

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



# **Directorate of Higher Education Reviews**

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

**Bachelor of Law  
College of Law  
University of Bahrain  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 4-6 May 2015  
HC064-C2-R064**

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## Acronyms

|      |                                                                                   |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ABA  | American Bar Association                                                          |
| CILO | Course Intended Learning Outcome                                                  |
| DHR  | Directorate of Higher Education Reviews                                           |
| ILO  | Intended Learning Outcome                                                         |
| MIS  | Management Information System                                                     |
| PCAP | Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice                                     |
| PEO  | Programme Educational Objectives                                                  |
| PILO | Programme Intended Learning Outcome                                               |
| QAAC | Quality Assurance and Accreditation Center                                        |
| QQA  | National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training |
| SER  | Self-Evaluation Report                                                            |
| UILO | University Intended Learning Outcomes                                             |
| UoB  | University of Bahrain                                                             |

# The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process

## 1.1 The Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework

To meet the need to have a robust external quality assurance system in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR) of the National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training (QQA) has developed and is implementing two external quality review processes, namely: Institutional Reviews and Programmes-within-College Reviews which together will give confidence in Bahrain's higher education system nationally, regionally and internationally.

Programmes-within-College Reviews have three main objectives:

- to provide decision-makers (in the higher education institutions, the QQA, the Higher Education Council (HEC), students and their families, prospective employers of graduates and other stakeholders) with evidence-based judgements on the quality of learning programmes
- to support the development of internal quality assurance processes with information on emerging good practices and challenges, evaluative comments and continuing improvement;
- to enhance the reputation of Bahrain's higher education regionally and internationally.

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

### **Indicator 1: The Learning Programme**

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

### **Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme**

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

### **Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates**

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

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

*The arrangements in place for managing the programme, including quality assurance, give confidence in the programme.*

The Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Panel’) states in the Review Report whether the programme satisfies each Indicator. If the programme satisfies all four Indicators, the concluding statement will say that there is ‘confidence’ in the programme.

If two or three Indicators are satisfied, including Indicator 1, the programme will receive a ‘limited confidence’ judgement. If one or no Indicator is satisfied, or Indicator 1 is not satisfied, the judgement will be ‘no confidence’, as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Criteria for Judgements**

| Criteria                                                 | Judgement          |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| All four Indicators satisfied                            | Confidence         |
| Two or three Indicators satisfied, including Indicator 1 | Limited Confidence |
| One or no Indicator satisfied                            | No Confidence      |
| All cases where <b>Indicator 1</b> is not satisfied      |                    |

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

A Programmes-within-College review of the College of Law was conducted by DHR of the QQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place on 4-6 May 2015 for the academic programmes offered by the college; these are: Bachelor of Law, Master of Public Law; and Master of Private Law.

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

UoB was notified by the DHR/QQA on 11 December 2014 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College review of the programmes offered by the College of Law with the site visit taking place on 4-6 May 2015. In preparation for the review, UoB conducted its college self-evaluation of all its programmes and submitted the SERs with appendices on the agreed date of 5 March 2015.

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

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

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

It is expected that UoB will use the findings presented in this report to strengthen its Bachelor of Law 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 administrative staff and faculty members in the Bachelor of Law programme.

### **1.3 Overview of the College of Law**

The study of Law in UoB commenced as a department in the College of Business Administration in 1999. However, and in recognition of the significant role of legal studies, the UoB Board of Trustees issued resolution (159) to establish the College of Law on 6-3-2002. The College of Law aims to achieve its mission by preparing qualified graduates to work in judicial establishments and legal departments, and providing them with professional legal knowledge and skills which enables them lead positive change in their society. The College of Law has two academic departments, namely: Department of Public Law and Department of Private Law, which offer four academic programmes: Bachelor of Law, Master of Public Law, Master of Private Law and PhD in Law. During the 2014-2015 academic year, there were (44) full time and (10) part-time faculty members supported by (20) administrative staff. The total number of students enrolled in the College at the time of the site visit was (1871) students. The College was reviewed in 2013 by the American Bar Association (ABA) which submitted a detailed report including recommendations for the improvement of the college programmes.

## 1.4 Overview of the Bachelor of Law Programme

The Bachelor of Law programme is offered by the College of Law. The College Dean is responsible for the programme management in coordination with the Heads of Public Law and Private Law Departments. The programme was offered for the first time in the 1999-2000 academic year and (23) students graduated in the academic year 2003-2004 as the first batch of graduates. There are (44) full time and (10) part-time faculty members supported by (20) administrative staff contributing in offering the programme. At the time of the site visit, the total number of students enrolled in the programme was (1841) students, and the number of graduates was (1243) graduates.

## 1.5 Summary of Review Judgements

**Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor or Law Programme**

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

## 2. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

- 2.1 The College of Law has a comprehensive academic framework which includes clear and specific procedures for the development and evaluation of academic programmes. Within this framework, the Bachelor of Law programme was designed, starting from the statement of the College mission, followed by the identification of the programme's educational objectives, which in turn provide the focus for the Programme and Courses Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs and CILOs). The Bachelor of Law programme aims at preparing qualified graduates equipped with legal professional skills and knowledge and who are well-trained in ethical values, communication and scientific research, in order to meet the labour market needs in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Overall, the Panel finds the programme objectives to be appropriate, clear and comprehensive. Moreover, the SER includes illustrative tables that demonstrate the alignment of the programme objectives with the College's and University's missions and strategic goals. The Panel appreciates that the programme objectives are well-designed, and are appropriately aligned to the College's and the Institution's mission statements.
- 2.2 The Bachelor of Law curriculum comprises a number of compulsory and elective courses with a total of (134) credit hours, out of which (12) credit hours are university requirements, and (12) credit hours are elective courses. During interviews, faculty members indicated that the curriculum was designed to ensure progression from courses addressing basic principles and general concepts of Law to courses that include more complex concepts and require analytic and synthesis skills, ending up with practical courses that provide students with the necessary skills to work in the Law field. Upon the review of the curriculum, the Panel notes that the curriculum is overall sound and provides an appropriate academic progression from one semester to another, and from one academic year to another, with clearly specified prerequisites. Moreover, the students' workload, which ranges between (15-18) credit hours per semester, is appropriate and consistent with regional and international standards. The Panel notes - with appreciation - that one of the many strengths characterizing the programme is the inclusion, within the curriculum, of several compulsory and elective courses that are taught in English, hence ensuring that students remain abreast of current legal international developments. The curriculum also comprises a number of applied courses, including 'Applications in General Law' (LAW 429) and 'Applications in Private Law' (LAW 409), in addition to the Internship Course (LAW 299) all of which provide students with practical experience that addresses the employers' needs. The Panel appreciates that the curriculum is appropriately organized in terms of academic progression, students'

workload and balance between knowledge and skills, and between theory and practice. However, the Panels is of the view that there are some exceptions that need to be addressed in order to enhance the curriculum; the most important of which is the need to introduce a course in 'Principles of Economics' which is essential for the generic build-up of Law students, as well as being an introduction for the study of subsequent courses in General Finance, Economic Legislations and Commercial Law. The Panel also finds that there is a need to introduce 'Substantiation' as a separate course instead of being part of the 'Execution Law' (LAW 412). Moreover, the Panel is of the opinion that there is some exaggeration in the number of Human Rights courses, as the curriculum includes two courses: 'Human Rights' (LAW109) with two credit hours and 'Human Rights' (LAW 307) with three credit hours. The Panel thus finds that if the number of credit hours allocated to Human Rights courses is reduced, more credit hours may be allocated for current course that contribute to the academic build-up of the graduates. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the curriculum is subject to a comprehensive review in the light of the recommendations provided by the Student Advisory Committee and the Curriculum Committee, as well as external reviews committees. The Panel is satisfied that the above-mentioned exceptions noted by the Panel have also been identified by the College and that necessary actions have been taken to address them, as evident from the meeting minutes of the Curriculum Committee. The identification of these exceptions by the Curriculum Committee supports the Panel's afore-mentioned observations. The Panel recommends that the College expedite the implementation of the Curriculum Committee's recommendations, to enhance the balance between the courses comprising the curriculum, in terms of comprehensiveness, diversity and content.

