



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

# Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

## Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

**Bachelor in Mass Communication**

**College of Arts**

**University of Bahrain**

**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of the Review: 5-9 November 2017**

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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 Department
ILOs	Intended Learning Outcomes
ITC	Information Technology Centre
MIS	Management Information System
NQF	National Qualification Framework
PILOs	Programme Intended Learning Outcomes
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre
QAC	Quality Assurance Committee
QAO	Quality Assurance Office
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
UILO	University Intended Learning Outcomes
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 <b>Indicator 1</b> 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 Mass Communication 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 provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Bachelor in Mass Communication programme based on:

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

It is expected that the UoB will use the findings presented in this Report to strengthen its Bachelor in Mass Communication. The DHR recognizes that the 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 Mass Communication.

## **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 Mass Communication Programme**

The programme of Mass Communication in UoB was first offered through the Department of General Studies in 1997-1998. In the academic year 1998-1999, the Department of Mass Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts was established to deliver the programme of Bachelor in Mass Communication and Public Relations, and the programme of Bachelor in Tourism and Hotels. The Bachelor in Mass Communication programme was developed in the academic year 2001-2002, by including new specialization tracks within its study plan, which was first implemented in 2007-2008. In the academic year 2016-2017, the study plan was revised and replaced by the currently applied plan, in which the programme offers a number of tracks, namely: Journalism, Radio and TV, Public Relations, Advertising, and Digital Media. The current plan highly relies on the practical side that is supported by Bahrain Credit Media Centre. At the time of the site visit, the total number of enrolled students in the programme was (1171), and the total number of graduates was (1655). There are (21) full-time academic members contributing to the delivery of the programme, supported by (19) part-time members, in addition to (7) administrative staff.

## E. Summary of Review Judgements

**Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor in Mass Communication Programme**

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

## 1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

- 1.1 The Bachelor in Mass Communication programme has a clear academic planning framework, which is based on the University's strategic plan, and includes procedures to enhance the academic programmes' quality. Moreover, the programme has clear objectives, which are related to the missions of the University and the College to keep up with the recent global developments in knowledge and techniques of information and communication sciences. These objectives include the involvement of the student in different careers of mass communication, giving him/her the basic knowledge and scientific skills, enhancing his/her critical thinking within different fields including research, and utilizing his/her language skills in Arabic and English, alongside the technological skills of media and communication. These objectives are consistent with the College of Arts mission, which emphasizes the need to provide students with the tools of knowledge, alongside the scientific and professional skills to enable them to be involved in the labour market and the ongoing development. Therefore, the Panel is of the view that the programme objectives are suitable for a Bachelor degree in Mass Communication, and are aligned with the Department's mission, as well as the strategic goals of the University, which are based on excellence in teaching, scientific research and community engagement. Thus, the Panel appreciates that there is a clear academic planning framework for the programme, and its objectives are consistent with the University and the College missions.
- 1.2 According to evidence provided to the Panel, the study plan of the programme includes (128) credit hours, which are divided over four years as follows: (11) credit hours for university requirements, (18) credit hours for college requirements, (63) credit hours for compulsory department requirements, (3) credit hours for elective department requirements, (3) credit hours for general elective requirements, and (30) credit hours in one of the following tracks: Journalism, Radio and TV, Public Relations, Advertising, and Digital Media. The examination of the study plan and the course files revealed to the Panel that the curriculum is organized in a way that allow a smooth year by year progression from one course to another. The study plan is beginning with the university requirements, then the college requirements, and progresses to the discipline requirements; in addition, there is a clear balance between theory and application, as well as knowledge and skills. As per the programme plan, the student is allowed to register (14-18) credit hours, with the exception of the eighth semester, in which the student is allowed to register (13) credit hours. The Panel considers the academic workload of the students as appropriate, and this was confirmed during interviews with students, who expressed their satisfaction with the academic workload in general. Hence, the Panel appreciates that there is a balance between

theory and practice, knowledge and skills within the curriculum, and the study plan requires appropriate student workload. However, the Panel noticed that the study plan lacks some courses such as: Introduction to Radio and TV, and Introduction to journalism, which are considered basic introductory courses that inform students about the different disciplines of Mass Communication and the establishment and the development of Mass Media. There is also a need to add some courses in Modern Media and Social Media. Moreover, through examining of the pre-requisite list of courses, the Panel noted the need to revise some of course pre-requisites such as 'Mass Communication Theory' (MCM201), which is as a pre-requisite for 'Legislation and Ethics of Mass Communication' (MCM301), as there is no link between these courses. Furthermore, the Panel noted that the 'Elocution' course (MCM461) is integrated into the current plan as a fourth year course, although it will be of greater benefit if it was delivered in the first or the second year. The distribution of some of the courses and pre-requisites has been modified in the revised study plan, which has been in place since September 2016. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should ensure that the allocation of all courses and their pre-requisites are modified in the new study plan, in order to achieve the greatest possible benefit for the student.

- 1.3 The Panel reviewed a proper sample of the course files, and noted that most files are well designed, and include detailed information about the course objectives and outcomes, which are mapped to the assessment tools, and the teaching methods, in addition to the alignment of the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs), with the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs). The course files also include a list of weekly lecture topics and the available textbooks. Most of the available textbooks outlined in the course specifications are new, but no sufficient evidence was provided of the use of new research findings, and current professional practices when teaching the courses. Through examining the course specifications, the Panel noted duplication and overlap in the content of some courses such as 'Skills of Media Language' (MCM361), and 'Elocution' (MCM461) courses, which can be merged in one course. In addition to similarities among some courses such as 'News Coverage and Writing in Journalism' (MCM110), 'Computer-based News Coverage' (MCM210), and 'Press Editing' (MCM310). Furthermore, some students indicated during interviews the limited aspect of practice, analysis, and application within English courses (e.g. 'English Media Topics and Applications' (MCM460)). Accordingly, the Panel recommends that the College should review the specification of the courses, to ensure its alignment with the programme objectives and needs; the Panel also urges the College to benchmark the course specification to verify its accuracy and relevance.
- 1.4 According to the provided evidence, the PILOs are defined in the specification form of the academic programme, which is prepared by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre (QAAC) of the University. These PILOs are grouped properly into four categories: A. Knowledge and Understanding, B. Subject-Specific Skills, C. Critical Thinking Skills, and D. General and Transferable Skills. The Panel reviewed a

matrix outlining the mapping of the programme outcomes to its objectives as well as to the university outcomes. The Panel is of the view that the programme outcomes are in line with the mission, vision, and objectives of the Department, as well as the college objectives and the university outcomes. During interviews, the Panel learned that the Department has recently revised the programme's mission and vision, in addition to implementing the new study plan after revising it in 2016. The Panel noted that the PILOs are well-written in a measurable format. Thus, the Panel appreciates that the PILOs are well written, measurable, and covering the knowledge and skills categories which are aligned with the programme level. However, the Panel suggests dividing the fourth outcome that is related to the preparation and production of the media campaigns, into two outcomes. The first is the preparation and production of media, marketing, and advertising campaigns, and the second is the management of media institutions in public and private sectors; as they are different in nature.

