



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

# Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

## Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

**Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature**

**College of Arts**

**University of Bahrain**

**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of the Review: 3 - 7 December 2017**

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## Table of Contents

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Acronyms.....	2
The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process.....	4
1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme.....	8
2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme.....	14
3. Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates.....	22
4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance.....	30
5. Conclusion.....	37

## Acronyms

BA	Bachelor of Arts
BAEL	Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature Programme
BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
DELL	Department of English Language and Literature
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
DQAC	Department Quality Assurance Committee
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
HEC	Higher Education Council
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
MA	Master of Arts
MIS	Management Information System
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PAC	Programme Advisory Committee
PCAP	Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice
PEO	Programme Educational Objective
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA	British Quality Assurance Agency
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre

QAO	College of Arts Quality Assurance Office
SAC	Student Advisory Committee
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
UILO	University Intended Learning Outcome
UoB	University of Bahrain
UTEL	Unit for Teaching Excellence and Leadership

## **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 programmes offered by the College of Arts at the University of Bahrain (UoB) was conducted by the DHR of the BQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain.

UoB was notified by the DHR/BQA on 6 March 2017 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College reviews of a set of programmes offered by the College of Arts with the site visit taking place on 3-7 December 2017. These programmes are Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature, Master of Arts in Applied English Language Studies, Bachelor in Arabic Language, Master in Arabic Language and Literature, and Bachelor in Islamic Studies. In preparation for the review, UoB conducted a self-evaluation of the above-mentioned programmes and submitted the Self-Evaluation Reports (SERs) with appendices on the agreed date on 2 July 2017.

The DHR constituted three panels consisting of experts in the academic fields relevant to the programmes above and in higher education who have experience in external programme quality reviews. A total of seven reviewers participated in the reviews of the programmes.

This Report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature based on:

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

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

The DHR would like to extend its thanks to UoB for the co-operative manner in which it has participated in the Programmes-within-College review process. It also wishes to express its appreciation for the open discussions held in the course of the review and the professional conduct of the faculty and administrative staff of the Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature programme.

### **C. Overview of the College of Arts**

The College of Arts, at the UoB, was originally established as a part of the University College of Science, Art and Education, which was founded in 1978. In 1986, the UoB was established by a merger of the Gulf Polytechnic and the University College of Science, Art and Education. The Board of Trustees of the UoB issued a decision, in 1990, to separate the College of Arts & Science into two colleges: The College of Arts and the College of Science. The current vision of the College of Arts is 'to occupy its leading role in promoting the identity and the modern vision of heritage; be distinct in creating the cultural environment and stimulating scientific creativity and intellectual excellence in an atmosphere open to values of pluralism and cultural diversity through outputs that integrate graduates in development, community service and the labour market.' The College of Arts currently includes five departments, which offer undergraduate programmes of study leading to Bachelor of Arts qualifications as well as Master of Arts degrees. At the time of the site visit, the College employed 128 full-time and 69 part-time faculty members, and 29 administrative staff. The total number of enrolled students was 5719.

## D. Overview of the Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature Programme

The Department of English Language and Literature offers the Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature (BAEL) programme at Sakhair campus. The programme was first offered in 1986 when the UoB was established. The Department also offers a Master of Arts in Applied English Language Studies programme as well as 15 service courses to various colleges. The BAEL programme offers a single major option and a major/minor option of a total of 128 credit hours. At the time of the site visit, the total number of students enrolled in the programme was 1319, with the total number of graduates since inception being 1626. Currently, there are 36 full-time and 12 part-time faculty members, supported by seven administrative staff, contributing to the delivery of the programme.

## E. Summary of Review Judgements

**Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature 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 of Arts in English Language and Literature (BAEL) programme has a clear academic framework with appropriate aims for the type and level of the programme. The programme specification outlines the Program Educational Objectives (PEOs), depicting the programme aims, which are mapped to the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs). Moreover, the PILOs and PEOs are well-aligned with the University and College mission statements and have undergone revision as recently as 2017. The mission of the Department of English Language and Literature (DELL) is 'the pursuit of excellence in teaching, learning and research in language-related fields and literature' and promoting 'participation in local and global community by developing a global outlook, cultural awareness, and intercultural communication skills', which is congruent with the institution mission of supporting 'leading edge teaching, technology and research with regional impact.' Further, the mission and vision statements along with programme aims are well-communicated to stakeholders as evidenced by interviews with students and the campus tour, where the mission and vision statements were noticeably on display in the Department. The Panel appreciates that the programme aims are clearly stated, appropriate for the type and level of the programme and well-aligned with the mission statements of the University and College.
- 1.2 The BAEL programme is comprised of 128 credit hours distributed as follows: 11 credit hours (4 courses) university requirements, 18 credit hours (6 courses) college requirements, 54 credit hours (18 courses) programme requirements and 45 credit hours for programme elective courses (for single major, 15 courses to be chosen from two packages of courses; or for major/minor, 5 courses to be chosen from two packages of courses as well as 10 mandatory minor area courses). A typical semester workload begins at 12-14 credit hours, then moves to a recommended 15 and finally 18 credit hours. Upon study of the curriculum, the Panel found that the programme's curriculum has appropriate literature, linguistics and elective course offerings and an adequate number of credits overall, as well as an overall balance between theory and practice. The Panel appreciates that the curriculum is organised to ensure the diversity and appropriateness of literature, linguistics and elective course offerings, adequate number of programme credits, balance of theory and practice, and an appropriate course load for students. Nonetheless, the Panel notes that there is some lack of balance in core courses between linguistics and literature courses, particularly in the required courses, where the curriculum effectively has a total of only four required linguistic courses. Moreover, in the elective course offerings, 14 courses are literature-based while eight are linguistics-based and one course could be either (ENGL 436: Special

Topics). Hence, the Panel advises balancing the linguistic and literature courses in the curriculum. Furthermore, the Panel notes that the prerequisites within the curriculum are generally set appropriately, except that the first linguistics courses, ENGL 308 (English Grammar) and ENGL 340 (Introduction to Linguistics) are scheduled in the third year; and the Panel is of the view that these courses should be offered earlier in the programme. Similarly, the case is the same for some language proficiency support courses such as Language Development Courses III-V, ENGL 205-305-405, and Composition II and III, ENGL 250-350, which are often found in preparatory or foundation years rather than at an advanced level. The Panel recommends that the College should revise the study plan to ensure that all required language proficiency and composition support courses (specific language support courses, not major content courses) are offered earlier in the programme. Moreover, the Panel notes that a capstone course is not included in the curriculum. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should investigate the possibility of integrating a capstone course in the curriculum that provides a cumulative experience from all the offered courses in the programme in a manner that supports the programme aims and objectives.

- 1.3 Course specifications presented to the Panel include the required information relating to the course content, Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) and their mapping to the PILOs, as well as information on weekly topics, assessment and teaching methods used. The Panel notes that the course specification document does not always follow the university's Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre (QAAC) format where, in some courses, the topics as well as the teaching methods and assessment are mapped to the PILOs instead of the CILOs and a number of the course syllabi are incomplete (e.g. ENGL 340, ENGL 250, ENGL 350, ENGL 405). Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should follow the QAAC format for course specifications and include all the required information to ensure consistent delivery of the courses. In view of the examined course files and textbooks onsite, the Panel notes that the breadth and the depth of courses are generally appropriate to the level of a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature programme. Nonetheless, the syllabi of the Language Development courses are not adequate in content with regards to breadth or depth or appropriateness for the level of the programme. For example, the content of ENGL 205 and ENGL 250 (Language Development III and Composition II) could be combined into a single course. Similarly, ENGL 305 and 350 (Language Proficiency IV and Composition III) could also be combined into a single course. Moreover, the use of current research and relevant materials is present in the courses; however, several of the main course textbooks are more than 10 years old (e.g. ENGL 348 and ENGL 440). The Panel recommends that the College should revise all course specification documents, to ensure that they include all the required information and that the list of textbooks of main courses are current and adequately expose students to the new concepts of their field of study.