- 2.3 As indicated earlier, the curriculum includes (12) credit hours for elective courses, whereby a student can select four courses from a list of (13) elective courses. However, during interviews with students and graduates, the Panel learned that the College offers a limited number of electives, usually not more than six courses, which negatively impacts on students' choice. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College offer an appropriate number of elective courses in each semester, to provide students with a genuine opportunity to select four courses from the elective courses outlined in the curriculum.
- 2.4 In terms of the skills developed in the curriculum, the Panel notes – with appreciation – that there are some aspects which are well-addressed including the analysis of verdicts, preparation of legal summaries, in addition to general skills such as oral communication and team work. However, the Panel notes that the research skills need enhancement. For example, the course 'Principles of Legal Research' (LAW 499) is offered in the seventh semester whereas, in the Panel's view, it should be offered in the first or second semester, so that students can benefit from this

course in preparing the research projects required within the courses. This delay may explain the relative weakness which the Panel noted upon examining samples of research projects included in the course files, in terms compliance with scientific research rules, referencing and selecting research topics (e.g. the course files of 'Administrative Law' (LAW 225); and 'Constitutional Law 1' (LAW 106)). During interviews, both students and graduates indicated that this course should be offered in the first academic year, and that there should be more emphasis on applied aspects. The American Bar Association report also included a recommendation to move this course to the first year of the programme. In addition, the minutes of the Curriculum Committee meeting on 8-4-2013 included a recommendation 'to move 'Principles of Legal Research' (LAW 499) from the seventh semester to the third semester and to change its code to (LAW 199)'. In its interviews with the College senior management and faculty members, some of them attributed the delay in offering this course to the need to have the students acquire more legal knowledge and skills prior to conducting their graduation projects. The Panel finds that there is a misunderstanding about the concept of the course, as it includes principles and methodology of legal research in addition to a requirement of conducting a graduation project. The Panel is of the view that these two issues should be addressed in two separate courses. The Panel recommends that College offer the 'Principles of Legal Research' course in the first academic year, and develop the 'Graduation Project' as a separate course required for graduation and governed by a research framework.

- 2.5 According to the SER, the curriculum of the Bachelor of Law programme was developed in the light of the recommendations provided by Pantheon-Assas- Paris 2 University as the courses are consistent with those offered in universities of Latin orientation. The Panel appreciates that the course specifications reflect the programme's mission and objectives, and are appropriate for the degree level. During interviews, faculty members indicated that all courses are documented in course files which include a standard form prepared by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre (QAAC) for course description. The Panel also learned that course descriptions are subject to periodic reviews by relevant committees to ensure that they are aligned with recent developments in the Law field. The SER includes detailed examples on how comprehensiveness and depth are achieved in these course descriptions through the identification of course topics and their link to the CILOs, in addition to the implemented teaching and assessment methods. From reviewing the course descriptions of a selected sample of course files, the Panel acknowledges that the courses syllabi are overall well-documented; however, the Panel notes that - in some courses - the description is brief (for example 'Criminology and Penalty' (LAW 221), 'International Organization' (LAW 327) and 'Human Rights' (LAW 307)). The Panel encourages the College to exert more effort in the preparation of course descriptions, to ensure they are appropriately documented and updated.

- 2.6 The Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) are clearly stated in the programme specifications, and are designed to achieve a broad set of knowledge and skills required for the professional practice in the field of law, in addition to analytic thinking and general skills. In its interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the PILOs have been formulated in accordance with standards adopted by the Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation Center at UoB. From provided evidence, the Panel notes – with appreciation – that the PILOs are well-aligned to the programme objectives and University ILOs, and are appropriate for the level of a Bachelor in Law programme.
- 2.7 For each course, there is a set of CILOs that measure knowledge understanding, skills and general as well as specialization-specific competencies. The SER indicates that the CILOs are developed by senior faculty members, reviewed by the Curriculum Committee and discussed in the Department Council in preparation for their final endorsement by the College Council. A review of a selection of course files confirmed that the CILOs are overall appropriate for the course level. During interviews, faculty members informed the Panel that the CILOs are developed in light of the institutional quality assurance guidelines. Faculty members also indicated that they have received training on the development of CILOs to ensure they reflect the complexity level of the course, and that they are appropriately mapped to the PILOs. The SER includes a detailed matrix which clearly illustrates the mapping of CILOs to PILOs. The Panel appreciates that appropriate CILOs are in place, and that they contribute effectively to the achievement of the programme ILOs.
- 2.8 The curriculum includes a practical training course, Internship (LAW 299), which is compulsory for all students and requires them to spend eight weeks of training at workplaces approved by the University. The work-based learning aims at providing students with practical experience relevant to the labour market, through the practice of professional activities related to their specialization. The Panel notes – with appreciation – that the Internship course contributes to the achievement of the PILOs, especially in terms of acquiring legal professional skills and team-work. Students’ performance is assessed by the training supervisor as well as by the supervising faculty member who visits students at their training place. Evaluation forms are submitted by both the training supervisor (TF4) and the student (TF3). From interviews with faculty members and training supervisors, it is evident to the Panel that the College exerts considerable effort with regard to practical training; however, the Panel notes that the Internship course is not awarded credit hours. During interviews, the Panel learned that, and due to the large number of students, it is difficult to ensure that all students receive practical training of the same quality and which can be reliably assessed. The Panel is of the view that the College should explore available options to overcome this challenge. Practical training may be

undertaken in different forms; for example external training at courts and lawyers offices; and internal training at moot courts. In addition, the College offers the 'Legal Clinic' (LAW 407) course as an elective course of (3) credit hours, which the Panel finds to be a useful training and community service tool. The Practical Training Manual states that 'students may undertake training on campus as per the University needs or off campus at a workplace approved by the University', accordingly, the College may benefit from the abovementioned options currently available to provide appropriate training for all students. The Panel recommends that the College revise the Internship course framework, to accommodate various modes of external, internal and blended training, including visits to courts, lawyers' offices and legal clinics, and to allocate credit hours to the Internship course so as to better reflect its key role in the curriculum.

- 2.9 The SER indicates that the teaching policy of the College of Law is guided by the 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at University of Bahrain'. In line with this policy, the College encourages its faculty members to implement a variety of teaching and learning methods including: lectures, interactive teaching methods, practical training, electronic resources and self-learning; to enable the students to acquire legal knowledge and skills. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel learned that the implemented teaching and learning methods vary from one instructor to another, with the majority of them still relying on traditional lectures. In addition, students interviewed by the Panel indicated that only a small number of faculty members use modern technologies in teaching. Moreover, the results of students' survey on courses and teaching and learning methods indicate that only (55.7%) of them find that teaching involves a variety of teaching methods, which was the lowest rating in the survey. These findings were also confirmed by the minutes of QAAC meeting number (3) which document the students' views regarding the lack of variety in implemented teaching methods. The SER emphasizes the students' participation in the learning process *via* external training, moot courts, and the legal clinic, which the Panel acknowledges as a positive aspect; however, it represents only one aspect of the learning process and students' participation should be encouraged within the classrooms *via* dialogue and debates or asking students to present some topics, and other classroom activities. In their interviews with the Panel, students estimated that (60%) of the courses encourage students' participation in the classroom and taking responsibility for their own learning. Moreover, the American Bar Association report indicates that students' participation in lectures is 'superficial to some extent'. The Panel is of the opinion that there is a need to urge faculty members to diversify their teaching and learning methods, particularly the adoption of e-learning, and to enhance students' participation in learning. The Panel thus recommends that College conduct training programmes for all faculty members on teaching and learning methods that are appropriate for the College pedagogy, and which support the achievement of the programme objectives. With regard to

exposure to professional practice and applications of theory, the Panel notes that there are many opportunities provided for students including: the practical training - within the Internship course - as well as the two applied courses in private and public law, the graduation project, in addition to students' participation in the legal clinic and moot courts competitions. In addition, these mechanisms encourage individual responsibility for learning among the students. The Panel appreciates that appropriate mechanisms are implemented to assist the students in acquiring practical skills and applying theoretical knowledge.