- 1.5 The Panel learned during interviews that the Department of Mass Communication, Tourism, and Fine Arts depends on the National Qualification Framework (NQF) level descriptors to ensure that the CILOs are appropriate for the level of each course and ensures that the course content enables the achievement of the CILOs. The CILOs were reviewed in 2014 and within the context of offering a new study plan in 2016 to ensure the use of action verbs in rewriting the outcomes, as per the 'Bloom's Taxonomy'. The interviewed students informed the Panel during the site visit that they are aware of the CILOs, as the instructor of each course distributes the course specifications at the beginning of each semester. The Panel reviewed a matrix that properly outlines the mapping of the CILOs to the PILOs, to ensure their alignment. The Panel also reviewed a sample of the course files and noted that the CILOs, in general, are suitable for the course level and content, and covering the adequate knowledge and skills, which are expected to be acquired by the students. Consequently, the Panel appreciates that the the CILOs are properly mapped to the PILOs. However, the Panel noted that the CILOs are not properly linked with the content of some courses such as the 'Legislation and Ethics of Mass Communication' (MCM301), as its outcomes focus mainly on the legislation of Mass Communication more than ethics. Moreover, the Panel observed that the CILOs were not subject to the benchmarking process and there is a limited number of practical course outcomes that are written in a non-measurable form, such as the fourth outcome of the course 'TV Programmes Production II' (MCM423). Hence, the Panel advises the College to review the CILOs to ensure their alignment with the course objectives and content.
- 1.6 The study plan includes a work-based learning component within the 'Internship' course (MCM499), which is a graduation requirement, awarded two credit hours, requiring the completion of (116) credit hours of the programme requirements for registration; and it has clear and appropriate outcomes in alignment with the PILOs. The Department of Mass Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts has developed a manual for the Internship, which includes: systems, mechanisms, tasks of the training

instructors, and the assessment approaches, which include a weekly report, a final report by the training supervisor, and the practical project conducted by the student. The assessment is done through the assessment form of the internship, as follows: the internship supervisor marks 70% of the final grade and 30% of final grade is marked by the faculty member. The student has to pass the course successfully, as the internship is based on pass or fail only. The Panel confirmed during interviews with the faculty members, field supervisors, and the students that they are all satisfied with the mechanism that is applied within the internship course, as well as its evaluation; and that they all have an adequate awareness of the policies and procedures regarding the course evaluation and how to pass it. The Panel appreciates that there is a component for work-based learning in the study plan, with clear and appropriate assessment policy, and learning outcomes. However, according to the SER, the Panel notes that if the student registered in the Internship course (MCM499) during the summer semester, he/she will not be able to register in any other courses during the same semester. If he/she takes it during the first or the second semester, he/she can register in a maximum of three additional courses besides the internship course, provided that three days of the week are dedicated for the internship with eight hours per day. This is considered a high workload on the student as it will not give him sufficient time to perform in the internship properly, as demonstrated through interviews with students, and confirmed by the employers as well as the training supervisors. Thus, the Panel advises the College to review the registration policy of students in the internship, to ensure that the internship policy is effectively implemented and the course outcomes are achieved.

- 1.7 UoB has an appropriate teaching and learning policy, in which the educational system, of the University, combines the traditional lecture style and the electronic platforms. As stated in the SER, the Department adopts different teaching approaches such as: classroom lectures, practical training within the curriculum or off campus in media institutions, and group work within the practical course projects at the end of the semester, in addition to several meetings with professionals through workshops, using peer tutoring approach, self-learning through Moodle and Blackboard platforms, and the available online tutorials. During interviews, students and alumni expressed their satisfaction with the principles and the applications of teaching methods in the programme and their variety. Furthermore, the Panel noted through reviewing the course files that the course description includes a timetable of topics that will be discussed throughout the semester and the teaching methods of each topic. In addition, a number of courses includes a final project and contributing in encouraging the students to participate in the learning process and developing their self-learning skills. Hence, the Panel acknowledges that there is a proper policy of teaching and learning at the University, clarifying the utilized teaching methods, which are aligned with the programme type, and achieving its outcomes. Nevertheless, it was noted that despite having the e-learning in the teaching and learning strategy of the UoB, it is not

implemented in an effective way. The Panel also found during interviews that most of the faculty and students of the programme do not use the available e-learning platforms at the University (e.g. Blackboard) and do not know its functions. Moreover, it was indicated during student interviews that English courses depend mainly on explaining theoretical concepts at the expense of practical aspects; in addition, some part-time faculty members mainly use traditional teaching methods. During interviews with students, the Panel was unable to confirm that the students' views on the implemented teaching methods were taken into consideration. The Panel suggests that the College should be informed by the students' feedback with regard to the learning process, to ensure the achievement of the programme objectives. Moreover, during interviews with faculty members, the Panel found that some part-time faculty members were teaching courses outside their specialization, which was also stated in the internal audit report of the College, and leading to a deficiency in achieving the learning outcomes. Consequently, 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 intended learning outcomes and measure their effectiveness.

- 1.8 The SER states that the Department follows UoB's assessment regulations. The System of Study and Examination of the UoB requires mapping the assessment to the CILOs, implementing fair and regular assessment, combining formative and summative approaches of assessment, and providing feedback to students in three weeks time on the submitted assessment. The system also includes the procedures for detecting and preventing plagiarism and cheating in examinations, as well as, the procedures of submitting an appeal against the results of any course, and re-marking the final examinations. The marks of each course are divided as follows: objective questions should not exceed (50%) of the total grade of an examination paper, 40% of the total marks is dedicated to the final examination or project, and the remaining marks are distributed on the classwork and examinations which suit the nature of the course. The Panel is of the view that these policies are suitable for a Bachelor programme in Mass Communication. During interviews, students confirmed their awareness of the policies and procedures through the course specifications distributed to them at the beginning of the semester; moreover, the assessment policies are outlined in the student handbook and available on the university's website. However, it was revealed to the Panel from the examination of the course files and interviews with students that the received feedback from the course instructors on examination papers is limited, and does not help them in understanding their mistakes. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should provide feedback to the students, as per the UoB System of Study and Examination regulations. During interviews with the faculty members, the Panel learned that there are transparent mechanisms for giving grades, as the assigned Head of Department (HoD) approves the final grades after the instructor enter the grades into the online system of the Deanship of Registration and

Admission. The instructor has to publish the grades of the students' coursework (60%) before final examination, in addition to conducting standard midterm examinations for the multi-section courses, and after publishing the final examination grades, the student has the right to submit an appeal against the course grades. Moreover, there are policies and penalties for academic plagiarism, which are applied at the university level. Hence, the Panel appreciates that there is a framework for the assessment at the university level, which includes general policies and procedures that are appropriate to the Bachelor in Mass Communication programme, and well-known to both faculty members and students.