- 1.4 The BAEL programme has measurable PILOs, which are stated in the programme specification approved in 2016 and are at an appropriate level for a Bachelor of Arts Qualification. The Panel notes the DELL programme team's efforts to revise and improve the PILOs in 2016, compared to the ones approved in 2012. Currently, there are five PILOs divided into four categories: knowledge and understanding (A1, A2, A5); subject – specific skills (B1, B3, B4); thinking skills (C1, C3, C5); general and transferrable skills (D1, D3, D5). The Panel was provided with evidence showing appropriate alignment of the PILOs to the programme aims and college's mission. The Panel appreciates that the PILOs are aligned with the programme aims and college's mission, measurable and appropriate for the programme type and level. Notwithstanding the above, the Panel noted that PILOs 3 and 4, although measurable, are both quite dense (there are four behaviours or verbs in PILO 3 and PILO 4 has two behaviours, which could be further separated into two separate outcomes). The Panel advises that PILOs 3 and 4 be revised or separated for improved clarity and focus, which supports the programme aims and mission.
- 1.5 Course specifications indicate the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for each course in the programme. From the interviews conducted during the site visit, the Panel notes that faculty members are knowledgeable about the procedures for developing CILOs and mapping them to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels. Interviewed staff informed the Panel that the CILOs are developed by course coordinators and revised by the Chairperson of the Department and approved by the QAAC, and the mapping process is checked by DELL's Quality Assurance Committee. The Panel examined the course specifications and course files made available during the site visit and noted that while the majority of the CILOs are properly written, measurable, and mapped to the PILOs, some courses include ILOs that are not measurable, not clearly written, nor appropriately mapped to the PILOs (e.g. ENGL 111, ENGL 348, ENGL 405, ENGL 412, ENGL 405), where as an example some of the CILOs for ENGL 405 (demonstrate understanding) are not measurable. The Panel recommends that the College should review all course specifications to ensure that all CILOs are measurable and appropriately mapped to the PILOs and course topics.
- 1.6 The BAEL programme, single major, does not have any work-based learning component. The only work-based course or component is in the minor of translation and according to the Course Directory and Guide 2017, the practicum course is TRAN 405. The course is mandatory for all students with a minor in translation, offered in the fourth year and is assigned three credits, with prerequisites of TRAN 401 and TRAN 403. The course specification shows five clear and measurable CILOs; the first three are mapped to the PILOs appropriately while the last two are not. The Panel advises that the practicum course specification, including mapping between CILOs and PILOs, be updated and completed. The course assessment strategy is clear and known by participants, as evidenced by the course specification and interviews with

practicum supervisors, employers, and students. The assessment strategy is comprised of portfolio evaluation (40%), reports (30%), attendance (10%), and presentation (20%). Interviewed students informed the Panel that a faculty member conducts one or two on-site visits per semester; and students can take up to two courses along with the practicum. The employers and students' views on the relevance and benefit of the course are highly positive, where the students receive good training that prepares them for employment and are immediately employed upon graduation. The Panel appreciates the clear and relevant practicum for translation minor students with clear assessment tools and relevant CILOs that contribute to the achievement of the programme outcomes, and suggests that the College investigate the concept of work-based learning for the single major BAEL students.

- 1.7 UoB has a Teaching and Learning Policy, which specifies student-centred and e-learning blended teaching approaches; however, such a policy is lacking at the College/Department level, as evidenced by interviews. In the majority of course specifications, teaching methods are included; however, in several of the courses reviewed by the Panel, teaching methods are not mapped to CILOs, but rather to PILOs. Further, the same teaching methods mentioned are often repeated for each week (e.g. ENGL 340, ENGL 348, ENGL 405) (see paragraph 1.3). From interview sessions with faculty and students and provided evidence, the Panel confirmed that, in practice, there is a variety of teaching and learning methods used in the programme, which supports the attainment of the intended learning outcomes. These methods are informed by current research, comprising: lecturing, discussion, listening activities, exercises, critiques, group work, think-pair-share, problem-solving, case studies, presentations, peer reviews, assignment portfolios, use of articles, multi-media, plays and debates. These methods and techniques reflect good practices and professional development in research-based communicative and student-centred constructivist pedagogy. The Panel notes that through such methods, students are exposed to practice and application of theory and are encouraged to develop independent learning skills, and that they are generally satisfied with these teaching methods. The Panel appreciates that the programme utilises a variety of appropriate teaching and learning methods to ensure attainment of the intended learning outcomes and promote student learning and development. The Panel also confirmed that the vast majority of the courses offered by the Department are placed on Blackboard. However, the features available within the e-learning platform are not fully utilised as the platform is mainly used to deposit course material, upload assignments and communicate with students. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should develop and implement a plan that ensures the effective use of the available e-learning platform in the delivery of the programme courses.
- 1.8 The University has a 'Study and Exam Regulations' document as well as 'Assessment and Moderation Guidelines' that include an appropriate assessment policy. While the

institutional policy addresses both formative and summative assessment, interviewed faculty members did not have a shared understanding of the purpose and the criteria of formative assessment. According to students and faculty interviews, the assessment policy is disseminated during the induction day in the Student Handbook and *via* the website and Blackboard. The mark distribution of courses is given to the students at the start of the semester in the course specification, which includes a mapping of the course content to assessment. However, some courses do not include all the details and in some, the assessment tasks are mapped to the PILOs instead of CILOs, as noted in paragraph 1.3. According to the SER, 40% of the assessment marks are allocated to the final examination while the remaining 60% is distributed according to the type of the course, such that linguistic and literature courses have 50% and language courses have 20% or less for the midterm examination, which is reflected in the courses. Furthermore, UoB has a clear appeal policy and procedure that students are well-aware of, as confirmed from student interviews and students' grade appeals and requests for re-grading evidence. Interviews with students revealed that they typically receive written feedback on assignments/test papers, no more than, on average, two weeks after the summative assessment; moreover, some students mentioned that they received feedback on their progress orally by faculty during office hours. The Panel appreciates the clear and appropriate university assessment policy and framework that provide provision for timely feedback, and clear appeal policy and procedures. Notwithstanding the above, the Panel notes that internal and external moderations are not conducted in the BAEL programme, in line with university policies. Moreover, while there is an anti-plagiarism policy at the university level, its implementation is not consistent in the BAEL programme. The Panel urges the implementation of elements of the university's assessment policy, as noted in paragraphs 3.3, 3.5 and 3.6.

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

- The programme aims are clearly stated, appropriate for the type and level of the programme and well-aligned with the mission statements of the University and College.
- The curriculum is organised to ensure the diversity and appropriateness of literature, linguistics and elective course offerings, adequate number of programme credits, balance of theory and practice, and an appropriate course load for students.
- The programme intended learning outcomes are aligned with the programme aims and college's mission, are measurable and appropriate for the programme type and level.
- There is a work-based leaning element for the translation minor students, with clear assessment tools and relevant course intended learning outcomes that contribute to the achievement of the programme outcomes.

- The programme utilises a variety of appropriate teaching and learning methods to ensure attainment of the intended learning outcomes and promote student learning and development.
- There are clear and appropriate university assessment policy and framework that provide provision for timely feedback, and clear appeal policy and procedures.