- 2.10 The 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at the University of Bahrain' constitutes the framework that governs students' assessment, and includes the various regulations and procedures for the setting and conducting of examinations, as well as feedback and appeals mechanisms. In line with these regulations, suitable arrangements are in place for assessing students' achievements *via* summative and formative assessments which include final and midterm examinations, projects and classroom activities. According to Article (53) of the 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at the University of Bahrain', the University Council specifies the percentage of the total score to be allocated to final examination as (40%), while the remaining (60%) are allocated to formative and summative assessments as decided by the course instructor. The review of samples of course specifications confirmed that course grades are distributed as (40%) for final examinations, (10%) for class participations and assignments, and (50%) for midterm examinations and quizzes. Some courses, however, adopt grading criteria appropriate to the nature of the course as in - for example - the 'Legal Clinic' course. The Panel notes that the College implements the institutional plagiarism policy and students interviewed by the Panel confirmed that they were made aware of the plagiarism and appeals policies during the orientation programme. Moreover, institutional policies stipulate that students should be provided with feedback on all their assessment, which should be returned to students with clear comments and model answers within two weeks of the assessment date. From examining provided evidence, the Panel confirmed that the feedback system is in place, and that students are given the opportunity to review their answer sheets and discuss their grades, based on the model answer sheet, provided by the course instructor. Furthermore, there is an appeals system for students assessments which allows the review of the answer sheet by a committee of two faculty member other than the marker. During interviews with the Panel, students confirmed that assessments are returned to them, and that they can request remarking of their final examinations. The Panel appreciates that appropriate policies and procedures are implemented, to assess students' achievements, and to ensure transparency and fairness of grading.
- 2.11 In coming to its conclusion regarding The Learning Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- The Bachelor of Law programme objectives are well-designed, and are appropriately aligned to the college's and the institution's mission statements.
- The curriculum includes several compulsory and elective courses that are taught in English, hence ensuring that students remain abreast of current legal international developments.
- The curriculum is appropriately organized in terms of academic progression, students' workload and balance between knowledge and skills, and between theory and practice.
- The curriculum develops essential legal skills such as the analysis of verdicts, preparation of legal summaries, in addition to general skills, such as oral communication and team work.
- The course specifications reflect the programme's mission and objectives, and are appropriate for the degree level.
- The Programme Intended Learning Outcomes are well-aligned with the programme objectives and University Intended Learning Outcomes, and are appropriate for the level of a Bachelor of Law programme.
- Appropriate Course Intended Learning Outcomes are in place, and they contribute effectively to the achievement of the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes.
- The Internship course contributes effectively to the achievement of the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes, especially in terms of acquiring legal professional skills and teamwork.
- Appropriate mechanisms are implemented to assist the students in acquiring practical skills and applying theoretical knowledge.
- Appropriate policies and procedures are implemented, to assess students' achievements, and to ensure transparency and fairness of grading.

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

- expedite the implementation of the Curriculum Committee' recommendations, to enhance the balance between the courses comprising the curriculum, in terms of comprehensiveness, diversity and content
- offer an appropriate number of elective courses in each semester, to provide students with a genuine opportunity to select four courses from the elective courses outlined in the curriculum
- offer the 'Principles of Legal Research' course in the first academic year, so that the students benefit from this course in preparing their required projects within the courses
- develop the 'Graduation Project' as a separate course within the curriculum required for graduation and governed by a research framework.

- revise the Internship course framework, to accommodate various modes of external, internal and blended training, and to allocate credit hours for it so as to better reflect its key role in the curriculum
- conduct training programmes for all faculty members on teaching and learning methods that are appropriate for the college pedagogy, and which support the achievement of the programme objectives.

### 2.13 Judgement

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

### 3. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

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

- 3.1 Admission to the Bachelor of Law programme follows the university-wide admission policy for undergraduate studies. According to the SER, admission to the programme, requires a high school certificate or its equivalent with a minimum score of (70%). In addition, applicants should pass an Aptitude Test and a personal interview. The Panel notes that the admission policies are clear and widely published for students in the college handbooks and on the university website. During interviews, the Panel was informed that students' admission is a competitive process, whereby the best applicants are selected based on their high school GPA, results of the Aptitude Test and the personal interview. The Panel also learned that the admission policies are subject to periodic review based on students' performance in the academic programmes; and that improvements are made, if deemed necessary. The admission policies also allow the enrolment of students transferred from other colleges and universities provided they have passed with (C) grade as minimum. The Panel finds the procedures for the admission of transferred students to be clear and appropriate. The Panel appreciates that the admission policies and procedures in the Bachelor of Law programme are appropriate to the level and type of the programme, and are widely published and subject to periodic reviews, to improve students' academic progression and their retention.
- 3.2 The Panel notes that the profile of students admitted in the Bachelor of Law programme is consistent with the programme objectives, as the university admission requirements, which stipulates that 'a student should have (70%) or higher in high school certificate and pass the Aptitude Test', are adequate to recruit students who are appropriately qualified to join the programme. During interviews, the Panel also confirmed that the students have the cognitive capabilities required to comprehend the courses taught in the College of Law. The Panel notes that the College is working to overcome the weaknesses in the English language skills of some students by introducing an orientation programme, as well as offering two courses for learning English, namely 'ENG 191 and ENG 192'. The Panel also found - during the site visit - that the College of Law has adequate resources to accommodate all students registered in the programme, in terms of lecture halls, laboratories, teaching and learning resources as well as information services.
- 3.3 There are clear procedures for the distribution of responsibilities in the management of the Bachelor of Law programme, as evident from provided documents and site visit interviews. The College Dean holds overall responsibility for the management of the programme, in coordination with the Head of Public Law Department and the

Head of Private Law Department. The heads of the academic departments play crucial roles in this respect, including delegating of faculty members to teach the various courses, dealing with students to solve their problems, chairing the Department Council, attending the College Council sessions and coordinating with College Dean regarding the programme. The College has clear procedures for decision making, with the important decisions being taken by the Department Council, and then forwarded to the College Council and subsequently to the University Council as necessary. In addition, there are many committees contributing to the programme management, the most important of which are Faculty Members Selection Committee, Academic Promotion Committee, Textbooks Committee, Curriculum Committee and Assessment Committee. The mandates and responsibilities of these committees are clearly-specified and well-documented. The Panel also notes the existence of coordinators for academic issues such as courses and textbooks, to enhance the management of the programme. The Panel appreciates that there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability, which enables the Bachelor of Law programme to achieve its objectives.