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

- There is a clear academic planning framework for the programme, and its objectives are consistent with the missions of the University and the College.
- The study plan of the programme provides a balance between theoretical and practical courses, and knowledge and skills.
- The Intended Learning Outcomes of the Programme are well written, measurable, and covering the knowledge and skills categories, which are aligned with the programme level.
- The Courses Intended Learning Outcomes are properly mapped to the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes.
- There is a component for work-based learning in the study plan, with clear and appropriate assessment policy and learning outcomes.
- There is a framework for the assessment at the University level, which includes general policies and procedures that are appropriate to the programme of Bachelor in Mass Communication, and well-known to the faculty members and the students.

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

- ensure that the allocation of all courses and pre-requisites are modified in the new study plan, in order to achieve the greatest possible benefit for the student
- review the specification of courses, to ensure its alignment with the programme objectives and needs
- implement the procedures that contribute to using the e-learning properly, effectively, and in line with the teaching and learning strategy of the university to attain the educational outcomes, and measure their effectiveness
- provide feedback to the students, as per the University System of Study and Examination regulations.

### 1.11 Judgement

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **satisfies** the indicator on **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 There is an admission policy at the university level and it requires that the applicant must have a secondary school certificate or its equivalent in private schools 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 the general aptitude test, in addition to passing any test or interview conducted by the College. Applicants who have scored (90%) or above in their secondary school certificate, or having (500) in TOEFL, or (5.5) in IELTS are exempted from the orientation programme of English, while the students, who have scored between (80%-89.9%) in secondary school have to take the test of the orientation programme exemption. On the department level, students have to pass written examinations in both Arabic and English, an interview, and the arts literacy test of the Department (UoB website). It was revealed during the interviews with faculty members that the Department has, for a while, suspended interviews and the arts literacy test for applicants, which the faculty members justified by the ongoing increase of the number of applicants in recent years. Thus, the admission requirements of the Department are currently limited to the written test of general information in Arabic and English. The Panel examined the test and found that it has a wide variety of questions. The Panel also found that the stakeholders are aware of the admission policies of the programme and the senior management confirmed that students are centrally distributed on different colleges, based on their preferences and performance according to the admission criteria. They emphasized that the general aptitude test is an example of the improvement in the students' admission criteria that was introduced and applied by the University. Thus, the Panel appreciates that there is a clear admission policy, published at the university level, and well-known to all stakeholders.
- 2.2 As per the SER, students are admitted according to their scores in the general aptitude test, as well as the interview conducted by the University, and students who have less than (90%) in secondary school, attend the orientation programme of English. It was revealed to the Panel during the site visit that the attributes of the admitted students are compatible with the admission criteria at the university level. The Panel is of the view that the limitation of the admission criteria in the Department on a written test of general information in Arabic and English - as indicated in paragraph: 2.1 - is inadequate. There is a need to measure the student skills and their willingness to study Mass Communication by conducting an interview, the arts literacy test, or the written test arranged by the Department, taking into consideration the fact that (33%) of the students graduated after five years and a half. However, the Panel acknowledges that

there is an admission policy applied regularly at the university level, and an orientation programme to improve the students' level in English. The Panel also recommends that the College should develop a proper mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of the applied admission criteria of the programme, through benchmarking, and systematically measure their effectiveness in the Department.

- 2.3 There is a clear and adequate organizational structure for the programme management, where the HoD is responsible for its administration in cooperation with the Department Council, and a number of the department committees, which are formed at the beginning of each semester. Coordinators are identified for different academic sections at the Department, namely: Mass Communication section, Tourism section, and Fine Arts section. The Panel noted through reviewing the meeting minutes of those committees that members do not meet regularly, as mentioned in the academic audit report of the College. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel noted that the HoD has clear responsibilities, as he is assigned with the programme management, taking administrative decisions such as inviting the Department Council to meet, and distributing tasks on the academic and administrative staff. In addition to this, the academic decisions of the programme management are taken through the Department Council and raised to the College Council upon request. Hence, the Panel acknowledges that there is a clear and appropriate organizational structure for the programme management. However, the Panel noticed the lack of clear responsibilities for the coordinators of different programmes in the Department, as the responsibility, management, and coordination of all programmes are assigned to the HoD. Therefore, the Panel advises that the College should activate the coordinators' role in the programme, clearly identify their responsibilities, and monitor the committees to ensure that they meet periodically and effectively.
- 2.4 As per the provided evidence and the site visit interviews, there are (21) academic staff members contributing to delivering the Bachelor in Mass Communication programme, who are highly qualified experts, working full-time, and including (18) Ph.D. holders. Their academic ranks are as follows: (1) Professor, (3) Associate Professors, and the remaining ones are Assistant Professors. Furthermore, the Department employs (3) Master degree holders, besides (7) administrative staff. Through examining the CVs, the provided evidence, and faculty interviews, it was revealed to the Panel that the faculty members have appropriate qualifications and academic specializations for delivering the programme; in addition, some of them have recently published research papers and have suitable professional experience. However, the Panel noted the lack of balance in their specializations, as there are (5) members in Journalism, (4) members in Public Relations, (1) member in Advertising, and at the same time, there are (4) members in Radio and TV, and (5) members in Digital Media. The number of students is (1171) and hence the ratio of faculty members to the students is (1:55), which indicates a shortage in the number of academic

members. The SER, refers to the lack of specialized instructors particularly to some disciplines that attract large number of students (e.g. Advertising, Radio and TV), and in some courses, as indicated in the recommendations of the internal audit report of the programme. As a result, a number of specialists and academics are employed on a part-time basis (19 faculty members) to compensate for the shortage in the academic staff. However, the Panel noted from provided evidence that some of them are not qualified to teach the courses assigned to them and lack the required teaching experience, as confirmed by students during interviews. Although, the responsibilities of the full-time faculty members include teaching, academic advising, scientific research, committee work, and community service, but the focus is mainly on teaching, because of the increasing number of students. The Panel noted that the academic workload of some full-time faculty members is higher than the workload identified by the university regulations - (15) teaching hour for PhD holders and (18) hours for holders of lower scientific degrees - and it may reach (21) credit hours per week. Moreover, the number of students for most courses may exceed the maximum number allowed for one section. It was also revealed during interviews that the University urges faculty members and support them financially to conduct and publish their research, although the University does not have policies to decrease the academic workload to encourage the research publishing, as well as, there is no evidence on encouraging faculty members to participate in the community. The Panel recognizes that faculty members have different specializations and qualifications, which are consistent with the programme. It is recommended, however, that the College should adopt a clear plan to increase the number of academic staff members in disciplines of Advertising, Radio and TV with consideration of selecting higher academic ranks, to decrease the academic workload of the faculty members, and to achieve the institution's goals by conducting scientific research, and encouraging community engagement.