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

- revise the study plan to ensure that all required language proficiency and composition support courses (specific language support courses, not major content courses) are offered earlier in the programme
- investigate the possibility of integrating a capstone course in the curriculum that provides a cumulative experience from all the offered courses in the programme, in a manner that supports the programme aims and objectives
- follow the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre format for course specifications and include all the required information to ensure consistent delivery of the courses
- revise all course specification documents, to ensure that they include all the required information and that the lists of textbooks of main courses are current and adequately expose students to the new concepts of their field of study
- review all course specifications to ensure that all course intended learning outcomes are measurable and appropriately mapped to the programme intended learning outcomes and course topics
- develop and implement a plan that ensures the effective use of the available e-learning platform in the delivery of the programme courses.

### 1.11 **Judgement**

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

## 2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

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

- 2.1 The programme applies the university's general admission policy for undergraduate programmes that is published on the university's website and in the 'Study and Exam Regulations' document. As per the policy, applicants should score a minimum of 70% in the Secondary School Certificate or its equivalent; pass an aptitude test and a personal interview; and be competent in the language of instruction of the programme of study. Students are required to attend an Orientation Programme to improve their English language skills, unless they have an overall score of 90% or better in the General Secondary School certificate, score 90% or better in English language courses taken during high school, obtain a minimum score of 5.5 IELTS or 500 in TOEFL, or pass the English Exemption Test held by UoB. In any of the above cases, students are exempted from the Orientation Programme and are enrolled directly into the programme. From interviews, the Panel confirmed that the BAEL programme has no specific admission policy, such as an internationally recognized test. Moreover, the SER has identified the need for entry requirements at programme level. The Panel notes that this policy allows a student who scores 90% or higher overall, no matter the English language proficiency, to possibly enter the BAEL programme directly, and the Panel is of the view that this policy is not entirely appropriate for the purpose of the programme. Furthermore, there is a lack of evidence to indicate that the current admission policy has been benchmarked or updated as a result of an internal review. Hence, the Panel acknowledges, the availability of an admission policy with generally acceptable conditions published on the university's website at the level of the institution. Nonetheless, the Panel recommends that the College should revise the admission policy to include specific programme admission requirements for the BAEL programme, in light of the current admission outcomes against admission policies of similar programmes (see paragraph 3.2) and students' performance (see paragraphs 2.2 & 3.9).
- 2.2 As noted earlier, students are accepted into the programme in accordance with the UoB's general admission requirements and there has been an increase in student intake recently. Most of the students admitted into the programme are female (83%) and Bahraini nationals (91%), with an increase in the intake of students from other Arab countries from 2.9% to 5.5%. Furthermore, the number of the directly accepted students into the programme, without taking the Orientation Programme, has increased in the last three years from 47% to over 56%. According to the raw data provided, the admitted students' profile meets the basic admission criteria for the University. As noted earlier, there is an Orientation Programme that focuses on developing students' basic language skills for one semester or up to one year

depending on the students' English exemption test results. However, significant dismissal and withdrawal rates from the programme indicate that these measures, as well as the institutional admission requirements, may not be sufficient for raising the students' linguistic competence to a level that enables them to function properly in the programme. The Panel further notes that there are no apparent mechanisms in place to investigate or implement measures to follow up on students' academic progress in relation to their profile, as evidenced by the SER and interviews. The Panel recommends that the College should investigate measures to follow up on BAEL students' academic progress in relation to their admission profile and establish remedial measures for inadequately prepared students, to ensure that the profile of admitted students matches the programme aims.

- 2.3 A well-structured hierarchy has been established for the BAEL programme in accordance with the university regulations. The department's Chairperson is responsible for its management, where the responsibilities of the Chairperson are clearly stated in the QAAC Quality Manual. There are department committees related to the timetable, curriculum, quality assurance, recruitment, research, conference and promotion. Moreover, course coordinators are assigned the responsibility for the coordination of assessment and grading of multi-section courses. Decisions regarding the BAEL programme are proposed by the department's relevant committees and then approved by the Department Council and the College Council and finally by the University Council, as needed. From interviews and the provided evidence, the Panel established that the organizational structure for the management of the programme is clear, appropriate for the programme and facilitates effective communication and decision-making. The Panel notes, with appreciation, the organizational structure and clearly-stated reporting lines with regards to the management of the programme.
- 2.4 The Department is employing 36 full-time faculty members contributing to the BAEL programme with 28 assistant professors, six associate professors and two instructors with varied and appropriate specializations in literature, linguistics and translation. Moreover, 12 part-time staff are employed for teaching some service courses. The major emphasis in the faculty's workload is on teaching, in addition to other activities such as research, advising, supervision and committees. According to the SER, the required weekly teaching load is 12 credit hours for PhD holders and 15 for Master holders. However, a number of the interviewed faculty members stated that they usually teach three to six extra hours of service courses, thus impacting their other activities due to the high teaching load. Moreover, the student-faculty ratio for the BAEL programme based on the 1319 enrolled students was at the time of the site visit 42:1 and, from interviews and provided evidence, the Panel notes that the number of students taught by the average faculty member is high, ranging from 150 to over 300 students, in some cases. Interviewed faculty and their CVs indicate that the majority of BAEL faculty has not published in the last 4-5 years. Moreover, although the

Deanship of Scientific Research provides publishing incentives (grants and financial support), research is impacted by the high teaching loads. The Panel acknowledges that there is an appropriate faculty specialisation to cater for the needs of the programme. Nonetheless, the teaching load and the student-staff ratio are high in light of international standards, impacting staff research performance and community engagement, as well as the efficient delivery of the programme. The Panel recommends that the College should investigate ways of reducing staff teaching load and the number of students taught by faculty members, to enable the efficient delivery of the programme and allow time for faculty research and community engagement activities.

- 2.5 Staff recruitment policy and procedure are stated in the university's Academic and Administrative Bylaws, which are also stated in the SER. The Department has a recruitment committee that sends its recommendations, based on need, to the Department Council then to the College Council and the university administration. Moreover, the Panel was informed that faculty appraisal used to be done at times of contract renewal only, but recently it is annually conducted for all the staff through an online system. The recently revised annual appraisal covers faculty members' contribution to teaching, research, university and community service and professional development. Furthermore, the department's Chairperson provides input for all faculty evaluations. Faculty are also evaluated at the end of each semester by the students they teach. The Panel notes that these evaluation mechanisms are aligned with the institutional policy but there is no obvious link between staff appraisal and professional development (see paragraph 4.9). Interviewed faculty and provided evidence confirm the adherence to these policies and the Panel notes with appreciation that the criteria and procedures for recruitment and appraisal are appropriate and consistently implemented. Moreover, the retention rate for the period 2013-2017 was 88% owing to a competitive salary and incentives, but it was noted that, while there is a part-time instructor guide, there is no formal induction of newly appointed staff or a faculty exit survey. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should implement systematic and formal arrangements for the induction of newly appointed faculty. The Panel also suggests conducting faculty exit surveys. According to the 'Regulation for Academic Promotion' document at UoB, the promotion criteria include teaching, research and community service and follow clear procedures which are known to faculty. Nonetheless, interviewed faculty confirmed that some of them have been working at the Department for many years and they did not apply for promotion. Moreover, during faculty interviews, the Panel noted that there are obstacles to promotion, which include the high teaching load that has a negative impact on research. The Panel urges the College to ensure an academic environment that supports faculty in applying for promotion, in line with university policy and programme aims (see paragraph 2.4).