- 3.4 The College of Law includes (47) faculty members contributing to the Bachelor of Law programme, of whom (6) are Professors, (9) are Associate Professors and (18) are Assistant Professors, in addition to (2) Lecturers and (12) Teaching Assistants. The Panel finds that the number of faculty members is adequate and that their fields of specialization are varied, covering all specializations offered in the programme. The Panel notes – with appreciation – the diversity of the academic institutions from which the faculty members graduated, including regional and European universities, which enriches the programme. However, upon examining provided evidence, the Panel notes a disproportion in the academic ranks of the faculty members, as Assistant Professors constitute more than (50%) of the total number of faculty members. The Panel is of the view that there are advanced courses that require the expertise of Professors or Associate Professors; these include Criminal law, Commercial Law, International Private Law, General Finance and Political Economics. The Panel encourages the College to recruit additional Professors or Associate Professors in the fields of Criminal law, International Private Law and Commercial Law.
- 3.5 According to the data provided in the SER, the ratio between faculty members and students is approximately (1:31), which the Panel finds to be acceptable and consistent with standards adopted by UoB. During the interviews with the College senior management, the Panel was informed that the College has an ongoing process for the recruitment of qualified faculty members according to the College programmes' needs. The Panel notes – with appreciation – that the top graduates are appointed as Teaching Assistants in the College, after they pass the Aptitude Test, and that they are offered scholarships to distinguished European and American

universities to pursue postgraduate degrees in Law. Over the last few years, the University has enrolled (17) Research Assistants in European and American universities, five of which have completed their studies and are among the faculty members interviewed by the Panel. The Panel notes that faculty members have a wide range of expertise and that some of them are actively engaging in research and publishing, as was evident from the faculty members' CVs and list of their academic publications. In addition, the College is keen to develop the faculty members' competency in the field of teaching and scientific research by engaging them in conferences, workshops and training courses. However, and in spite of the appropriate scholarly output of the faculty members, the Panel notes the lack of a college research plan to motivate active researchers to continue their research activities. The Panel recommends that the College develop a research plan to encourage faculty members - through some type of recognition - to publish their work in academic fields that serve the college and programme aims.

- 3.6 The University has clear procedures for the appointment, appraisal and promotion of faculty members and administrative staff, which are implemented transparently across all colleges. With regards to the recruitment of new faculty members, the concerned committees in the College are responsible for the preparation of shortlisted nominees for academic positions, in collaboration with Human Resources Office. These nominations are forwarded to the Department Council, and subsequently to the College Council, which in turn submits recommendations to the University Council for final approval. The Panel notes that Bahraini citizens are appointed on a permanent basis, whereas non-Bahrainis are recruited on contracts basis, which are renewed based on competency. During interviews, the Panel learned that the College has an induction programme for new faculty members and staff, where they are introduced to the College of Law facilities and programmes. According to the SER, the Faculty Members Appraisal System includes teaching performance evaluation by students in each semester, as well as a comprehensive evaluation of faculty members by the Head of Department and the College Dean. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the comprehensive appraisal system is implemented only for promotion purposes, and at the time of contract renewal for non-Bahraini faculty members. The Panel is of the view that there is a need for implementing an annual evaluation process for all faculty members. The Panel recommends that the College develop and implement a plan which includes formal mechanisms for the annual evaluation of all faculty members and use the results of this evaluation to identify their professional development needs and academic performance improvement.
- 3.7 The University has a comprehensive framework with clear procedures for the promotion of academic staff members, as evident from provided documents. In line with this framework, promotions are based on four aspects namely: the time period,

teaching activities, scientific research and scholarly activities, as well as university and community services. As for the retention of competent faculty members, the College offers several incentives such as financial support for research projects and providing opportunities for publishing their work. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel expressed their satisfaction with the arrangements in place for the recruitment, induction and evaluation of faculty members. The Panel appreciates that clear and transparent procedures are in place for the recruitment and retention of faculty members, and are consistently implemented. However; during interviews, faculty members indicated that although the promotion policies and procedures are clear, there are some obstacles that can lead to prolonging the promotion process. The Panel was informed that the promotion process may take up to three years from the time the faculty members submit their promotion documents. The Panel learned that only one faculty member was promoted over the last five years, with another faculty member's promotion application being processed. From examining provided evidence, the Panel notes that a large percentage is allocated to the non-academic activities such as community services within the University promotion system, which the Panel finds to be a delaying factor for the promotion of many faculty members. The Panel recommends that the College work with relevant entities in UoB to review some of the promotion procedures, particularly the relative weightages of promotion criteria, and to shorten the time required to process promotion applications.

- 3.8 UoB provides an effective Management Information System (MIS) which includes components for electronic registration, timetable preparation, academic advising, e-learning as well as human resources. During the site visit, the Panel observed a demonstration of this system, which confirmed that this system is available on the university website, and that necessary information and data can be extracted for informing decisions or developing policies and strategies. The Panel also learned during interview that students, faculty members and administrative staff can access relevant information on the MIS according to their individual need. The Panel appreciates that an effective Management Information System is in place and is effectively utilized by the College to inform the decision-making processes in the management of the Bachelor of Law programme.
- 3.9 UoB has appropriate policies and procedures for ensuring the security of students' records, examinations and results, and which are implemented by the Deanship of Registration and Admission and the College of Law Deanship. In light of these policies, the academic departments are responsible for keeping examination records and students grades for two semesters. The Admission and Registration Deanship, on the other hand, is responsible for implementing necessary procedures for keeping students' records and ensuring their integrity and security *via* a secured multi-layered system to control access to these data. During interviews with the IT Centre

staff, the Panel was informed that access to records is restricted to authorised personnel, *via* a password that is changed every (120) days. The Panel also learned that it is possible to track the identity of individuals who access these records. An electronic copy of records is made every semester by the IT Centre, in addition to the on-campus and off-campus back up in case of disasters. In light of the provided evidence and interviews, the Panel notes – with appreciation – that robust policies and procedures are implemented to ensure the accuracy and security of college data and records.

- 3.10 UoB has adequate physical resources in terms of area, type and equipment that meet the needs and objectives of the Bachelor of Law programme. During the site visit, the Panel had the opportunity to tour the College of Law building and common facilities, and noted that there is an adequate number of lecture halls equipped with data show and electronic teaching tools, faculty members offices, IT laboratories, two Moot Courts, Legal Clinic, in addition to an auditorium with a capacity for (127) students. The Panel finds these facilities to be adequate in terms of number and capacity. As for, the library - and despite its temporary move from the College building to the Central Library - the Panel finds that it is rich references in general and the legal ones in particular. The legal library includes more than (17000) references, most of which are in Arabic including textbooks on Public and Private Law, Islamic Sharia in addition to Arabic legal journals and periodicals. During the site visit to the central library, it was evident that the library has adequate learning resources with study areas, computers, internet catalogue and digital library. However, the Panel is of the view that the library needs support with regard to legal references in foreign languages. The Panel recommends that the College subscribe to foreign electronic databases in the legal studies field such as: West-Law, LegiFrance, and LexisNexis, to support the faculty members' and students' research. In general, the Panel appreciates that the UoB campus and the College of Law building provide an excellent learning environment that meets the faculty members' and students' needs. However, students interviewed by the Panel expressed their dissatisfaction with the move of the legal library to the central library. In this regard, the college management informed the Panel that this move was made to provide more offices for new faculty members who have recently joined the College. The Panel also learned that the University has an initiative for constructing an additional building for the College of Law - which includes a legal library - to accommodate the future expansion of the College in light of the increasing demand on its programmes. The Panel supports the implementation of this initiative.
- 3.11 There is a tracking system in place to identify the usage of laboratories, library and e-learning resources. A daily log is maintained for tracking the usage of computers in the laboratories and the library. In addition, the library tracks the usage of resources, as evidenced from the statistics on the number of legal references borrowed from the

library. As for the e-learning resources, Blackboard and Moodle, the e-learning centre is responsible for tracking their usage and producing reports. In its interviews with the administrative staff, the Panel confirmed that a tracking log is available for the usage of abovementioned facilities, and that regular reports are prepared and submitted to departments upon request. The Panel acknowledges that the tracking system is adequate for the evaluation of the utilization of the college resources.

