessment is calculated at the end of each course and presented in a Course Assessment Form & Report. A target level is set for at least 70% or more students meeting the course outcomes, and remedial measures are recommended for the outcomes that have not been met. Whilst the Panel appreciates that appropriate mechanisms are in place to determine which course CILOs has been achieved, the Panel is of the view that this mechanism raises the issue of how many CILOs can be tested within any specific assessment task or examination question. Under these circumstances the suggestion that 70% of students attain a mark of 60% or more becomes a crude mechanism in the determination of student achievement of specific outcomes. The Panel suggests that the Department further refine the assessment practices in order to maximize the usefulness of assessment data.
- 4.8 There is no doubt in the minds of the Panel that the College and Department, in the selection and construction of their mapping project for intended learning outcomes, and PEOs, is aiming at the attainment of graduates worthy of the qualification. The SER states that external reference points for the BSBM academic standards include the NQF Mapping, and AACSB standards, which are reflected in the course and programme learning outcomes. It is equally clear from employer surveys, input from the PAC and alumni, that the standard of the BSBM qualification is found acceptable in the labour market (see section 4.13). Moreover, a considerable number of graduates have/are pursuing professional certificates or post-graduate studies. In seeking accreditation from the AACSB the Department's intention is to further

benchmark the BSBM qualification to those of other accredited institutions. The Panel appreciates that the level of programme graduates meets the programme aims and learning outcomes.

- 4.9 The College monitors the drop-out rates, retention rates on a regular basis. The Panel notes the students retention rate over the past three academic years has increased from 85.2% in 2011-2012 to 94.37% in 2013-2014. The Panel also notes an improvement in the time taken by students to graduate from 4.98 years in 2011-2012 to 4.56 years in 2013-2014 years. In line with the views of the Panel given above it is an inescapable fact that improvement in the teaching and assessment processes will result in increased throughput rates, enhanced skills and enhancement of the general quality of graduates of the programme. The SER indicates that the students' dropout rates range from 5.63% in 2013-2014 to 14.8% in 2011-2012. The Panel notes that the highest drop-out rates occur in the first semester, with the highest rate occurring in the first semester of 2013-2014 – 14.8%. The Panel acknowledges the study by the University into the most important factors leading to the students drop-out for the period 2000 to 2011; however, there is no comparison of the drop-out rates in the Department of Management and Marketing with other departments in the College of Business and the University as a whole, or with other universities. The Panel encourages the College to investigate the reasons for the drop-out rate of its students and devise appropriate mechanism to address them.
- 4.10 The BSBM Programme includes work-based learning in the form of an Internship (MGT 299). There are policies and procedures in place to manage the process, including guidelines for written reports by the workplace supervisor, the faculty member and the student. The CoB has an effective system in operation for the placement of up to 500 students annually in various working environments throughout Bahrain. Appropriate procedures are in place to manage the process, including guidelines for written reports by the workplace supervisor, the faculty member and the student. The current system of monitoring through a system of reports serves its current purpose, namely to provide feedback to the College and the business concerned on the performance of the student. The Panel notes with appreciation, from the results of Student Training Evaluations for the third semester 2012-2013, that 90% of students scored 4.5 out of 5 on the overall performance. The Panel also notes that over 83% of students achieved 4.3 to 4.6 out of 5 in English and Arabic communications, respectively (Learning Goal D) while over 88% of students scored 4.5 out of 5 in team work and interpersonal relationships (Learning Goal E). The Panel appreciates that the work-based learning programme, in bringing theory and practice closer together, contributes to improved graduate attributes.
- 4.11 The College has a Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) comprised of the Departments' Chairpersons, Head of the QA Office, as well as appropriate