- 2.6 The SER indicates that the UoB provides a secure Management Information System (MIS) that covers registration, academic advising, scheduling, student registration, human resources and surveys. Moreover, the department's Chairperson uses the MIS to make decisions on scheduling based on student enrolment; conducts appraisal of staff members; accesses personal records of students, faculty and administrative staff within the Department; as well as approves the grades submitted by the faculty members. The system facilitates students' mentoring and advising. Moreover, students can register and drop courses and pay registration fees online. Staff and student interviews confirmed that the available components of the MIS have a good potential for enabling informed decision-making for the Department, the Chairperson, advisors, staff and students. The Panel notes, with appreciation, the availability of the components of the MIS with potential to support the programme. Nonetheless, the Panel notes that the MIS could provide further reports, and 'more detailed and systematic statistics about students from the registration system' could be obtained to augment the decision-making process within the programme, as identified in the SER. Hence, the Panel advises the College to further utilise the MIS to make better informed decisions regarding the programme.
- 2.7 UoB has a policy and procedures for ensuring the security of students' and instructors' records and the accuracy of results, where the IT Centre implements these in a strict manner and the Deanship of Admission and Registration handles students' records. Furthermore, various access levels of authorisation are implemented with passwords that users have to change on a regular basis. All information is backed up by the IT Centre according to its backup and recovery policy and procedures, with backups being kept on- and off-campus. Furthermore, there is an audit trail of all transactions, which records the approval of the grades and grade changes. Instructors enter their grades electronically and send them to the department's Chairperson, who can view and approve them. During the site visit, the Panel was able to confirm that these procedures are consistently and effectively implemented. The Panel notes, with appreciation that policies and procedures to ensure security of learners' records and accuracy of results are in place.
- 2.8 According to the SER, and as confirmed during the site visit tour, there are a number of classrooms dedicated to the programme, each of which is equipped with a data-show projector connected to the Internet as well as a computer and a whiteboard. There are also well-equipped laboratories with a special one for the visually-impaired students. There is a reading laboratory and a functioning interpreting laboratory as well. A teachers' resource room is also available. Moreover, Wi-Fi and email services are available for staff and students. Each faculty member has a separate office that is adequately equipped, which enables them to meet and converse with students. The Panel notes that the available facilities viewed during the site visit are adequate for the programme and students' needs. However, some of the laboratories had outdated

computers and were in need of updating. UoB's main library is well-equipped with physical resources along with references that cater for the programme, as well as multiple study areas. There are special study rooms in the library where students can meet and discuss their common academic issues. The digital library provides access to 150,000 e-books. Students can access these resources on- and off-campus. Moreover, the library has adequate facilities that meet national and international standards. Students praised the library's facilities, especially the digital library to which they have access from any place. The University also has large halls and auditoriums for classes with a large number of students. DELL staff and students also have access to the facilities of the E-learning Centre, the Bahrain Credit Media Centre, the National Geographic Centre and the Centre for English Language Learning. During interviews, the Panel confirmed that students and staff are satisfied with the library, the facilities and laboratories available for the programme. The Panel notes, with appreciation, the provision of adequate facilities and resources for the programme, including a well-equipped library.

- 2.9 There are arrangements for generating usage reports at the departmental, college and university levels for a number of services. The Department keeps a record of all faculty members who use e-learning facilities, and the E-Learning Centre generates usage reports, which indicate that the faculty have fair usages of Blackboard and Moodle systems in the instruction process. However, the Panel notes that the programme does not make effective usage of the available e-learning platforms, and urges the College to ensure that the programme's courses further benefit from the available e-learning management systems and the support provided by the E-learning Centre (see paragraph 1.7). UoB's main library maintains a record of the requests of resources and library loans by faculty and students. During the site visit tour, the Panel noticed that a manual borrowing system is used for monitoring the rate of students' borrowing from the reading laboratory and that time-tables are posted in the classrooms and laboratories used by the programme. The Panel acknowledges that tracking systems are available that can generate appropriate usage reports. Nonetheless, there is lack of evidence to prove that information from tracking reports is used to inform decision-making. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should utilise the information obtained from tracking reports to inform the process of decision-making with regard to the programme.
- 2.10 During the site visit, the Panel noted that appropriate support is provided for students in relation to the library, laboratories and e-learning, both in terms of infrastructure and computing facilities, or human support such as laboratory technicians or specialists within the library. The main library offers training sessions for faculty and students on how to make use of its facilities. There is a special instruction hall in the library for this purpose. The library has facilities as well as support staff to support students in their academic tasks. Interviewed students indicated their satisfaction with

the support they receive from the library's staff. Zain E-learning Centre provides training and advice on Blackboard, which is used for providing students with educational materials such as syllabi, slides, previous tests, assignments and grades. Student interviews supported the fact that they benefit from faculty members' use of Blackboard in courses. The computing laboratories in the Department are supported with a technician who is responsible for running and maintaining them. A special laboratory is dedicated for visually-impaired students and smart laboratories with qualified technicians for those teaching pronunciation and speech production are available. There are counselling and guidance services, as confirmed by staff and students interviewed during the site visit, which focus on career counselling, study habits and behavioural issues. The Panel notes, with appreciation, the availability of comprehensive support facilities and guidance for the students, and that students find them of value.

- 2.11 The Deanship of Student Affairs organizes an induction day annually for the newly admitted students during which they are introduced to the academic programmes. They are also introduced to the university regulations, facilities, events and students' activities. A Student Handbook is distributed, detailing the available facilities and describing the overarching academic regulations. In addition, the College of Arts conducts another induction day for its students in which new students meet the Dean and the departments' Chairpersons. The Chairperson gives a briefing about the Department and provides the students with the programme course directory. New students are also assigned advisors. Interviewed students indicated their satisfaction with the induction day, which is not repeated for students who miss it. The Panel was informed that questionnaires are distributed to those who attend the induction day to measure its effectiveness but no evidence was provided that the results of the questionnaires were used for improving the induction day. The Panel notes, with appreciation, the organization of an induction day for newly admitted students by the University and the College. Nonetheless, the Panel suggests that the institution tracks attendance of newly admitted and transferred students on that day; investigates ways to repeat the induction, to cater for students who miss it; and use the outcome of the induction day survey to inform improvements in induction programme and activities.
- 2.12 UoB has a formal academic advising policy where each student is assigned an academic advisor who is responsible to follow up the student's progress and provide the academic advice needed. The SER states that faculty members of the BAEL programme rely on an online advising system to monitor and identify at-risk students, who are defined as those with a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) below 2.0. Information on academic regulations are available in the Student Handbook and on the university website. During the site visit, the Panel noted that once identified, at-risk students are not allowed to register online without the permission of their advisors, who would advise them to plan their schedules and select courses, in order

to raise their CGPAs above 2.0 to avoid dismissal. Nonetheless, from student interviews, the Panel noted that there is no systematic follow-up or monitoring of at-risk students. Moreover, outcomes of the students' satisfaction survey show an overall dissatisfaction with the advising provided to the students enrolled in the programme, and the majority of students interviewed during the site visit indicated that they do not visit their advisors often. Furthermore, the Panel notes that the number of advisees is high for some advisors. The Panel acknowledges the online procedure for identifying at-risk students and offering these students some guidance. Nonetheless, the Panel is of the view that at-risk students need to be identified before their CGPAs drop below 2.0, in order to help them avoid being placed on probation and at risk of facing dismissal. Hence, in light of the above and the significant dismissal rates (see paragraphs 2.2 and 3.9), the Panel recommends that the College should investigate ways to provide more effective academic advising for all students; and to use proactive advising for possible at-risk students, to identify them early on, and systematically monitor them to ensure their academic good standing.

2.13 According to the SER, the University provides various informal learning opportunities for the BAEL students; specifically, opportunities provided by the Centre for English Language Learning, the National Geographic Centre and DELL's extra-curricular activities. Students engage in department-sponsored extracurricular activities such as the annual drama festival, college oral presentations competition, and competition in poetry writing. Students who have certain academic weaknesses can be assisted through the Peer Tutoring programme that is organised through the Student Services. In addition, the Deanship of Student Affairs occasionally organizes symposia and conferences for all UoB students. The E-learning Centre organizes an annual conference to which students are invited and encouraged to attend. Interviewed students expressed their satisfaction with the provided extracurricular opportunities and confirmed the availability of these opportunities. The Panel notes, with appreciation, the availability of opportunities for the BAEL students to get involved in extracurricular activities that expand their experiences and knowledge.