- 3.12 The College of Law has a range of support services available for students of the Bachelor of Law programme, which include the use of laboratories, library and e-learning. Faculty members and students can have access to computers - *via* their usernames and passwords – that are connected to the internet and protected by the Directory Domain. The University also provides technical assistance for computer users so that they can report on technical problems to be solved by technicians. In addition, there is a technician in each computer laboratory who provides assistance for students. In addition, Zain centre for e-learning provides training on the efficient use of the Moodle and Blackboard for both faculty member and students. With regards to the library, there is a system - operated by specialized technical staff – to assist students in locating books and electronic resources, as was evident to the Panel during the site visit to the central library. The Panel commends the level of the administrative staff in the central library, and the effective support they provide for students and researchers. The Student Activities Office, Guidance and Counselling Office and Student Services Office in the Student Affairs Deanship conduct cultural, social, sporting and art activities for the programme students. A number of these activities, as well as the distinguished activities of Training and Student Development Unit, are listed in the SER. These activities were confirmed during the site visit tours and interviews with the administrative staff and students. The Panel also notes the logistic support provided for students with special needs across the campus, including the allocation of a special examination room for students with sight disability, as well as the provision of a special laboratory quipped with Visio Braille. The Panel appreciates that a broad range of effective support services are provided for students to assist them in the utilization of available resources, and the enhancement of their learning experience.
- 3.13 The University organizes an orientation day for the newly-admitted students at the beginning of each academic year, during which students are introduced to the college facilities, academic programmes and faculty members, as well as the academic and social services provided by the Deanship of Student Affairs. The students are also provided with the College Handbook, Student Manual and Disciplinary Bylaws, that inform students about their liabilities and duties. The same orientation procedures are also provided to students who are transferred from other institutions. During interviews, the students were positive about the value of the orientation day in preparing them for their studies, as it provided valuable

information about the programme, the university facilities and services. The Panel appreciates that a well-developed induction programme is implemented for new students admitted in the programme. However, the Panel notes - from the data presented about the orientation day for the 2013-2014 academic year - that only (41.3%) of the students admitted in the College of Law attended the orientation day. The Panel encourages the College - in collaboration with the Deanship of Student Affairs - to assess the effectiveness of the orientation day in light of the results of the students' surveys, and to develop appropriate arrangements for students who are not able to attend the orientation day.

- 3.14 The College of Law implements the institutional academic advising system, to follow up on the academic progress of students, in collaboration with the Deanship of Registration and Admission. In line with this system, an academic advisor is assigned for each student and their communication is facilitated *via* different appropriate means. The College also adopts the academic warning system to identify 'At risk students' and implements intervention measures. Students with a GPA lower than (2.00 out of 4.00) are placed on probation and an academic warning letter is issued to them. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that all students are required to meet with their academic advisors at least once every semester. The academic advisor's main role is to assist the students in selecting courses, and to improve the GPA of 'At risk' students, who are not permitted to register without the academic advisor's approval. The SER outlines several programmes that are implemented to offer academic support and guidance for 'At risk students'; these include peer-tutoring sessions and extra-tutorial classes offered by the Student Training and Development Unit, to support the students' academic progress and social welfare. During interviews, the students indicated that they are aware of the assessment and academic warning systems and regulations, as they are available on the university website. The Panel acknowledges that the College has appropriate systems in place to identify and support 'At risk students'. However, the Panel notes – from the results of the graduating students survey – that the effectiveness of academic advising system received low ratings. For example, the item 'Generally, I received distinguished academic advising during my study' received a score of (48.1%), and the item 'I visit my academic advisor one time at least every semester' received a score of (43.4%). Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College monitor the implementation of the academic advising system, and take necessary actions to address its shortcomings, so as to ensure that students receive appropriate academic advising.
- 3.15 The College has an appropriate informal learning environment which broadens the students' knowledge and experience outside classrooms, by organizing an extensive array of activities, courses, seminars and conferences. These activities include the 'Legal Week' which the College organizes in collaboration with the Legislation and

Legal Opinion Commission, and the 'Legal Forum' organized by the College of Law Society, where some lectures are delivered by a group of distinguished specialists. In addition, visits are regularly organized to the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives, the Constitutional Court and the Bahrain Institute for Political Development. Furthermore, support is provided for students to attend local and regional competitions. The Panel commends the efforts of the College of Law Society, the Youth Delegation Programme, Injaz Programme, the students' engagement in the Moot Court competitions in Austria, as well as the Legal Clinic activities in the United States. Moreover, the Job Fair day, which is annually organized by the Career Counselling Office, is a significant event during which employment opportunities are presented and students are kept abreast with the latest developments in the legal labour market. Students interviewed by the Panel expressed their satisfaction with the opportunities provided to them by the College to participate in informal learning activities. The Panel appreciates that a broad set of informal learning opportunities and activities are provided for the Bachelor of Law programme students, to expand their knowledge and enhance their skills.

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

- The admission policies and procedures in the Bachelor of Law programme are appropriate to the level and type of the programme, and are widely published and subject to periodic reviews, to improve students' academic progression and retention.
- There are clear lines of responsibility and accountability within the Bachelor of Law programme which enables the programme to achieve its objectives.
- There is diversity in the faculty members' specializations and in the academic institutions from which they graduated, which enriches the programme.
- The top graduates are appointed as Teaching Assistants in the College and are offered scholarships to distinguished European and American universities to pursue postgraduate degrees in Law.
- Clear and transparent procedures are in place for the recruitment, orientation and retention of faculty members, and are consistently implemented.
- An effective Management Information System is in place and is effectively utilized by the College to inform the decision-making processes in the management of the Bachelor of Law programme.
- Appropriate policies and procedures are implemented to ensure the accuracy and security of college data and records.
- The UoB campus and the College of Law building provide an excellent learning environment that meets the faculty members' and students' needs.

- The administrative staff in the central library are highly professional, and provide effective support for the faculty members and students of the Bachelor of Law Programme.
- There is a broad range of effective support services provided for students to assist them in the utilization of available resources, and the enhancement of their learning experience.
- A well-developed induction programme is implemented for new students admitted in the programme.
- A broad set of informal learning opportunities and activities are provided for the Bachelor of Law programme students, to expand their knowledge and enhance their skills.

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

- develop and implement a research plan to encourage faculty members to publish their work in academic fields that serve the college and programme aims
- develop and implement a plan which includes formal mechanisms for the annual evaluation of all faculty members and use the results of this evaluation to identify their professional development needs and academic performance improvement.
- review some of the promotion procedures, particularly the relative weightages of promotion criteria, and shorten the time required to process promotion applications.
- subscribe to foreign electronic databases in the legal studies field such as: West-Law, LegiFrance, and LexisNexis, to support the faculty members' and students' research
- monitor the implementation of the academic advising system, and take necessary actions to address its shortcomings, to ensure that students receive appropriate academic advising.