representatives from the public and private sectors. In addition, an advisory committee is also in place for the Department of Management and Marketing. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel learned that the College and Department PACs meet regularly to discuss academic and professional issues for programmes improvements. The Panel was also informed that ideas originating in the PACs meetings were put before the Departmental Councils and discussed. Where deemed appropriate, these ideas are then implemented. The Panel had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Department PAC, who reported that the PAC was functioning well and that they are already in discussion with the Department on how closer ties between the College, Department and the public and private sectors might be enhanced through research collaborations and the like. This promises to be an exciting and fruitful development for all concerned. In addition, the Department has established a Students Advisory Committee (SAC) so that students' feedback can be formally incorporated into the BSBM programme improvements. The Panel examined the SAC meeting minutes over the past three years and noted that various issues are discussed including, curriculum, assessments, teaching faculty as well as physical resources. The Panel was pleased to note that students' comments were taken into consideration and appropriately addressed. The Panel appreciates that well-functioning advisory committees are in place and that their feedback is considered and implemented, where deemed appropriate, as part of the programme improvement plans.

- 4.12 The Panel acknowledges that active steps are taken to measure graduate and employer satisfaction with the standards of the graduate profile *via* the Alumni Survey and the Employer Survey. The analysis of these surveys' results revealed a satisfactory rating of the PEOs by the programme alumni, with an average score of 3.25 out of 5 score. The evaluation of PEOs by employers, however, revealed a higher rating, with the highest score for Programme Outcome (b) 'Demonstrate understanding of how business operates in global and multicultural environment' (4.7 out of 5) and Programme Outcome (c) 'Apply critical and reflective thinking skills and use analytical tools to evaluate information, solve problems, and make sound decisions' (4.33 out of 5). Similarly, the indicators regarding the employment of graduates are favourable indicating the high regard in which the College and its students are held. During meetings with employers and alumni, the Panel noted the overall satisfaction with the standards of graduates, and the strong support by employers for the Department and its graduates. The Panel appreciates that there is clear evidence of graduate and employer satisfaction with the standards of the BSBM graduate profile.
- 4.13 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Academic Standards of the Graduates, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- Appropriate graduate attributes are in place and their achievement is reliably assessed through direct and indirect assessments.
- Appropriate mechanisms are in place for the setting of assessment instruments and grading students achievements.
- An appropriate mechanism is in place for the alignment of course assessments with learning outcomes.
- Appropriate mechanisms are in place to determine the achievement of Course Intended Learning Outcomes.
- The level of programme graduates meets the programme aims and learning outcomes.
- The work-based learning programme contributes to improved graduate attributes.
- Well-functioning external advisory committees are in place and their feedback is considered and implemented, where deemed appropriate, as part of the programme improvement plans.
- There is evidence of graduate and employer satisfaction with the standards of the graduate profile.

4.14 In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the Department should:

- develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures for the formal benchmarking to determine the equivalence of the BSBM programme academic standards with reputable regional and international programmes
- supplement the current Assessment Strategy with appropriate policies, and ensure their implementation, to bring it into line to reflect the changed philosophy and pedagogy implicit within the adoption of Outcomes Based Education by the College
- expedite the implementation of processes for the external moderation of assessments.

4.15 **Judgement**

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

5. 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.

- 5.1 The policies, procedures and regulations, and particularly the academic policies regarding students' admission, progression and transfer, are published on the University website and made known to the different constituencies. This is appreciated since the first step in the effective application of policies, is their availability to concerned parties: faculty, students and parents. The interviews with the students and faculty members revealed that these policies and procedures are applied effectively and consistently within the BSBM programme and across the College of Business. Many of the academic regulations and their application are discussed in the College and Department councils. Students interviewed by the Panel also confirmed that they are informed about the institution's policies and procedures during the induction day, and that their inquiries are adequately addressed. Additionally the Internal Audit Office plays an important role in monitoring the effectiveness and consistent application of institutional procedures. The Panel appreciates the effective dissemination and implementation of the university and college policies, procedures and regulations.
- 5.2 Overall the hierarchy of management at the University, at the College and at the Department levels is appropriate and adequate to ensure effective management. The Department Chairperson has appropriate qualifications and experience to ensure that the programme is managed in an effective and responsible manner. The faculty members in the Department are involved in decision-making through the Departmental committees that consider almost every academic and administrative matter, from class timetables, textbooks, curriculum, recruitment and promotion, to the Examinations committee and the Programme Advisory Committee. The Panel appreciates that faculty members participate in the management of the Department, which reflects positively on the sharing of responsibilities by Faculty. In terms of academic leadership the Panel suggests that the Departmental Chairperson arrange an annual meeting with every faculty member to map out their intended individual programme for the new academic year, covering teaching to be undertaken, proposed research projects, possible publications, etc. In this way the Chairperson can lend support, encourage development strategies towards promotion or publishing goals etc. so as to facilitate not only the academic careers of individual faculty but also the academic focus of the department.