- 2.5 The UoB has procedures for recruitment, performance evaluation, and academic staff promotions, which are transparent and published. The system for recruiting new academic members is based on the university faculty members' regulation, its policies, and the laws of the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain. During interviews with the faculty, it was indicated that the recruitment procedures are implemented in a clear and transparent manner. Furthermore, the faculty members referred to the appraisal system of the academic staff by the students, which is applied electronically and regularly, and the HoD evaluates them based on several aspects such as academic performance and community engagement. The Panel observed through the provided documents and interviews with faculty members that the retention rate is high and it may reach - in some cases - (18) years, though there was no evidence of surveys to measure academic staff satisfaction. 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 of the academics teaching in the programme. During interviews,

the Panel noted that the University has an academic promotion system for academic staff, requiring the approval of the promotion committees at the department, college, and university levels. However, the Panel noted that the promotion of faculty members is generally delayed, as over the past five years, there was only one academic member promoted. During interviews, the faculty members justified that this was due to the increase in the academic and administrative workload. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should implement a clear plan to support the faculty members to apply for promotion. In relation to introducing the new academics to the University, its system, services, and resources, the Panel was informed during interviews with faculty members that these activities are implemented informally at the department level. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should organize a formal induction programme for new academics on the department, college, and university levels to introduce them to the university policies, regulations, resources, and its various services, and evaluate the effectiveness of the induction programme.

- 2.6 The SER states that UoB has a system to manage various information of all colleges, including online registration system, academic advising, students' timetables, human resources, and quality assurance. During the site visit, it was 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 can also 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, interviews with the faculty revealed the availability of recording absence and entering the 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 The UoB has clear policies and procedures to ensure the security of learners' records and accuracy of results, and recover it through central data keeping. The Information Technology Centre (ITC) of the University implements strict procedures to ensure confidentiality of student data, and records of its academics and non-academics members by restricting the access to the data that requires ID user, and changing password every (120 days). In regard to the process of entering grades, it is assigned only to the course instructor, approved by the HoD, and changed formally -if necessary - after the approval of the HoD and the Dean. During the tour of the site

visit, the Panel found that the programme management keeps answer papers of the student final examinations and the final projects of the students in a locked room with restricted and secured access. In addition, there is a plan for risk management implemented by the ITC in case of disasters or emergency events, including electronic regular recovery of data. Moreover, there are servers for data backups that are kept safe on and off campus. The Panel appreciates that there is a rigorous system for risk management, maintaining the security of records, and the accuracy and integrity of learners and staff data, as well as the accuracy of the programme results.

- 2.8 During the site visit tour of the College and the University, the Panel noted that the College provides the essential resources to fulfil the learning needs of its students. There are (17) classrooms equipped with projectors and accommodating (42-97) students, halls to accommodate a large number of students, (8) computer laboratories (Windows & Mac), multi-media laboratory, a hall for press editing, photography laboratory and a music room. In addition, there are several places for student activities such as the arts club, music, theatre, chess, mass media, arts cinema, gymnasium, and health centre. Furthermore, Bahrain Credit Media Centre provides Radio and TV studios and a theatre. The University also provides Wi-Fi across the College and laboratories, besides emails to students and faculty members. Furthermore, there are sufficient individual offices for the academic members, equipped with computers and are adequate for work and meeting students. There are also online learning systems (Blackboard & Moodle) provided by Zain E-learning Centre to enable academic staff members to upload some parts of their courses electronically. During interviews, the students and staff expressed their satisfaction with the available facilities and services that support the programme. Thus, the Panel appreciates that there are general resources that are adequate for the programme and meet the learning needs of students and faculty members. Nevertheless, during interviews with students, it was revealed that many of them sought to conduct their projects outside the University, especially those students of Radio and TV track, who explained that some photography laboratories need to be updated along with some of the new professional software. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should update the University's studios and laboratories, and provide modern professional software to meet the programme needs. During the tour of the library, it was revealed that it includes several online resources as there are more than (100 thousand) e-books, and over (27 thousand) electronic journals. The library has also subscription in databases (e.g. Business Source Thompson, Reuters, EBSCO, etc.), which are linked to (47) international databases. However, the availability of some of the mass media books and resources which are either in Arabic or in Foreign languages are either limited or out of date as mentioned in the SER. Moreover, there are computers in the library for students to be used when searching the library catalogue. There are also places for studying and reading. It was confirmed during interviews, that the students are satisfied with their utilization for the library and its resources. Hence, the Panel

appreciates that there are online resources that are appropriate to the programme needs, and encourages the College to increase its hard copies.

- 2.9 UoB has a tracking system to track the use of different resources; the Panel noted during the site visit that the timetables of classrooms and laboratories are posted at the doors. Furthermore, the ITC 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. Moreover, Zain E-learning Centre provides a platform for e-learning courses in which the system collects data about the use of its resources and generates several reports on the size and forms of use. In addition, the library has a rigorous system to monitor and track the implementation of its processes. The Panel acknowledges that there are tracking systems to evaluate the utilization of different resources, but no evidence was provided on using them by the programme management to inform decision making regularly and periodically. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should further utilize the tracking reports and the updated data of the tracking systems in enhancing decision making that contributes to improving the educational process.
- 2.10 From the site visit and the provided evidence, the Panel was informed that there is an appropriate support for students in laboratories, library, and e-learning through either the infrastructure or available computer applications, and through the HR support provided by laboratory technicians and specialists in the library. Regarding academic advising, there is a system to help students in choosing the appropriate subjects for them, and each academic advisor must present annual electronic report to the HoD. In addition, supports are provided for 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 provides special services for them by providing a special computer for those who are visually impaired. 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 and applying to work on campus. Moreover, the Department of Advice and Guidance of the Deanship of Student Affairs provides guidance and advice to students through social workers. It was revealed during the students' interview that they were satisfied with the different support services provided to them. The Panel reviewed the satisfaction surveys of the expected graduates and noted the lack of evidence on the use of these surveys in improving different services provided to students to support them. The Panel appreciates the various support services provided by the University to the students, and suggests expanding the distribution of the satisfaction surveys to include all undergraduate students, as well as 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. It is an orientation activity for the newly admitted students during which the students are introduced to the location of colleges, facilities, the available services at the University, offered programmes, and the university's policies and regulations, in addition to some other services offered by the Deanship of Students Affairs. Moreover, there are guidebooks distributed to them including the student handbook, students' rights and duties and the regulation of academic misconduct. At the level of College of Arts, students are introduced to different departments and programmes, in addition to explaining the study system of each programme separately. Interviews with the faculty revealed that there are no arrangements for the induction of students who are transferred to the programme. However, they highlighted that all information related to introducing the programme is available on the website for those students who could not attend the induction programme. Interviewed students expressed their satisfaction with the role of the Student Council in introducing the new students who did not attend the 'Induction Day' to different services and activities in the University. From interviews, the Panel learned that there are no surveys 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; however, the Panel advises the College to track the level of satisfaction of the new students about the effectiveness of the 'Induction Day' systematically, to utilize its results in improving the induction programme.
- 2.12 During the site visit, it was indicated that the University has an academic advising system, where students are allocated to their academic advisors at the beginning of the academic year, in addition to identifying the office hours to meet with students, and the advising timetable is posted on the doors of faculty offices. The advising system monitors the problems of students at risk of academic failure with a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), which is less than (2.0). At-risk student meets with his/her academic advisor to help him/her and give the appropriate advice to raise his/her CGPA. Interviewed faculty members explained that at-risk student is blocked from online registration in new courses if he/she does not seek the advice of his/her academic advisor to help him/her overcome the reasons behind his/her academic failure. During interviews with students, and faculty members, the Panel 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, which goes up to (61) students, in addition to the lack of evidence of the department tracking the progress of the at-risk students in the programme. As stated in the SER and according to interview sessions with the faculty members, the Department of Student Training and Development offers the peer-tutoring programme in each semester, through which the student at risk of academic failure