### 3.18 **Judgement**

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

## 4 Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

- 4.1 The graduate attributes are stated in the programme objectives as well as in the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs), and include acquiring legal professional skills, knowledge of professional responsibility, as well as building up scientific research and communication competencies. These attributes are also reflected in the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) which upon being assessed, the objectives of the programme are achieved. According to the SER, the programme adopts a set of assessment methods including direct tools (such as examinations and assignments) and indirect tools (such as questionnaires and surveys). These tools are documented in the course specification forms. The Panel confirmed, from examining the course files and interviews with faculty members, that the graduate attributes are cascaded to the courses in the form of CILOs, and that appropriate mechanisms are implemented to align the assessment tools with the CILOs and in turn with PILOs. The Panel appreciates that there are clearly stated graduate attributes appropriate for the Bachelor of Law programme, and that their achievement is measured by effective assessment mechanisms.
- 4.2 The SER outlines the benchmarking activities conducted by the College in order to ensure that the programme's academic standards are comparable with similar programmes at regional and international institutions. These activities include benchmarking with the Sorbonne University/Abu Dhabi and a number of Egyptian universities in the light of the National Academic Standards for Law Colleges in Egypt. The Panel notes that these benchmarking activities are informal, as the College does not have a benchmarking policy that identifies the aims of benchmarking, how it should be managed and how its results are to be used. During interviews with senior management and faculty members, the Panel confirmed that the College utilizes information available on the internet for the informal benchmarking of the Bachelor of Law programme with similar programmes. The Panel is of the view that there is a need to improve the benchmarking process and make it more comprehensive to cover all essential aspects of the programme. The Panel recommends the College develop a formal benchmarking framework which includes appropriate policies and procedures, in order to determine the equivalence of all aspects of the Bachelor of Law programme with similar reputable local, regionally and international programmes.
- 4.3 The College adopts the institutional assessment policies and procedures stated in the 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at the University of Bahrain', in addition to the guidelines included in IDEAS Handbook prepared by the Quality Assurance and

Academic Accreditation Centre. Students are informed about assessment policies by faculty members at the beginning of the semester through the distribution of the course specifications. From the review of the course files, the Panel noted that the implemented assessments include midterm and final examinations, quizzes, research papers, oral discussions and practical training. It was also evident to the Panel that the assessment policies are overall well-implemented. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the College is keen on monitoring the implementation of assessment policies, and the periodic reviews of assessment mechanisms in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Office which reviews the course files, to ensure that performance indicators are in place and are measured. The Office also verifies faculty member's adherence to the standards stipulated by the 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at the University of Bahrain' when constructing their examination questions. Following this review, the Quality Assurance Office submits a report to the College Dean including the shortcomings observed, so that corrective measures are implemented. The Panel appreciates that the institutional assessment policies and procedures are systematically implemented in the Bachelor of Law programme and are subject to monitoring and review.

- 4.4 The College is guided by the institutional procedures for the alignment of assessment tools with the CILOs, which stipulate that the assessment methods (examinations, assignments, projects, etc.) should be appropriate for the level of the ILOs subject to assessment. During interviews, the Panel learned that faculty members utilize the Course Assessment Matrix to ensure a balanced assessment of the CILOs during the semester. Faculty members also provided several examples of how they assess students' understanding of knowledge and skills in the best way that assures they have achieved a particular intended learning outcome. Course files also included samples and forms indicating that the assessment tools were designed while taking the CILOs into consideration. From examining course files and interviews, the Panel confirmed that there is an adequate understanding among faculty members of how to link the assessment tools with the CILOs. The Panel appreciates that appropriate mechanisms are in place and are implemented for the alignment of assessment tools to the CILOs, to ensure the achievement of graduate attributes.
- 4.5 The 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at the University of Bahrain' clearly specify the internal moderation mechanisms, including regulations for setting and scoring examinations to verify their fairness. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the course coordinators are responsible for identifying the moderation duties of multiple-section courses, whereas the course coordinator prepares the examination question paper in coordination with other faculty members, to ensure transparency and objectivity in wiring the questions. The Panel also learned that this process is subject to follow up, whereby the course coordinator or the course instructor (in the case of single-section courses), prepares a course file which includes

the examination, model answers, marking rubrics in addition to the moderation report. The Department Examination Committee is responsible for checking the examination scores and verifying their fairness before posting them on the website. The University QAAC reviews the course files, to check the level of examinations and the extent to which they achieve the CILOs, and submits a detailed report of its observations to the Head of Department. This was confirmed by examining samples of the course files and interviews with faculty members. The Panel appreciates that the mechanisms for the internal moderation of summative assessment tools, are consistently applied in the programme, in line with the institutional procedures. However, the Panel notes that the internal moderation is restricted to mid-term and final examinations only, and does not include formative assessment tools. The Panel recommends that the College develop and implement appropriate mechanisms for the moderation of formative assessment tools such as quizzes and class presentations.

- 4.6 The SER indicates that the American Bar Association conducted a comprehensive review of the College in September 2013, and submitted a detailed report on its programmes. However, the Panel notes that this report did not include the moderation of examination questions or students' marks. During interviews with senior management, the Panel learned that the College does not have a system in place for the external moderation of students' assessments. Nevertheless, faculty members interviewed by the Panel were aware of the importance of using external moderators for courses, in order to compare the academic standards of the Bachelor of Law programme with similar programmes at local, regional and international institutions. The Panel concurs and recommends that the College develop and implement appropriate mechanisms for the external moderation of students' assessments, and to utilize the moderation feedback in enhancing the programme's academic standards.
- 4.7 According to the SER, the College of Law implements the outcome-based system to assess the extent to which the students have achieved the CILOs by the assessment tools used. During interviews, the Panel was informed that, at the end of the semester, faculty members utilize the 'Course Evaluation Form' to measure the students' results in each assessment. If (60%) of students scored (60) and above in a particular assessment, it is an indication that students have achieved the CILO; and remedial measures are recommended for the outcomes that have not been met. During the site visit, the Panel reviewed samples of students' assessments and found them to be overall, accurate, fair and consistent with those in similar programme locally, regionally, and internationally. Assessments included essay type questions, objective questions and problem-solving. The Panel also noted that the level of assessments and quality of students' responses are, in general, appropriate for the course level and its CILOs. The Panel appreciates that the level of students'

achievements, which is measured *via* appropriate mechanisms, is appropriate for the level and type of programme in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the region and internationally.

- 4.8 As indicated earlier (section 4.4), there are mechanisms in place to align assessments with the CILOs, which are in turn mapped to the PILOs; as well as mechanisms for monitoring assessments by the Quality Assurance Office (section 4.5); both of which ensure the rigour of academic standards and achievement of PILOs. The Panel also finds that the grades distribution and the examination results - in the sample it examined - reflect the objectives of the programme and its outcomes. In addition, the course files provide documented information about the level of students' achievements, and the attainment of CILOs. Table (3.4) in the SER indicates that the level of graduates' achievement meets the programme objectives and ILOs, which is consistent with the Panel's conclusion from interviews with students, graduates and employers. This conclusion is supported by the students' participation since 2007 in the international Moot Courts held annually in Vienna, Austria, during which they compete with other Law students and are commended as being the only Arabic team participating in this competition. The Panel appreciates that the level of graduates' achievements meets the Bachelor of Law programme objectives and learning outcomes.
- 4.9 The statistics viewed by the Panel indicate that there is an increase in the number of students admitted in the Bachelor of Law programme over the past three years; as their number increased from (280) students in the 2011-2012 academic year to (490) in the 2013-2014 academic year. During interviews with senior management, the Panel learned that this increase is mainly attributed to the lowering of the minimum high school score from (80%) to (70%), within the admission criteria. The Panel also notes that the average length of study ranges between four to six years. However, the Panel notes that the College lacks a statistical database that includes comparative data about retention and progression rates from one year to another and graduates' preferred destinations after graduation. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College conduct student cohort analysis and compare the results with those in similar local, regional, and international programmes, in order to enhance the academic standards of the Bachelor of Law programme.
- 4.10 The College of Law has robust policies and procedures to manage the Internship course, which include a set of evaluation reports by the training supervisors, students and supervising faculty members. The Training Office in the College is responsible for the coordination between the students and the Training Office in the University, which in turn coordinates with external employers, such as the Ministry of Justice and courts, for students' placement. The Practical Training regulations stipulate that training takes place during the three semesters, with the University

providing placements during the second and summer semesters, whereas placement during the first semester is the student's responsibility. By examining the provided evidence, the Panel notes – with appreciation – that the procedures for the management of practical training are clearly documented, rigorously implemented and subject to monitoring. During interviews, it was evident to the Panel that students are satisfied with this course; however, some students and graduates informed the Panel that they find the practical training at some workplaces to be inadequate, especially for summer training, as courts are closed. Nevertheless, the Panel is of the view that there are opportunities for increasing the efficiency of the practical training programmes, and students' motivation as explained in section (2.8).