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

- There is a clear organizational structure and reporting lines with regards to the management of the programme.
- The criteria and procedures for recruitment and appraisal are appropriate and consistently implemented
- There is a management information system that includes various components with potential to support the programme.
- There are policies and procedures in place to ensure the security of learners' records and accuracy of results.

- There are adequate facilities and resources for the programme, including a well-equipped library.
- There are comprehensive support facilities and guidance for the students, and students find them of value.
- There is an induction day organized by both the University and the College, which introduces newly admitted students to the needs of the programme and university regulations.
- There is a multitude of extracurricular opportunities for students to get involved in, which expand their experiences and knowledge.

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

- revise the admission policy to include specific programme admission requirements for the BAEL programme, in light of the outcomes of the current admission outcomes against admission policies of similar programmes and students' performance
- investigate measures to follow up on BAEL students' academic progress in relation to their admission profile and establish remedial measures for inadequately prepared students, to ensure that the profile of admitted students matches the programme aims
- investigate ways of reducing staff teaching load and student-to-faculty ratios, to enable the efficient delivery of the programme and allow time for faculty research and community engagement activities
- implement systematic and formal arrangements for the induction of newly appointed faculty
- utilise the information obtained from tracking reports to inform the process of decision-making with regard to the programme
- investigate ways to provide more effective academic advising for all students; and use pro-active advising for possible at-risk students, to identify them early on, and to systematically monitor them to ensure their academic good standing.

## 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 The University identifies the attributes expected in all its graduates as indicated in the University Intended Learning Outcomes (UILOs), which are categorised into effective communication, technology competence, critical thinking knowledge and skills, information literacy, responsibility and integrity, and life-long learning. To ensure that the graduates of the programme attain these attributes, the SER shows how the PEOs and PILOs are mapped to the UILOs. However, the mapping of the PEOs and PILOs to the UILOs needs to be revised due to several instances of incorrect mapping. For instance, PEO 1, 'Communicate effectively both orally and in writing in a variety of academic and professional settings' is mapped to UILO 3, 'Critical Thinking Knowledge and Skill: Possess a knowledge base in general education areas and demonstrate and apply critical and creative thinking, and specific knowledge and skills in a major discipline or professional programme of study'. This PEO should be mapped to UILO 1, 'Communication: Communicate effectively (oral and written) in a clear, well-organized manner to convey ideas with an intended audience in a variety of academic and professional settings'. An example of an incorrect mapping between the PILOs and the UILOs is PILO 1 'Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theoretical concepts, processes, practices, properties and principles related to language, literature, and linguistics' being mapped to UILO 4 'Information Literacy: Demonstrate the ability to apply research skills to effectively locate, retrieve and evaluate information and use it ethically'. This PILO is better mapped to UILO 3 'Critical Thinking Knowledge and Skill'. The Panel is of the view that it is extremely difficult to measure the attainment of graduate attributes if the outcomes are not mapped appropriately. The Panel further notes that the programme has made an effort to ensure the validity of its assessment through the course assessment forms. However, there is no direct evidence that attainment of the graduate attributes and/or programme outcomes are appropriately and consistently measured, due to alignment issues noted earlier in this paragraph and the lack of effectively measuring the CILOs, due to them not being written clearly and measurably, and the misalignment in mapping assessments to CILOs (see paragraphs 1.5 and 3.5). The Panel recommends that the College should revise the mapping of the PEOs and PILOs to the UILOs and ensure that the programme utilises reliable assessments that adequately measure the attainment of CILOs and hence PILOs.
- 3.2 UoB has a Benchmarking Policy that was approved in 2015, the purpose of which is to 'ensure that the University's performance is comparable to national and international standards'. In order to equate academic standards, the SER states that the NQF level descriptors are used to ensure that each course and consequently the whole

programme, is within the same level required in terms of knowledge and skills. The SER also states that the 'scope of study and content of the programme' was benchmarked with the British Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) definition of Bachelor of Arts in English as stated in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2015) and was found to be 'consistent'. The SER also illustrates that a benchmarking of PEOs, PILOs, and course offerings to other regional and international programmes has taken place. Moreover, no evidence was presented to show how the attributes of BAEL students are consistent with those of the QAA definition, how the benchmarking process was managed, or how the benchmarking was used. During interview sessions, faculty members confirmed that all benchmarking activities to date were conducted informally. The Panel acknowledges the efforts made by the programme to informally benchmark some of its aspects in order to verify the equivalence of its academic standards. Nonetheless, the Panel notes that procedures stated in UoB's formal benchmarking policy were not adhered to and that benchmarking should not only be limited to PEOs, PILOs, and course offerings but expanded to other areas such as admission requirements, assessment and graduate achievements. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should conduct formal benchmarking of all aspects of the programme in accordance with the university's benchmarking policy.

- 3.3 The University has appropriate assessment policy and procedures, as noted earlier (see paragraph 1.8). It is evident from interview sessions and course files provided during the site visit that the programme follows the appeal procedures and the course outlines, with typical course information and assessment plan provided to students of all BAEL courses during the first week of the semester. The Panel appreciates that assessment policies and procedures are well-communicated and available to students, and faculty members use assessment tools and marking schemes stated in the course specifications. To ensure fairness of assessment, the SER states that the department's Chairperson reviews the grades 'in terms of overall average, rate of failure, and whether they generally represent a normal curve with the majority of students getting a (C) grade and around the (C) grade', before these are released to students. Moreover, according to the SER, 'no procedures are followed for the moderation of single section courses'. It became evident from the interviews that faculty members are primarily responsible for ensuring that the assessment policy and procedures are implemented, except for multi-section courses, where the examination is set by the course coordinator in collaboration with faculty members teaching the different sections. UoB has a clear plagiarism policy and faculty are aware of the existence of its related procedures; however, there is no evidence to ensure that the policy is implemented consistently and effectively to ensure that students' submitted work is free from plagiarism. Moreover, faculty members were not all able to articulate how they should deal with detected plagiarism cases in line with the university's policy in this regard. Furthermore, internal and external moderation of assessment tools and students'

assessed work is not implemented for the BAEL courses (see paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6) and there is no evidence of a systematic review of the assessment policies and procedures to ensure that these are suitable for the needs of the programme. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should implement a formal system with clear lines of responsibilities, to ensure that the programme applies all aspects of the university's assessment policy, including those relevant to internal and external moderation of assessment and dealing with plagiarism.

- 3.4 According to the SER and faculty interviews, there are mechanisms, such as the course specifications and the course assessment forms that are adopted by the programme to ensure the alignment of assessment with ILOs and assure the academic standards of the graduates. However, there is a lack of evidence of appropriately linking course assessments to CILOs or of appropriately measuring the outcomes. For instance, some of the sampled course files mapped course assessments to PILOs rather than CILOs (as noted earlier in paragraph 1.3), while the ENGL350 course syllabus listed lectures and writing workshops as assessments. Furthermore, all the CILOs had the same scores in the results' column and not all assessments listed were related to each CILO on the course assessment form (e.g. ENGL250). Moreover, there were mismatches between the CILOs mapped to the PILOs on course syllabi (e.g. ENGL350 and ENGL405). From faculty interviews and the reviewed sample of course assessment forms, the Panel concluded that individual CILOs are not always measured. This coupled with the inaccuracy of the mapping of the assessments to the CILOs, and to the PILOs, makes it difficult to ascertain whether academic standards are assured. The Panel recommends that the College should thoroughly review and revise the alignment of course assessments with CILOs and PILOs to ensure the achievement of academic standards of graduates. Moreover, the Panel urges investigating ways to detect misalignments through internal and external scrutiny of assessment tools and students' assessed work (see paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6).
- 3.5 UoB has a policy on the moderation of examinations and student assessment that covers the requirements of internal pre- and post-assessment moderation. Moreover, the QAAC manual states that 'internal moderation processes' principles at UoB ... aim to ensure that all assessments are applied consistently'. From the SER and faculty interviews, the Panel notes that for courses offered in multi-sections, a consultation process takes place and common mid-term and final examinations are developed. There is evidence of cases where students' answer papers are graded collectively and grades are reviewed to ensure that they yield a normal distribution curve, while as stated in the SER 'no procedures are followed for the moderation of tests/examinations of single section courses'. Therefore, there is no evidence of a formal internal moderation system being implemented by the programme for setting assessment instruments and grading students' achievements. The Panel recommends that the College should implement a formal internal moderation in line with the university's

policy and procedure, and develop mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of internal moderation to ensure fair and rigorous assessment.