- 5.3 There is a Quality Assurance (QA) structure at all levels of the university: a QA committee at the department level, the QA office at the college level, and a Center for Quality Assurance exists at the university level. This structure communicates the information and monitors the implementation of the quality assurance measures set by the University. The assessment cycle is clear and can be easily followed. There is an assessment management information system to house all the data of evaluation reports and feedback. The internal audit function is also a component of the quality assurance management system and it plays an important role in quality assurance monitoring. During interviews with senior management, the Panel was informed that the last change in the programme of study in the College was initiated by the Internal Audit Department. The Panel reviewed the internal audit report that was available for the BSBM programme and found it to be very informative and useful. The Panel believes that greater importance should be attached to the findings of such reports and duly acted upon. The Panel appreciates that a clear quality assurance management system is in place and is consistently implemented and monitored. The Panel also encourages the Department to gain buy-in and support from faculty members for the adoption and implementation of the outcomes mapping process, which the Panel acknowledges is of itself a difficult task for any institution embarking upon the adoption of an OBE approach to education. In the view of the Panel, this can only be achieved through unstinting support and encouragement – at the level of QA it means less emphasis on ensuring documents are filled in (important as this might be, but for faculty to understand why this is so) and more encouragement of faculty training and assistance for faculty to recognize their critical role in the attainment of quality enhancement through their students (see section 5.4).
- 5.4 The SER indicate that a number of seminars and workshops have been held to explain the quality assurance system and concepts to academic and administrative staff members. In addition, some faculty members have participated in QA seminars abroad, conducted by the AACSB. The Panel commends this practice. Meetings with the faculty and staff revealed that they have a reasonable understanding of the quality assurance system in place, and they understand their role in applying this system. This was deduced from the capacity to ‘speak’ the language of OBE by everyone interviewed by the Panel, such as the vocabulary of CILOs, PILOs and PEOs in explaining and answering the Panel inquiries and pointing out the importance of their alignment. The Panel is pleased to note that the Department has an ongoing initiative in its Improvement Plan to ‘Organize training workshops regularly for academics and support staff for better understanding of quality assurance and their role in ensuring effectiveness of ongoing provision’ and ‘Promote a culture of accountability to ensure that all faculty members take ownership of the curriculum development process for high level of student learning and achievement.’ The Panel appreciates that the Department provides capacity-

building opportunities for faculty members to enhance their understanding of quality assurance concepts. The Panel suggests that the Department encourage faculty members to attend these training workshops to establish a greater understanding of QA's importance and practices at the department and college levels. The Panel also encourages the Department to implement the principles of Change Management, from seeking college and departmental 'champions' to the regular showcasing of the examples of those who have made the transition.