- 4.11 According to the SER, the College of Law has an Employers Advisory Committee comprising nine members from various legal sectors in the Kingdom. During interviews with senior management, the Panel was informed that the Advisory Committee has not met recently due to its members' commitments, being members of the Supreme Judicial Council. The Panel also learned that the College obtains the Advisory Committee's views *via* surveys on the extent to which the programme's outcomes meet the labour market needs. The Panel recommends that the College activate the role of the Employers Advisory Committee, to better inform the decision-making process in the programme. The Panel also suggests re-establishing the Committee and selecting members who have adequate time for participating in the programme's development and improvement. The College has also established an Alumni Advisory Committee including (11) members representing the public and private sectors in order to provide suggestions for the programme development. This Committee communicates with the College through the Quality Assurance Office, which forwards the committee's suggestion to the College committees and councils for consideration and inclusion in the College's annual self-evaluation report. The Panel appreciates that there is an Alumni Advisory Committee, and that its feedback is considered and implemented, where appropriate, as part of the programme improvement plans.
- 4.12 Based on a number of indicators, the Panel concludes that there is a high level of satisfaction with the programme among employers and alumni. The SER, as well as its appendices, include survey results indicating that the alumni and employers are satisfied about the graduate profiles of the Bachelor of Law programme. These results are consistent with the Panel's observations on the achievements of the programme's students, in comparison to similar regional and international programmes. Furthermore, alumni, training supervisors and employers interviewed by the Panel commended the level of programme's graduates. The alumni indicated that their study has well-prepared them for the workplace. In addition, the majority of employers confirmed that they prefer UoB Bachelor of Law programme graduates over graduates of similar programmes from other universities, particularly for their

competence in the English legal knowledge and skills. The Panel appreciates that employers and alumni are highly satisfied with the level of the Bachelor of Law programme graduates and hold them in high regard in comparison to graduates of similar programmes.

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

- There are clearly stated graduate attributes appropriate for the Bachelor of Law programme, and their achievement is measured by effective assessment mechanisms.
- The institutional assessment policies and procedures are systematically implemented in the Bachelor of Law programme and are subject to monitoring and review.
- Appropriate mechanisms are in place and are implemented for the alignment of assessment tools to the Course Intended Learning Outcomes, to ensure the achievement of graduate attributes.
- The mechanisms for the internal moderation of summative assessment tools, are consistently applied in the programme, in line with the institutional procedures.
- The level of students' achievements is appropriate for the level and type of programme in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the region and internationally.
- The level of graduates' achievements meets the Bachelor of Law programme objectives and learning outcomes.
- The students participate in international Moot Courts competitions, and are commended as being the only Arabic team participating in this competition.
- The procedures for the management of practical training are clearly documented, rigorously implemented and subject to monitoring.
- There is an active Alumni Advisory Committee, and its feedback is considered and implemented, where appropriate, as part of the programme improvement plans.
- Employers and alumni are highly satisfied with the level of the Bachelor of Law programme graduates and hold them in high regard in comparison to graduates of similar programmes.

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

- develop a formal benchmarking framework which includes appropriate policies and procedures, in order to determine the equivalence of all aspects of the Bachelor of Law programme with similar reputable local, regional and international programmes
- develop and implement appropriate mechanisms for the moderation of formative assessment tools such as quizzes and class presentations

- develop and implement appropriate mechanisms for the external moderation of students' assessments, and utilise the feedback of this moderation in enhancing the programme's academic standards
- conduct student cohort analysis and compare the results with those in similar local, regional, and international programmes, in order to enhance the academic standards of the Bachelor of Law programme
- activate the role of the Employers Advisory Committee, to better inform the decision-making process in the programme.

#### 4.15 **Judgement**

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

## 5 **Indicator 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance**

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

- 5.1 In its management of the Bachelor of Law programme, the College implements the institutional policies, bylaws and regulations which are available for faculty members and students on the university website and the Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation Centre website. Furthermore, these policies and bylaws are included in the College Prospectus, Faculty Manual, and Quality Assurance Manual. During different interviews, the Panel learned that communicating new policies and procedures to all faculty members and ensuring their implementation is the responsibility of College Dean and Heads of Departments. The Panel also acknowledges the role of Quality Assurance Office in disseminating the college policies and regulations, and in ensuring their appropriate implementation. The role of the Office includes ensuring the compliance of faculty members with the procedures related to the teaching process such as the approval of courses, the administration of examinations, their marking, and subsequent discussion of results with the students. In order to enhance the dissemination of the college policies and regulations, students are informed about them during the orientation day, which facilitates the students' understanding of these policies during their study in the University. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel also confirmed that they are informed of the institution's policies and procedures during their induction programme, as well in the Department and College Council meetings. From the provided documents and interviews with students and faculty members, the Panel notes – with appreciation – that the institutional policies and procedures are implemented effectively and systematically in the College of Law.
- 5.2 The organizational structure of the College of Law clearly identifies the roles and mandates of the College Dean, College Council, Departments Councils and Heads of Departments. The College Dean, along with Heads of the Public Law and Private Law Departments, are responsible for the Bachelor of Law programme management, and are assisted by the college academic and administrative staff. The Panel notes that the academic staff include distinguished personalities with extensive experience in the legal fields and higher education, which reflects positively on the academic leadership in the College. In addition, a number of committees have been established, comprising faculty members and teaching assistants, to ensure the participation of faculty members and support staff in the programme management and decision-making processes. From interviews with senior management and faculty members, the Panel concludes with appreciation that the Bachelor of Law programme is effectively-managed indicating a responsible academic leadership.

5.3 The Quality Assurance System in UoB includes: the University Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation Centre (QAAAC); the College Quality Assurance Office, the Programme Quality Assurance Committee, the Quality Assurance Executive Committee, the Programme Advisory Committee and the Student Advisory Committee. This comprehensive structure monitors the implementation of quality assurance procedures across all colleges in the University. The Quality Assurance Office was established in the College of Law to communicate the information and monitor the implementation of the institutional quality assurance measures with regards to teaching and learning processes. The QAAAC has developed a University-Wide Handbook for the outcome-based assessment process (IDEAS). The policies and procedures of programme quality assurance include identifying, assuring and measuring the extent of students' achievement of the learning outcomes in accordance with programme objectives, and the use the resulting information for the programme development. The tasks and mandates of all members and committees involved in this process are also clearly identified. The College applies the quality assurance policies and procedures in the annual review and evaluation of the Bachelor of Law programme periodically, where the College Quality Assurance Office conducts an annual self-evaluation to the programme including the aspects of the teaching and learning process, for the continuous development of the programme in accordance with the University standards of quality assurance. The Panel was provided with evidence of the involvement of all relevant committees in implementing the quality management system in the Bachelor of Law programme. The College has established a Student Advisory Committee comprising eight members, in order to formalize the processes for obtaining students' feedback in the improvement of the Bachelor of Law programme. The Panel reviewed the Student Advisory Committee reports, and noted that they include many significant recommendations, which have been considered by the College during the review of the programme. The Students Advisory Committee also communicates with the students *via* social media (LAW UoB) to enable the students to discuss and present their views on issues related to the quality of teaching. The Panel appreciates the positive contribution of students to the quality system and their sufficient understanding of their role in assuring the effectiveness of teaching. The Panel confirmed, during interviews with senior management, that the quality assurance system is subject to continuous evaluation, as the College Quality Assurance Office is required to prepare an annual report that identifies the areas of strengths and weaknesses, in addition to an improvement action plan. This annual report is submitted to the university Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation Centre, which in turn studies this report and provides appropriate feedback on it, which is subsequently included in the university annual self-evaluation report. The Panel appreciates that a clear system for quality assurance management is well-implemented and is subject to monitoring and evaluation.