- 3.6 UoB has a policy for the Moderation of Examinations and Student Assessment that covers the requirements of external moderation of assessments. Moreover, the QAAC manual states that ‘feedback and outcomes of internal and external moderation support further development of good practice’ and ‘external moderation of assessment must be conducted for those programmes that do not have any review cycle of accreditation’, which is the case for the BAEL programme. According to the SER, the ‘practice of external moderation has not been adopted by the Department’ and ‘no such system exists in undergraduate programmes’ at the UoB. The Panel concludes that there is no evidence of an external moderation system and hence the Panel recommends that the College should implement external moderation of the assessment tools used in the programme and students’ assessed work in line with the university procedures and assess its effectiveness.
- 3.7 The Panel examined samples of students’ assessed work and found that the assessment tools used in the literature and linguistics courses are generally appropriate for a Bachelor of Arts programme in the region. Moreover, there is no evidence of extreme grade inflation and there is a variety of assessment, that includes critical thinking elements, and the students’ level of achievement is reasonable. However, the assessments in the language development and writing composition courses are below the expected level of a Bachelor degree in the region (as discussed in Indicator 1). For instance, the required essay production in both ENGL250 and ENGL350 is below expectations of a Bachelor level course. A variety of assessment tools (presentations, reports, and examinations) assessing both theoretical knowledge and practical applications are generally utilized; however, in some courses there is a lack of variety whereby most of the assessment is based on written examination, and the weighing of examinations is too high (i.e. ENGL340 has 90% of its assessment based on written examinations). In many cases, course rubrics were either unavailable (ENGL348, ENGL412) or unclear as to how marks were allocated (ENGL250, ENGL350, ENGL412). Moreover, there was no evidence of moderation of marked assessments in multi-section courses. In light of this, the Panel advises raising the expectations in the language development and writing composition courses; investigating ways to ensure a variety of assessments is utilized in all courses; and ensuring appropriateness and usage of rubrics.
- 3.8 The SER states that the programme uses two main methods to assess the level of PILOs’ achievement; a direct method of assessing the PILOs through the achievement of CILOs using the course assessment forms; and an indirect method using senior exit and alumni surveys. The programme makes the following claim, ‘the survey of alumni in the past three years and the alumni survey in 2017 confirm that PILOs are achieved

as judged by the degree of satisfaction of both senior students and alumni'. However, the provided statistics of the senior exit survey results do not reflect that. Moreover, during interviews, the Panel came to know that surveying of alumni and employers is not conducted systematically and the number of respondents is low, as shown by the statistics provided (see paragraph 3.13). Additionally, as stated earlier, the immeasurability of some CILOs, the misalignment of assessments to CILOs and/or PILOs, and the lack of individually measuring CILOs' achievement make it extremely difficult to measure the PILOs and PEOs adequately (see paragraphs 1.3, 1.5, 3.4, etc.). Moreover, there is no capstone project, and the Panel urges incorporating a compulsory capstone component (as recommended in paragraph 1.2). Furthermore, interviews and the SER do not indicate how the programme measures the achievement of the PEOs or assesses its grade distribution. However, there is a normal grade distribution in most of the courses, as evidenced by the course files, but in some cases the Panel noticed that the grade distribution is skewed towards the high end. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should implement effective measures to ensure that the level of achievement of the programme's graduates meet the programme aims and ILOs.

- 3.9 According to the QAAC Quality Manual, cohort analysis should be conducted on a regular basis in academic programmes. The programme provided data on the ratios of admitted students to successful graduates including rates of dismissal and length of study, which indicate that analysis of these data is not conducted systematically nor are its results used to inform decision making for the programme. The data provided shows that the intake into the programme has been increasing in the past years, where about 50% of the students were admitted directly into the first year of the programme, about 40% into the Orientation programme and the rest were a few transfer students. The statistics provided in the SER show that only 15% of the students who graduated in the academic years 2013-2014 to 2015-2016 have finished the programme requirements within 4 years and 30% of the students completed the programme in 4.5 years, while the remaining students took longer; and around 15% of the 2015-2016 graduates took six years or longer to complete the programme. The Panel notes from the extra statistics provided by the College (GE19) that the students' dismissal rate from the programme is high (22% for 2011-2012 cohort; 26% for 2012-2013, 17% for 2013-2014 and 16% for 2014-2015). This, coupled with the permanent official withdrawal rate for the same period (7%, 7%, 5%, 3% respectively), raises a concern about the ability of the enrolled students to meet the requirements of the programme (see paragraph 2.2). Moreover, even though the Panel was informed during the site visit that the Registration Department could provide the needed data, it was noted that there is a lack of evidence to show that the programme conducts cohort analysis and follows student progression year on year. The Panel notes that rates of dismissal and withdrawal are relatively high and that the length of study is not in line with the programme's study plan. Moreover, data on the first destination of graduates was not

provided in the SER nor in the evidence. The Panel recommends that the College should implement a systematic cohort analysis, study the reasons for the dismissal and withdrawal from the programme and the long duration needed to complete its requirements, and develop a mitigation plan, as well as gather data on first destinations of graduates.

- 3.10 As mentioned previously, in paragraph 1.6, the BAEL programme single major does not have any work-based learning component, while there is a work-based course in the minor of translation, being TRAN 405. The course specification indicates that assessment marks are allocated according to the report (30%), presentation (20%), attendance (10%) and portfolio (40%). Samples of assessments demonstrate that the learning experience in terms of content and level is appropriate for meeting the intended learning outcomes; however, as in other courses, the outcomes are not measured. During interviews, the Panel was informed that students are monitored by a faculty member throughout the practicum. Nonetheless, several interviews indicated that the definition of work-based learning is not clear to some members of the Department. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should develop comprehensive policies and procedures for managing the practicum course to ensure its effective implementation by all participants.
- 3.11 The university's Quality Manual states that programmes should utilise a Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) to provide feedback on the professional and labour market needs. According to the SER, the BAEL programme utilises a Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) that includes employers and alumni from appropriate fields as well as a Student Advisory Committee (SAC) with members representing different levels of the programme. During the interview with SAC members, the Panel was informed that the Committee was recently formed and met once to discuss the programme and attended a seminar about the NQF on a second occasion. Moreover, the Panel notes that interviewed SAC members did not know how they were selected although they understood that their role is to provide suggestions to the programme. According to the minutes of the April 2017 SAC meeting, numerous suggestions were made. The SER indicates that PAC has 10 members, who reported during interviews that they had met twice and had made suggestions for improvements. However, although these members were informed of their roles, they did not receive any feedback about actions taken on their recommendations from their previous meetings. Moreover, no evidence was provided to the Panel to show that recommendations made by the two recently formed advisory committees are being used systematically to inform programme decision-making. As a result, the Panel acknowledges the efforts of the College and the Department in recently forming programme advisory committees with clear terms of reference at the institutional level. However, the Panel recommends that the College should expedite the implementation of policies and

procedures related to the advisory committees for obtaining feedback and acting on their recommendations.