- 5.5 An institutional policy for the development of new programmes has been approved by the University Council in October 2013. The Panel notes the comprehensive requirements and procedures to permit carefully considered and effective development of new programmes. These include formal labor market studies, study plans, benchmarking studies, assessment and teaching policies, as well as feedback from internal and external stakeholders. The Panel acknowledges that robust procedures are in place for the development of new programmes and encourages the College to monitor its implementation to ensure that the new programme is relevant, fit for purpose, and comply with existing institutional regulations.
- 5.6 Arrangements are in place for internal programme evaluation, the QAC Director's 'Quality Manual for DAC Committees' outlines the preparation of an internal SER for each Department (QF-23-rev.a.1) and the preparation of the QAAC Self Evaluation Improvement Plan (QF-25-rev.a.2). A departmental quality assurance assessment is conducted annually and a self-evaluation report along with an improvement plan is submitted to the university quality assurance center. This practice is commended. The SER generally refers to the refinement of the process initiated in the 2012-2013 academic year under the supervision of the College's Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee which set out to refine the PILOs of the College's various programmes, along with the development of an Assessment of Learning (AoL) plan in compliance with the accreditation requirements of the AACSB. In essence this has seen the refinement of the 'mapping system' of CILOs to PILOs and PEOs as currently exists. The value of the process is clearly visible in the generally tight integration of this process already commented upon elsewhere in this report. The Panel appreciates that quality assurance assessment is conducted annually and a self-evaluation report, together with an improvement plan, is submitted to the University Quality Assurance Center.
- 5.7 The College has a policy of reviewing the programmes every 5 years. The review system is illustrated in the SER. The latest review of College programmes was approved in June 2013 and implemented at the commencement of the new academic year in September 2013. The new programme has been a culmination of various inputs. One was a demand from students, as concluded from the students' meeting and referred to in the SAC meeting minutes. Another was the influence of the

AACSB as the proposed accreditation body for the College's programmes, while a third was undoubtedly the input of the various Departmental Review Committees. The procedure followed ensures that changes in the programme are drawn from a wide range of international benchmarked programmes and local inputs. The Panel commends this practice. To ensure the relevance of the programme to the purpose, the suggested changes and modifications were revealed to the Programme Advisory committee (PAC) at its meeting on June 5, 2013. In the interview with employers and external stakeholders, the Panel noted that they mostly appreciate this change. To ensure that the new programme complies with existing regulations, it was reviewed at several management levels up to the University Council. The Panel appreciates that effective policies and procedures are implemented for the periodic review of programmes to ensure their relevance and stability.

- 5.8 The SER distinguishes between internal and external feedback on the basis that 'internal' relates to the stakeholders involved in the immediacy of the departmental functions, such as the PAC, Alumni and Student Council surveys, while 'external' is interpreted to the wider benchmarking activities of the AACSB. There is value in the distinction made along these lines. In preparing for the Fall 2015 visit of the accreditation committee of the AACSB, and the advice of its mentor, it is clear that the influence of this body is recognized as important and regularly acted upon. At the same time, the senior management informed the Panel that the CoB has no intention of sacrificing its autonomy and individuality in pursuit of AACSB accreditation, which the Panel found reassuring. The involvement and recommendations provided by the AACSB through an improvement plan (a copy was given to Panel) indicate a similar line of thought to the Panel. The Panel appreciates the Department's on-going AACSB processes and the beneficial impact this has had on the programme review outcomes. What was less evident to the Panel was the extent to which the internal stakeholder feedback is acted upon. Although less 'high-profile' this feedback is likely to have a greater bearing of the day-to-day operations of departments within the College and hence on the immediate quality of its functions. The Panel was not able to determine just how the data gathered from all these internal sources (such as students course evaluations) is discussed and, where considered important, acted upon. The Panel recommends that the Department regularly involve the feedback from all key stakeholders, including information from the internal stakeholders, in the review and updating of programme content and development. The Panel notes that both the internal and external review processes undertaken since 2011-2012 are now drawing towards conclusion. The progress already made is significant and appreciated by the Panel. The Panel is of the view that the adoption of outcomes-based education by both the QQA and AACSB has prompted dramatic changes in the thinking and actions of for both faculty and management. The Panel encourages the Department to gain more buy-in from every individual faculty member into the admirable vision and mission

statements already in place and the role of the adoption of OBE in attaining them (see section 5.4).