are being assisted by the help of their outstanding senior classmates. Despite the usefulness of peer-tutoring, the Panel noted that it is not activated in the programme of Bachelor in Mass Communication. The Panel found that various academic supports are available for the students who are poor in the English language *via* the National Geographic Centre for Learning Resources, which has been recently established at the University. Accordingly, the Panel acknowledges that a system of academic advising for students is in place, as well as the existence of 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 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 support activities, which include the participation in research planning seminars, thesis, events organized by the Deanship of Postgraduate Studies and Scientific Research, and field visits inside and outside the Kingdom of Bahrain. During interviews conducted during the site visit, it was clear to the Panel that students are allowed to participate in a wide range of informal learning activities organized by different entities on campus, these activities include cultural, social activities, sports events, seminars, and various workshops organized by the University in addition to the 'Career Day', and a peer-tutoring 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, College, and Bahrain Credit Centre to expand their informal learning experience. The Panel appreciates that there is a learning environment in the College contributing to expanding the knowledge and learning experience of 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 level, well-known to all relevant stakeholders.
  - There are clear and transparent policies for the recruitment, and there is evidence on high retention rate of faculty members.
  - The Management Information System is efficiently adapted to the needs and objectives of the programme.
  - 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.

- There are adequate resources for the programme including online resources in the library which are suitable to the programme needs, and meet the needs of both students and faculty members.
- The University provides an appropriate support for the student in regard to the different physical resources, psychological guidance, and professional advising.
- There are arrangements implemented by the University senior management to introduce new students to the programme and to the provided services.
- 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:

- develop a proper mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of the applied admission criteria of the programme, through benchmarking, and systematically measure their effectiveness in the Department
- adopt a clear plan to increase the number of academic members in disciplines of Advertising, Radio and TV with consideration of selecting higher academic ranks to decrease the academic workload of the faculty members, and achieve the institution's goals by conducting scientific research, and encouraging community engagement
- adopt a clear plan to support the faculty members to apply for promotion
- organize a formal induction programme for new academic staff members on the department, college, and university levels to introduce them to the university policies, regulations, resources, and its different services, and evaluate the effectiveness of this programme
- update the university's studios and laboratories, and provide updated professional software to meet the programme needs
- 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 As per the SER, the University Intended Learning Outcomes (UILO) are categorized into several categories including: communication skills, skills of information technology, the skills of analytical and critical thinking, professional and moral responsibility, and continuous self-learning. The graduate attributes at the programme level are aligned with its learning outcomes and objectives and mapped to the UILO. According to the SER, the graduate attributes are verified through two phases. First, the course assessment forms are filled by the instructor to verify the achievement of CILOs through the assessment processes and if the course needs improvement, in addition to the mapping of these outcomes to the educational outcomes of the programme. Second, performance indicators are used and mapped to each course individually to measure their achievement in relevance to each PILO. The Panel appreciates that the graduate attributes are clearly defined within the educational objectives of the programme, in addition to identifying the actions taken to assess the graduate attributes through the assessment processes. However, the Panel is concerned that the applied mechanisms are not implemented in a consistent way to benefit in improving the programme systematically. Therefore, the Panel encourages the College to utilize the results of the course assessment forms in improving the programme (paragraphs: 3.4 and 3.8). Furthermore, the Panel is concerned that the used mechanisms are not applied in a suitable manner to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the graduate attributes, as will be detailed in the next paragraphs of this indicator.
- 3.2 UoB has a formal policy for benchmarking that was approved by the University Council in 2015; and is available on the website, along with its procedures, activities and its scope of implementation. During interviews, the Panel found that the benchmarking process is implemented informally, and the Department review for the study plan of 2011, and 2016 depended on the faculty members' experience, in order to benchmark the programme internally. With regard to the external benchmarking, the programme team confirmed during the site visit that they benefited from study plans offered on the websites of respectful international universities in Mass Communication discipline, and other similar programmes. When selecting the programmes for the benchmarking process, the Department depended on an international rank for the best departments of Mass Communication in the world, namely (SMBG-EDUNIVERSAL). For this purpose, three universities have been selected, one regional, and two international, where the benchmarking activity was limited to comparing study plans of those universities on two levels: theoretical fundamentals and practical application. The faculty members confirmed during

interviews that neither the syllabi nor the educational outcomes were subject to benchmarking. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should activate the benchmarking policy of the University, and benchmark all aspects of the programme formally against similar programmes and utilize the results to improve the programme.