- 3.12 There is evidence of graduate and employer satisfaction, in general, with the standards of the graduate profile. The SER presents students' exit survey data from the last three years, which indicates that graduates generally feel satisfied that they attained the knowledge and skills needed for functioning well in the job market. Moreover, a recent alumni survey (2017) found that the programme prepares students with analytical abilities and adequate linguistic knowledge and skills, for employment or enrolling in post-graduate study. However, the Panel notes that the number of respondents are very low and the respondents' response rate was not indicated, which makes it difficult to generalise findings to all alumni. The Panel interviewed alumni and employers during the site visit and found that they were relatively satisfied with the performance of the programme's graduates. Employers noted graduates' good work ethics and alumni noted the ability to find jobs easily. However, employers noted that students still need to be familiar with more technology and better informed of the real work environment. The Panel appreciates that there is general satisfaction with the graduate profile amongst alumni and employers, and urges the College to more systematically collect, analyse, and utilize graduate and employer feedback on their satisfaction with the standards of the graduate and to improve the response rate (see paragraph 4.8).
- 3.13 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Academic Standards of the Graduates, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- The assessment policies and procedures are well-communicated and available to students, and faculty members use assessment tools and marking schemes stated in the course specifications.
  - There is general satisfaction with the graduate profile amongst alumni and employers.
- 3.14 In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the College should:
- revise the mapping of the programme educational objectives and programme intended learning outcomes to the university intended learning outcomes and ensure that the programme utilises reliable assessments that adequately measure the attainment of the course intended learning outcomes and hence the programme intended learning outcomes
  - conduct formal benchmarking of all aspects of the programme in accordance with the university's benchmarking policy
  - implement a formal system with clear lines of responsibility, to ensure that the programme applies all aspects of the university's assessment policy, including

those relevant to internal and external moderation of assessment and dealing with plagiarism

- review thoroughly and revise the alignment of course assessments with the course intended learning outcomes and the programme intended learning outcomes to ensure the achievement of academic standards of graduates
- implement formal internal moderation in line with the university's policy and procedure and develop mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of internal moderation to ensure fair and rigorous assessment
- implement external moderation of the assessment tools used in the programme and students' assessed work in line with the university procedures and assess its effectiveness
- implement effective measures to ensure that the level of achievement of the programme's graduates meet the programme aims and intended learning outcomes
- implement a systematic cohort analysis, study the reasons for the dismissal and withdrawal from the programme and the long duration needed to complete its requirements, and develop a mitigation plan, as well as gather data on first destinations of graduates
- develop comprehensive policies and procedures for managing the practicum course to ensure its effective implementation by all participants
- expedite the implementation of policies and procedures related to the advisory committees for obtaining feedback and acting on their recommendations.

### 3.15 Judgment

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 According to the SER, the management of the programmes offered by the DELL is based on the UoB's policies, procedures, and regulations, which are comprised of a range of policies and procedures and guided by the Quality Manual. Examples of existing policies and procedures include Assessment Strategy, Academic Staff Promotion Policy, Faculty Performance Appraisal Policy, Anti-Plagiarism Policy and Quality Assurance Enhancement Policy. The Panel met with academic and administrative staff who confirmed that these policies and procedures are communicated to them *via* e-mails, website, induction day, and QAAC as well as the College Quality Assurance Office. Interviewed staff were able to discuss some ways in which the policies and procedures have been applied to enhance the quality of delivering the BAEL programme such as advising, revision of programme objectives and outcomes, and grade appeal processes. Policies and procedures relevant to students are included in the Student Handbook and on the university website, and interviewed students were well-aware of these. The Panel appreciates the existence of institutional policies and regulations that are sufficient for the effective management of the programme and that the University communicates these policies with staff members. However, policies such as benchmarking, formative assessment, moderation (part of the overall assessment policy), teaching load, and annual review, as well as how policies are reviewed were unclear or unknown to faculty members and were not consistently implemented, and the Panel urges the College to monitor their implementation to ensure that these are implemented in a consistent and effective way as indicated in different parts of this Report.
- 4.2 The BAEL programme is managed primarily by the department's Chairperson who chairs the Department Council where major academic decisions are made. The SER states and the interviews concur that the structure supporting the programme consists of the University Council (Senior Administration), College Council (Dean, Department Chairs, and Department Senior Representatives), the Department Council (Faculty members with the Chairperson), departmental committees, section representatives and course coordinators. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the custodian of the academic standards for the programme is the Chairperson in collaboration with the Department Council. It was evident that lines of responsibility (the reporting lines) are clear and transparent to faculty and administrative staff. The Panel acknowledges that the programme has an overall clear hierarchical management structure that demonstrates transparent lines of communication to support responsible leadership. However, the structure that supports the management

hierarchy, specifically the committees and transitioning of responsibility could be more effective. According to interviews conducted with various faculty members and based on committees' meeting minutes, the number of meetings or meeting schedules and the members are not consistent. Also, the Panel noted that committees vary in different documentations and do not have a clear scope, meeting schedules, service duration, and consistent membership. Further, when a new administrative head is appointed, there is no formal transition or handover, as evidenced by interviews. These issues negatively impact the effectiveness of the overall programme management. Hence, the Panel advises the College to further ensure that there is a clear scope, meeting schedules, service duration for all committee meetings and that there is a clear and formal transition of responsibility between former and current leaders at all levels.

- 4.3 According to the SER, the Department Quality Assurance Committee (DQAC) is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the programme and implementing modifications at the department level through the Quality Assurance Office in the College of Arts and within the supervision system of the QAAC at the university level. During interviews, the Panel was informed that DQAC is comprised of the programme faculty working in collaboration with the PAC and SAC, as per the Quality Manual. The QAAC has an overall responsibility for ensuring the quality of programmes at the University and is led by a Director and an Executive Quality Assurance Committee with 10 quality directors from each college across the University. The Department has been evaluated by QAAC on several occasions, for example in 2014 and 2016, which led to reports for improvement. These reports were followed by a departmental Improvement Plan 2016, which was approved in the Department Council for implementation and to be monitored in December 2017. The Panel was provided with evidence of meetings of the DQAC to support their involvement in quality assurance. The Panel appreciates that there is a formal quality assurance management system at the university and college levels, which to some degree is implemented in the programme. However, the Panel notes from the provided evidence and the conducted interviews that there is a disconnect between the well-stated quality policy/procedures and the actual implementation, which is recent in nature. The PAC and the SAC were recently formed with inconsistency in their memberships (see paragraph 3.11). Moreover, DQAC activity has been recent with two meetings in November 2017, and the course portfolios, including the Course Syllabus Forms, are not consistently prepared and do not follow QAAC format in several incidences (as discussed in paragraph 1.3). Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should ensure the consistent implementation of all institution's quality assurance policies and procedures, and monitor and evaluate their effectiveness with regard to the BAEL programme.