- 5.9 The Department conducts a number of surveys to collect stakeholders' feedback; these comprise: an Employer Survey, a Senior Exit Survey and an Alumni Survey. There is evidence in the SER that the results of these surveys are analyzed. However, the descriptive statistical analysis for student course evaluations was not made available to the Panel. During interviews with senior management, the Panel was informed that major decisions concerning the changes in the programme have been taken in light of the surveys' analysis results. For example, the introduction of the Major and Minor fields of study, and the revision of the contents of several courses, which the Panel appreciates. The Panel notes that the Alumni and Senior Exit surveys scored less than 3/5 in some areas such as formative assessment, advising and classroom facilities. The Panel is encouraged that the Department has addressed the issues arising from these surveys in its programme improvement plan.
- 5.10 The SER states that 'The College believes that academic members are one of the main keys to the attainment of this commitment and this could be achieved through ongoing professional development process.' The Panel acknowledges that the CoB provides encouragement for the personal development of faculty members in the pursuit of their academic careers. This was confirmed by faculty members during site visit interviews. However, there was no evidence that these activities are linked to formal training needs analysis or staff appraisal. The Panel recommends that the Department develop and implement a strategy for staff development, linked to staff appraisal, to evaluate and enhance the professional capabilities of faculty members. The lists of conference and workshop attendance by individual staff is impressive. The review of the SERs and the CVs of the faculty members' shows that inevitably the greatest number of entries captured in the 'Faculty Professional Development and Activity' table refer to faculty members attending discipline specific conferences and workshops. The Panel acknowledges this as a healthy trend but the meetings with the students revealed that some students postpone registration in a course rather than being allocated to a particular instructor with poor presentation and communication skills. Recognizing the individual differences between instructors, the Panel recommends that the Department conduct training programmes in teaching and assessment methods. The Panel also suggests that the Department encourage all academic staff to attend the PCAP programme.
- 5.11 The Department strongly relies on the PAC meetings to ensure that the BSBM programme is aligned with the labour market needs and trends as well as the educational performance and professional needs of industry. The Panel learned from interviews that the PACs are also seen as industry contacts or conduits through which the Department can access collaborative agreements in areas such as research

projects for faculty and senior student projects. The practical training (internship) is also an intervention to provide an insight into the real world to the graduating students. These are all healthy developments acknowledged by the Panel which suggests that as the system becomes more entrenched in the culture of the Department, might be further expanded to embrace a wider range of participants from the appropriate industries in a bid to further widen the benefits for both the Department and industry.

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

- The university and college policies, procedures and regulations are effectively disseminated and consistently implemented.
- Faculty members participate in the management of the Department, which reflects positively on the sharing of leadership responsibilities.
- Comprehensive quality assurance processes, with clear responsibilities for Quality Assurance, are in place at the department and college level as well as the at University level.
- The Department provides capacity-building opportunities for academic and administrative staff to enhance their understanding of quality assurance concepts.
- A robust system is implemented for the development of new programmes to ensure their relevance and stability.
- Quality assurance assessment is conducted annually and a self-evaluation report, together with an improvement plan, is submitted to the University Quality Assurance Center.
- The involvement of, and the recommendations provided by the AACSB contribute to the programme improvement plans.

5.13 In terms of improvements the Panel **recommends** that the College should:

- develop and implement a strategy for staff development, linked to staff appraisal, to evaluate and enhance the professional capabilities of faculty members
- conduct training programmes for all faculty members in teaching and assessment methods
- regularly involve the feedback from all key stakeholders, including information from the internal stakeholders, in the review and updating of programme content and development.

5.14 **Judgment**

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **satisfies** the Indicator on

Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance.

6. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own self-evaluation report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the site visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/QQA *Programmes-within-College Reviews Handbook, 2012*:

There is confidence in the Bachelor of Science in Business Management of College of Business Administration offered by the University of Bahrain.