- 3.3 The Department adopts various assessment tools as per the University's policy (as indicated previously in paragraph: 1.8). The assessment methods include quizzes, midterm and final examinations, applied projects in practical courses, in addition to research, reports, presentations, and short assignments. During interviews, students confirmed that they are aware of the updated methods of assessment through the course specifications form that is distributed to them at the beginning of the semester, in addition to the published assessment results by the faculty members to enable students to assess their level before the final examination. During interviews with faculty members, and from available evidence, it was revealed that most policies and procedures are implemented continuously, and the course instructor is responsible to ensure its effectiveness. In addition to that, the QAAC at the University and the Quality Assurance Office (QAO) at the College are responsible for internal moderation of course files after completing the assessment process, and developing improvement recommendations periodically. Nevertheless, the Panel did not observe that there are sufficient evidence referring to implementing recommendations, or applying pre-internal moderation for examinations, or external moderation of the assessment process. Furthermore, the feedback written on marked examinations is too limited, as confirmed during interviews with students. Although the article (56) of the examinations system clarifies that the questions in the examinations should be varied between objective and essay questions, and the proportion of objective questions should not exceed (50%) of the total examination grade; yet the Panel noted through reviewing the course files that a number of faculty members are not committed to this provision in some courses (e.g. 'Legislation & Ethics of Mass Communication' (MCM301)). Furthermore, the Panel noted that the university policies and penalties of academic plagiarism are not effectively implemented, as the academic staff explained during interviews that the verification process for the percentages of plagiarism in research and projects submitted by the students is absent. Some projects of the students are conducted outside the college laboratories, as revealed during interviews and through the inconsistency of the quality of TV projects the Panel, is of the view that the opportunity of achieving fair assessment will not be easy. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should implement a rigorous mechanism to verify the implementation of all policies and procedures of the University related to the evaluation of students' achievements, such as providing them with feedback, the detection of academic plagiarism, and the moderation process in order to ensure that the graduates meet the academic standards of the programme.

- 3.4 The SER indicated that the Department applies mechanisms to ensure alignment between the assessment tools and the intended learning outcomes, across two phases. Firstly, the instructor updates the course specifications form and maps the assessment tools to the CILOs at the beginning of every semester; secondly: the attainment of the CILOs is measured through the course assessment form, as well as the performance indicators for each outcome. Student assessment scores are used to measure performance indicators, as the PILOs assessment form states that '(70%) of students registered in the course must get "good" or "very good" grades to achieve the learning outcome'. At the end of the semester, the achievement of PILOs is measured by using the learning outcomes assessment form, through which the performance indicators of the PILOs are being measured by using the assessment results in courses. Although interviewed faculty members confirmed that these mechanisms are continuously applied; yet the Panel found through reviewing course files provided during the site visit that the verification process to ensure the alignment between the assessment processes and outcomes, is not implemented accurately across all courses. For example, in 'TV Programme Production (1)' (MCM322-1) course, the student performance assessment is based on criticizing programme forms presented on TV, and writing scenario for a TV programme. The assessment is neither compatible with the CILOs emphasizing on producing simple programme forms by the students, nor with the course level (third level) that allows student of Radio and TV track to produce various forms of programmes. Another example is in 'Elocution' (MCM461) course, which is a practical course, and its outcomes focus on the elocution skills training offered to the students, but the assessment of its practical aspect is less than (30%) of the total grade of the course. Although the Panel appreciates that there are appropriate mechanisms to ensure the consistency between the assessment process and the learning outcomes; yet the College is urged to implement the internal and external moderation for the assessment tools (see paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6); and to identify if there is inconsistency between the assessment process and the learning outcomes, and take appropriate actions in this regard.
- 3.5 UoB has a moderation system for examinations and students' assessment including the moderation requirements such as the internal pre-moderation for examinations, as well as the post-moderation for the course grades. From interviews with the faculty members, it was revealed that the internal moderation process is only implemented after the assessment process and not before it, and single section courses are not subject to any internal moderation. The SER clarifies that multi-section courses are assigned to one coordinator who conducts coordination meetings to set a standard final examination according to University's bylaws. The Panel learned during interviews that the QAO at the College reviews the course files, which must include the model answers of the examinations in order to ensure the consistency between the level of the examination questions and the learning outcomes. The verification of the course files did not show that, and the Panel noticed that most files do not include model

answers for the examination questions. Furthermore, the internal moderation process for course files is implemented by members of the quality assurance committees at the university and college levels, which is recognized by the Panel as an inappropriate practice. In spite of their wide experience in the field of quality, they are not specialized in the field of Mass Communication. Moreover, the Panel noted the lack of evidence that suggests the implementation of this procedure periodically and regularly along with the absence of measures to assess the effectiveness of the internal moderation mechanism itself. Consequently, the Panel acknowledges that there are formal mechanisms of internal moderation at the university level. However, it is recommended that the College should activate the university's procedures related to the internal moderation of assessment tools on the programme level, assess its effectiveness, and implement the internal moderation process by professors from the same specialization.

- 3.6 The UoB has a moderation policy for examinations and students assessment, which was approved by the University Council in 2015, it includes the requirements of the internal and external moderations and mechanisms of pre and post moderations for examinations. The Panel found from interviews and the SER that the programme is subject to being reviewed by the QAAC of the university, in addition to reviewing the CILOs by the department's faculty members to ensure that these CILOs are aligned with the NQF, however, there is no external review for the programme. The SER stated that the external moderation for the bachelor programmes is not implemented at the UoB, and the Department has not yet started any sort of activity to be externally accredited, although the university policies require the periodical internal and external moderation for the academic programmes. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should implement formal procedures for external moderation and utilize the feedback of external moderation reports in developing the programme, reviewing and improving its courses.
- 3.7 The Panel studied the course files across different levels including course specifications, samples of examination papers, marking schemes, and samples of students work with different types of assessment tools. Furthermore, the Panel noted that the level of students work in most courses is similar to other regional universities. However, the Panel found that examinations in some courses measure the memorizing skills at the expense of critical thinking skills; moreover, the level of marking in some courses is not adequate, especially in practical courses, where student grades are very high and do not reflect their real level. Examples include the courses of 'Legislation and Ethics of Mass Communication, (MCM301), and 'Social Marketing Campaigns' (MCM333). During interviews, the Panel learned that the evaluation of projects in some courses at the end of the semester is performed in the presence of employers and professionals representatives, as well as the field supervisors who participate in evaluating the production of students in the internship, which reflects the significant interest in the practical aspects by the programme team. However, there were

significant discrepancies in the level of students work in certain courses including documentary films and TV shows. Interviewed students and faculty members clarified that some of the students produce their projects - at their own expense - outside the laboratories of the College, hence, the Panel considers that this matter may affect the chances of achieving fairness of assessment, particularly for the students with low income. Additionally, the procedures for academic plagiarism detection are not applied - as stated in paragraph: 3.3 - which does not help to measure the level of achievements of the students properly. Thus, the Panel acknowledges the existence of the practical aspect within the majority of courses. Nevertheless, the Panel recommends that the College should ensure that examinations measure critical thinking skills alongside memorizing taking into account fairer assessment of courses.