- 4.4 The SER states that a number of meetings and workshops were organised for and attended by the DELL staff to ensure that they have a common understanding of the university's internal quality assurance system and their roles and responsibilities in this regard. Interviewed staff indicated that quality assurance mechanisms were introduced to the programme several years ago. Nonetheless, evidence provided indicates that an actual understanding of quality assurance (the quality culture) has become widespread over the Department only recently (see previous paragraphs 4.1 and 4.3). The Panel was informed, through the SER and interviews with faculty and administrative staff, of the variety of workshops made available through the QAAC and the college's Quality Assurance Office (QAO), which include NQF mapping, writing CILOs and PILOs, improving familiarity with the Quality Assurance Framework, and several others. Nonetheless, the Panel notes that the conducted workshops were fairly recent. According to interviews, these workshops are not compulsory to attend and are not consistently evaluated for effectiveness by their attendees. Further, the workshops' evaluations provided to the Panel were in Arabic only, which is not appropriate for the DELL and its international faculty members. Both academic and support staff interviewed showed an understanding of the role of quality management in the programme overall. However, as evidenced through interviews, the SER preparation itself, and the course portfolios examined on-site, it is clear that while the quality culture is improving at DELL, there is no common understanding of why these mechanisms are used and the standards required. The SER has notable inconsistencies and missing components even though, as evidenced, faculty clarified that it was checked at several levels. The Panel acknowledges the commitment and improved participation from faculty members in quality assuring the programme recently, particularly considering the high teaching loads and administrative responsibilities, and advises the College to investigate ways to increase understanding of the role of academics and support staff in quality assurance to help ensure the effectiveness of programme provision.
- 4.5 UoB has documented regulations for the 'Academic Programme and Course Development' that require new programme development to be consistent with the department's mission and the college's strategic plan, and to the labour market needs. Moreover, QAAC regulations for introducing new programmes include rationale, possible study plan, stakeholders' perspectives and full development of the proposed programme. Final approval for new programmes rests with the University Council and the Board of Trustees. The Panel acknowledges that the procedures at UoB for the development and approval of new programmes are appropriate.
- 4.6 UoB has a 'Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy', which stipulates submitting an annual SER of the programme to the QAAC, that analyses the assessment of CILOs, PILOs and PEOs; alumni, employers and senior exit surveys; PAC and SAC feedback. Evidence and interviews indicate that the College of Arts has

undergone recent programme and portfolio internal evaluations by the QAAC and QAO, for which evaluation reports were generated in 2014 and 2016 as well as an improvement plan in 2016; and made several improvements including prerequisites, PEO and PILO changes. Evidence provided shows that the internal evaluation involved members of the QAAC and one member specialised in the field. While the report was produced in Arabic, the specific points for the DELL were translated to English. Moreover, the Department has conducted evaluations of some of the courses and, in collaboration with QAAC, senior exit surveys, and student satisfaction surveys. However, the Panel was not provided with evidence showing that consistent annual programme evaluations are conducted for the BAEL programme. The Panel appreciates the increased efforts of the College and the University to ensure internal evaluation of the programme and the use of the review feedback to guide programme improvements and advises the College to ensure that an annual review of the programme is carried out consistently at both the college and department levels, and strengthen mechanisms used to monitor the implementation of the improvement plans.

- 4.7 UoB's institutional 'Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy' stipulates periodic programme reviews to be conducted that incorporate feedback from internal and external stakeholders, to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes and the effectiveness of the curriculum. Moreover, according to QAAC's Quality Manual, the programme depends on the 'Programme-within-College Reviews' conducted by the BQA, accreditation by the Higher Education Council and the NQF's placement. Nonetheless, this is the first review the BQA conducts of this programme and the programme is yet to be placed on the NQF. According to interviews, internal reviews contribute to the periodic reviews, which are conducted by the QAAC every five years. Moreover, the SER states that the internal review process requires the QAAC, the College QAO, and the DQAC to gather feedback from academic staff, students (every semester), graduating seniors (every semester) and other stakeholders such as employers and alumni (every 1-2 years), to determine the satisfaction level and perspective on different aspects of the programme, and to assess the PILOs. The Panel is of the view that the procedures in place for external review are adequate and the recent efforts for internal programme review can have a positive contribution to programme improvement. Nonetheless, the Panel notes that a systematic implementation of the periodic review of the programme, which incorporates all aspects of the programme and external feedback, and the use of its findings in programme improvement is not evident. The Panel recommends that the College should ensure that the programme is subjected systematically to a periodic programme review, which evaluates the programme holistically and includes both internal and external input and uses the outcomes to inform programme improvement.

- 4.8 UoB has a 'Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy' that states that programme development should be informed by structured feedback from stakeholders. The Panel notes that every semester the University collects students' feedback through instructor and course evaluations, and conducts senior exit surveys. Further, the Panel was provided with evidence of surveys conducted recently to seek feedback from faculty members, alumni, employers and meetings of both advisory boards, PAC and SAC. However, the number of respondents of the surveys shows a limited response rate. The Panel acknowledges the increased and recent efforts to gather stakeholders' perspectives from a variety of sources to improve the programme, and the analysis of some of the comments from student surveys, as shown by the evidence. Nonetheless, during the site visit, the Panel noted the lack of evidence of a formal mechanism for utilizing collected feedback to inform regular decision-making of the programme and for keeping stakeholders informed of such decisions, even though there is an Improvement Plan for 2016. The Panel recommends that the College should adopt more systematic and rigorous procedures to collect and use stakeholders' feedback, to make informed decisions regarding the programme, and formally report to the stakeholders the actions taken to address the identified issues.
- 4.9 The University has several units, centres and Deanships that provide professional development, such as the Unit for Teaching Excellence and Leadership (UTEL), Zain E-learning Centre, and, at the College level, there are several opportunities for faculty members to attend and participate in conferences and seminars locally and internationally. In addition, several academic staff members received a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP) through the UTEL and in coordination with an international university. Furthermore, the Panel learnt that the 'Faculty Appraisal Performance Policy' will be implemented at the University this semester and this will also link professional development needs to faculty appraisal. However, currently, the Panel did not see evidence of a formal process to link the professional development needs of academic staff to the actual activities conducted. The Department also has a Conferences and Seminar Committee, responsible for research activities, seminars, and conference attendance, which is quite active as evidenced by minutes of meetings, correspondence and proposals. A number of the interviewed academic staff confirmed that they have benefited from the staff development programme and attended conferences and seem to be quite active in professional development activities, as evidenced by the SER and various other evidence. The Panel appreciates the participation of faculty members in professional development activities and the provision of workshops and seminars, university's units and centres, which are in place to provide professional development opportunities for faculty members. The Panel advises the College to expedite the implementation of systematically linking staff members' development needs to their annual performance review process.

- 4.10 According to the SER, the programme depends on PAC, stakeholders' surveys, and follow-ups with alumni, employers and internship supervisors through on-site visits to gather feedback and information about the local labour market needs. However, the Panel was not provided with evidence of a continuous or systematic scoping of the labour market and various interviews with the faculty and administration staff confirmed that. The Panel acknowledges that there is anecdotal evidence that the Department has made recent efforts to acquire feedback from varied sources to informally scope the labour market needs but with very limited outcome. The Panel recommends that the College should develop and implement a formal mechanism for systematic scoping of the labour market needs and use the data received to ensure that the programme is up-to-date and relevant to the 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 institutional policies and regulations that are sufficient for the effective management of the programme and that the University communicates these policies with staff members.
  - There is a formal quality assurance management system at the university and college levels, which to some degree is implemented in the programme.
  - There are clear efforts by the College and the University to ensure internal evaluation of the programme and the use of the review feedback to guide programme improvements.
  - There are relevant professional development activities available to faculty members, in which they participate and appreciate.
- 4.12 In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the College should:
- ensure the consistent implementation of all institution's quality assurance policies and procedures, and monitor and evaluate their effectiveness with regard to the BAEL programme
  - ensure that the programme is subjected systematically to a periodic programme review, which evaluates the programme holistically and includes both internal and external input and uses the outcomes to inform programme improvement
  - adopt more systematic and rigorous procedures to collect and use stakeholders' feedback to make informed decisions regarding the programme, and formally report to the stakeholders the actions taken to address the identified issues
  - develop and implement a formal mechanism for systematic scoping of the labour market needs and use the data received to ensure that the programme is up-to-date and relevant to the 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 of Arts in English Language and Literature Programme offered by the University of Bahrain.**