- 3.8 As stated in the SER, the programme evaluates the compatibility of the graduate achievements with the programme objectives and outcomes in an indirect manner through various surveys to measure the satisfaction of employers and graduates, and present the results to the Advisory Board of the programme. Despite the low response rate to the surveys and their limited benefit, it was revealed to the Panel during interviews that interviewed employers and graduates have a general satisfaction towards the level of graduate achievements, although they raised their concern about the poor level of students in Arabic and English languages, which is in line with the analysis of employers and graduates survey results about the evaluation of graduates achievements. According to the SER, graduate achievements are evaluated directly through the form of assessing the course outcomes and mapping them to the programme outcomes. Although the provided evidence shows a normal distribution of grades and its alignment to the programme objectives, yet there was a notable inflation in the results as previously mentioned in (paragraph: 3.7). The Panel appreciates that there are direct and indirect mechanisms that help to ensure the alignment of the graduates' achievements with the programme objectives and outcomes. However, the Panel urges the College to benefit from the results of the assessment outcome forms in developing the programme (see paragraph 3.4).
- 3.9 The quality manual of the QAAC stipulates analyzing student cohorts in the academic programmes through self-evaluation 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 and Registration about the students and graduates statistics. However, the Department did not provide sufficient evidence to the Panel of any sort of tracking data and benefiting from it or having a holistic data about cohorts' analysis, statistics about the number of failed students, or withdrawal rates in the programme over the previous years. According to the provided evidence, the number of students in the programme is continuously increasing. They represent about (90%) of the students of

the Department of Mass Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts, and most of the admitted students are female representing about (75%) of the total number of students. The number of student withdrawals decreased in the last years and the rates of failing in courses are acceptable. However, it was found that the highest percentage of students (33%) graduate in five years and a half, and (10%) graduate in six years and a half. Interviewed faculty justified that the students do not achieve the required level in English language proficiency for admission, so they spend two foundational semesters to study English. This claim is not supported by any study to investigate the reasons behind the length of the study period. During interviews, it was revealed that most of the programme graduates are getting suitable jobs, while it was noted the lack of evidence on conducting a study by the programme team to discover the destination of the graduates. Accordingly, the Panel recommends that the College should implement a comprehensive study and a systematic analysis for the student cohorts of the programme to track the destination of the graduates, and be aware of the reasons behind the length of the study period, compare it with other similar programmes, and utilize the results in developing 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 meet the learning outcomes, and it is applied through the internship course (MCM499), which is a requirement for graduation. The faculty members confirmed during interviews that the student may be exempted completely from training if he/she has already worked in a media institution for at least two years. According to the SER and interviews, the Office of Internship Training is responsible for supervising students who are registered in this course, and tracking their distribution on various government and private institutions in the field of media. The department internship supervisor evaluates the performance of the student/trainee based on weekly reports forwarded from the Office of Internship Training. By examining the evaluation form of the trainee, it was clear to the Panel that he/she is assessed by the field supervisor, and through the site visits arranged by the department internship supervisor to monitor the student performance on site. The supervisor assesses the trainee based on the final report of the training institution about the trainee performance, the assessment of the student final project, and evaluating his/her commitment to attendance. During their interviews with the Panel, trainees and field supervisors expressed their satisfaction with the training process, although some of them raised their concern with respect to the limited number of visits conducted by the academic supervisor to the workplace and the lack of regular communication with him/her. Furthermore, the Panel was informed by the field supervisors that there is no prepared plan for training by the Department, and some students do not devote themselves to the training completely due to their concern with attendance in other courses - as indicated in (paragraph: 1.6). The Panel recognizes that there are policies and procedures in place to manage and assess the internship course. However, it is

recommended that the College should track the implementation of internship assessment policies and the adherence of the training institutions to the training plan, in order to ensure that all trainees are subject to similar experiences to accomplish the objectives of the course and the programme effectively.

- 3.11 As stated in the SER, within the sub-tracks of the Bachelor in Mass Communication programme, there are courses to prepare students to conduct theoretical and practical research. These courses are offered in the fourth academic year such as (Research of Public Relations) in addition to the three credit hours graduation project course that was added to the study plan in 2016. Students have to complete 116 credit hours to be able to register in this course. The supervisor monitors the student during his preparation for the research, where the student starts to visit the library to look through scientific journals and presents an initial proposal of his/her research in front of the students, then presents the final presentation in front of his/her peers and supervisor. It is the responsibility of the course coordinator to assign the duties and responsibilities of both the student and the supervisor. He/she also monitors the implementation and enhancement of this process. The Panel reviewed a sample of student projects and observed that the student conducts theoretical and practical research and the level of students' work is similar to their peers in other regional universities. Moreover, the students confirmed during interviews their awareness of responsibilities and duties required from them by referring to the course specification that was discussed with them by the course instructor at the beginning of the semester. The assessment process is implemented according to what is identified by the course instructor, and the assessment is mostly implemented through the student presentation of his project in front of his peers and supervisor during the lecture time. Furthermore, the students confirmed during interviews the absence of an external examiner to assess their research, which indicates the limitation of the external cooperation agreements held to engage employers for this purpose. Students also clarified that some students of Radio and TV discipline produce their projects outside the college laboratories. However, through interviews with faculty members and students, the Panel was informed that the Department does not have an effective supervisory role in courses; it was also noted a lack of evidence on documented procedures that are related to organizing, offering, and assessing the capstone project and detecting the academic plagiarism. Therefore, the Panel recognizes the existence of theoretical and practical research in the study plan, and it advises the College to engage external examiners to assess students research/projects to ensure fairness and transparency of the assessment process. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should develop and implement policy and procedures for supervising and assessing the graduation 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 QAAC at UoB, the academic programmes should have advisory councils to support them. The tasks of these councils are clearly

documented 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 formed advisory councils for the programme across three levels: students, employers, and graduates. The advisory council of employers includes the HoD, in addition to one representative or two from faculty members, and members representing the labour market from both the public and private sectors. In regard to the advisory council of graduates, it consists of students who have graduated and are involved in the labour market; the role of this council is similar to the role of the employers' council. The Panel reviewed the CVs of employers and graduate councils, and noted that their membership is aligned with the programme needs, as the two councils membership include representatives from employers and staff who work in media entities of public and private sectors in Bahrain. Through reviewing the records of the advisory council meetings, the Panel observed that the council members discussed important subjects such as the new study plan, and the internship. However, it was noted the lack of evidence indicating the use of feedback from the advisory councils in the decision-making process, because of the recent establishment of these councils, which all have been formed in April 2017, and the members have met only once. Thus, the Panel notes that there are newly formed advisory councils across the levels of students, graduates, and employers, and recommends that the College should ensure an effective role for the advisory councils to further utilize their suggestions and recommendations in the decision-making process of the programme. It also suggests reconsidering the formation of the advisory committee of the employers in the media sector to include decision makers along with people working in this field.

- 3.13 The College evaluates the satisfaction of graduates and employers about the graduates' attributes by distributing surveys for the students expected to graduate from the programme, alumni and employers. Results of the students expected to graduate surveys show that the majority are satisfied with several aspects of the programme including its content, training, implemented regulations, and the good preparation of the students that helps them to start practice in the labour market. Moreover, results of the surveys of alumni and employers show the limited number of participants in these surveys. The results indicate a general satisfaction towards the programme ability to provide the student with the basic knowledge in mass communication, and a limited satisfaction towards the programme success in enhancing the language skills of the students whether in Arabic or in English. The Panel did not find any evidence on implementing such surveys periodically, as confirmed during interviews with employers and faculty members. During interviews with employers, they referred to their general satisfaction towards the level of the graduates of the programme, and that they employed a large number of them because of their high level in comparison with other universities in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Furthermore, during interviews, the graduates of the programme expressed their

satisfaction towards the acquisition of basic knowledge to prepare them for the labour market, although they suggested upgrading the level of English language in the programme to keep up with the demands of the labour market. The Panel urges the College to measure the degree of graduates and the employers' satisfaction periodically, and on a wider scale in the labour market, and utilize the results in developing the programme (see 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 within the educational objectives, and there are specific procedures to measure the attainment of graduate attributes through the assessment processes.
- There are appropriate mechanisms to ensure the alignment of the assessment process with the learning outcomes.
- There are direct and indirect mechanisms to ensure that graduate attributes are aligned with the programme objectives and outcomes.

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

- activate the University policy of benchmarking, and carry out a formal benchmarking for all aspects of the programme against other similar programmes, and utilize its results in improving the programme
- implement a rigorous mechanism 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 applying moderation at the programme level to ensure that the graduates are meeting the academic standards of the programme
- activate the University's procedures related to the internal moderation process for the assessment methods in the programme, evaluate its effectiveness, and implement the internal moderation process by specialized academics
- apply formal appropriate procedures for the external moderation, utilize the feedback from the external moderation results in developing the programme and improving the courses
- ensure that examinations are measuring the critical thinking skills alongside the skills of memorizing; and take into consideration achieving a fairer distribution of grades within courses
- implement a holistic study and a systematic analysis for the student cohorts of the programme, in order to identify graduates destination, investigate the reasons behind the length of the study period, and utilize the results in developing the programme

- track the implementation of internship assessment policies and the adherence of the training institutions to the training plan, in order to ensure that all trainees are subject to similar experiences to accomplish the objectives of the course and the programme effectively
- develop and implement policy and procedures for supervising and assessing the graduation project, as well as identifying and documenting the responsibilities and duties of both student and supervisor
- ensure an effective role for the advisory councils to further utilize their suggestions and recommendations in the decision-making process of the programme.

### 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 report 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, and 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. A committee consisting of the QAAC of the University in collaboration with the QAO of the College of Arts has monitored the quality system of the programme through a visit, which 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 forms 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 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, and professional associations, alongside the views of the beneficiaries 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. Moreover, some of the students and faculty members expressed their interest in offering a new programme in mass communication that is completely taught in English to meet the labour market needs. The Panel is satisfied that the University has a documented policy that is suitable for preparing and offering new academic programmes.
- 4.6 The University has policies and procedures to ensure and enhance the quality of the programmes, stipulating that an SER is submitted annually to the QAAC of the

University. The SER should include the assessment of students' achievements, the educational objectives 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 beside other proper actions. Accordingly - as per the SER - there were arrangements for reviewing the study plan of the programme in the academic years 2001-2002, 2007-2008, and 2015-2016. In addition to preparing a report about the improvement opportunities for the department programmes in October 2016, including terms of improving the study plan, students, graduates, academic and administrative bodies, quality assurance, academic standards and accreditation, and external reviews. Moreover, this report of improvement opportunities states that, 'an important part of improvement opportunities indicated in the report was accomplished when developing the new study plan for the Bachelor in Mass Communication'. The Panel reviewed the audit report implemented by the QAAC in collaboration with the QAO at the College of Arts in June 2016, alongside the improvement plan presented by the programme in October 2016. The Panel was informed during interviews that the plan is in the process, and the Department will present a report about what was accomplished of the study plan 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 moderation of the quality activities, a self-assessment report, 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 programme, in addition to the lack of evidence referred to arrangements of internal and external periodic review for the programme or generating review reports. It was revealed during interviews that the internal review conducted by the QAAC and the QAO of the College contributes to the periodic review of the programme, in addition to reviewing the programme plan internally in the academic years 2001-2002, 2007-2008, and 2015-2016. An internal review of the programme was also conducted in 2012 and the Department 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 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 adopt 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 student's 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 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 stated in (paragraph 2.10). As stated in the SER of the programme in 2012, there are questionnaires distributed to (5) employers and alumni in the field of mass communication as they are considered as external stakeholders of the programme. Although in 2017 the surveyed sample increased, however, those surveys are not implemented regularly, so the results are not enough to rely on them. Moreover, employers and graduates of the programme referred to their participation in surveys, and highlighted several weaknesses in the programme, yet no actions were taken to address these shortcomings, as confirmed by the interviewed students and addressed in many parts of this Report. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should continue to develop its mechanisms to survey its stakeholders by using a representative sample, on a wider scale from 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 on 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 established 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 postgraduate programme in academic practice for new faculty members and is 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, 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 of the College in collaboration with the QAAC organized a number of workshops and training courses for the faculty members, alongside workshops that were 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 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 indicates that the programme of Bachelor in Mass Communication applied several methods for scoping the labour market needs to ensure that it meets these needs. It was also indicated to the Panel through interviews that the programme gathers information on the labour market needs *via* the meetings of the faculty with employers, professionals of media sector during students' internships, and field trips. Moreover, the SER referred to the mechanisms of identifying the labour market needs including cooperation agreements with media institutions, and Ministry of Information through the internship office in the Department, and surveys of employers and alumni. The Panel notes that these methods lack a systematic, scientific and holistic approach, which leads to the participation of public and private companies and institutions in the media sectors of Bahrain to provide their feedback about the labour market needs. Furthermore, the Department did not implement a holistic study of the labour market during the past five years, however, the Department listed in the last improvement plan of 2016, a recommendation stating that it should 'get the most possible benefit from the observations of professionals and employers regarding the study plan', as well as alumni according to another recommendation. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should conduct rigorous 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 at 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, and are appropriate to the programme.
- There are several efforts at the university and the college levels to disseminate the culture of quality amongst faculty members.
- The University provides several opportunities including the establishment of the Unit of Excellence in Teaching and Leadership Skills to develop teaching and professional practices of new and senior faculty members.

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

- improve 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 by using a representative sample on a wider scale from 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 Mass Communication Programme offered by the University of Bahrain.**