- 5.4 The SER indicates that a number of courses and workshops have been conducted to explain the concepts of quality assurance in education to the faculty members and support staff, as part of the plan developed by the College Quality Assurance Office in cooperation with QAAAC. The College has conducted eight training courses between 2012-2015 on topics such as the formulation of CILOs and course assessment. The Panel finds that the number of these workshops is not adequate to achieve sufficient awareness among faculty members about issues related to quality assurance. From interviews with faculty members and administrative staff, it was evident that they have an acceptable level of understanding of quality assurance concepts and their roles in ensuring learning effectiveness. However, the Panel noted, from reviewing course files, that there is some inconsistencies in faculty members' application of assessment procedures and issues related to quality assurance. The Panel is of the view that establishing a better understanding among faculty members about the quality assurance system would lead to improvements in the teaching and learning processes. Therefore, the Panel recommends that College conduct more training workshop for academic and administrative staff, and encourage their attendance, to enhance their understanding of quality assurance practices at the programme as well as college level.
- 5.5 The institutional framework for the development of academic programmes and courses, which was endorsed in the University Council meeting (12-2103), clearly specifies the procedures and requirements for developing new programmes and courses, as well as revising existing ones. According to this system, a feasibility study should be conducted to justify the development of an academic programme. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the proposals for the introduction of new programmes are first studied by an *ad hoc* committee at the department level which forwards its recommendations to the Department Curriculum Committee and Head of Department to be discussed in the Department Council. The Department Council's recommendations are then forwarded to the College Dean, who in turn presents it to the College Curriculum Committee, and then to the College Council, which forwards it – in case of approval – to the University Curriculum Committee. The Panel notes – from provided evidence - that the College implements these institutional procedures when introducing a new programme, or amending an existing curriculum. The Panel appreciates that appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the development of new programmes, and are effectively implemented to ensure that these programmes are relevant and meet the labour market needs.
- 5.6 The College follows the institutional procedures for the annual internal programme evaluation which are documented in the 'Quality Assurance Manual for Departmental Quality Assurance Committees'. This manual clearly outlines the steps for preparing the self-evaluation reports and improvement plans using the self-evaluation templates for academic programme. The College Quality Assurance

Committee conducts an annual review of the Bachelor of Law programme and prepares an annual self-evaluation report with an improvement plan, which are submitted to the University QAAC. During interviews, the Panel learned that academic staff participate in the self-evaluation process by preparing evaluation reports on CILOs achievement for each course which are then used for measuring the attainment of PILOs. The Panel reviewed samples of self-evaluation reports, and found that they constitute an appropriate mechanism for the evaluation of the programme, the achievement of its learning outcomes and the identification of areas of strengths and weaknesses. The Panel also notes that feedback from internal stakeholders is taken into consideration, and is utilized to enhance the improvement processes. The Panel appreciates that appropriate arrangements are implemented for the annual evaluation of the Bachelor of Law programme, which result in continuous improvement.

- 5.7 The College follows the institutional policy for the periodical review of academic programmes, and the associated mechanisms for the implementation of improvement recommendations, as outlined in the SER. In order to ensure that review processes utilize various inputs and feedback, the College has established a number of advisory committees, including the Committee of Experts from the Professional Field established by the College Deanship decree number (6) in 2013. This Committee is mandated to investigate the appropriateness of the College programmes for meeting the labour market needs, and propose measures to enhance the programme's graduate profile and learning outcomes. In addition, a College Alumni Advisory Committee was established by the College Deanship decree number (22) in 2013, to measure the level of stakeholders satisfaction with the community services provided by the College, and to offer advice for programme improvement. Moreover, there is a Student Advisory Committee for Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation. The SER indicates that the Bachelor of Law programme underwent an external review in September 2013 by the America Bar Association, which provided a review report evaluating the efficiency of the programme, in addition to a set of recommendations. The Panel appreciates that the College utilizes the expertise of external entities such as Pantheon-Assas- Paris 2 University and the American Bar Association, to review the Bachelor of Law programme and provide suggestions for its improvement. At the internal level, the College receives reports from the Employers and Alumni Advisory Committees. During interviews with senior management, the Panel was informed that College has developed a plan for the implementation of stakeholders' suggestions and recommendations included in these reports, including those of the American Bar Association. Upon reviewing provided evidence, the Panel acknowledges that the College has taken some actions to implement the recommendations resulting from the programme review, to improve the quality of teaching and learning processes.

- 5.8 The College Quality Assurance Office conducts a number of surveys to collect stakeholders' feedback, these include: Senior Exit, Alumni, Employer, Faculty and Students Surveys. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the Quality Assurance Office analyzes these surveys to identify the programme's strengths and weakness and utilizes the analysis results to take appropriate decisions, for the purpose of continuous improvement. The College also provided evidence in the SER appendices that the results of these questionnaires are subject to analysis. Upon reviewing these surveys, it is evident to the Panel that the analysis results reflect the views of internal and external stakeholders, who find that the programme has achieved its designated aims and objectives. The results also reveal the stakeholders' overall satisfaction with the level of the Bachelor of Law programme. However, the Panel notes that some aspects in the Student Survey achieved low scores, such as the academic advising aspect 'In general, I received distinguished academic advising during my study' (48.1%) and e-learning: 'The E-learning Centre was utilised to support the teaching activities in the programme' (46.2%), as shown in the results of Senior Exit Survey. These scores support the Panel's views and recommendations. The Panel also notes that the results of Faculty Survey analysis include a number of recommendations, the most important of which are related to revisiting the promotion system and encouraging faculty members to attend conferences and professional symposiums. During interviews with senior management, the Panel was informed that the College has started addressing the issues identified in these surveys, in its programme improvement plan. For example, the Curriculum Committee has considered the students' suggestions for curriculum revision, particularly the inclusion of 'Substantiation' as an independent course (LAW 401) and the deletion of 'Principles of Law' (LAW 104) course as it is similar in content to the 'Introduction to Law' (LAW 101) course; which the Panel appreciates. The Panel also acknowledges that the Quality Assurance Office forwards the results of the feedback collected from these questionnaires to the College Deanship, for discussion and taking necessary actions.
- 5.9 The SER refers to some professional development projects organized by the University for academic and administrative staff, the most important of which is the Professional Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP), which aims at providing new faculty members with the knowledge and skills required for enhancing the teaching and learning processes. The Academic Development section in the Measurement and Evaluation and Academic Development Centre is responsible for organizing induction courses and workshops for the development of new faculty members. Furthermore, the College Quality Assurance Centre organizes a set of training workshops in the field of quality assurance. With regard to administrative staff, the university Administrative Training Centre is responsible for offering training workshop to enhance the level of administrative staff performance. Upon examining provided evidence, it is evident to the Panel that a limited number of faculty

members has participated in the workshops for academic staff development over the last three years. The Panel also notes that the participation of faculty members in regional and international conferences is limited. This was confirmed during interviews, and from the results of faculty members' surveys. Furthermore, there was no evidence of formal mechanisms for the analysis of faculty members' training needs, or for the assessment of the effectiveness of the training courses. The Panel recommends that the College develop and implement a strategy for the professional development of academic and administrative staff, which includes mechanisms to identify their training needs and link them to their annual performance evaluation.

- 5.10 The SER indicates that the College – through the advisory committees and surveys – continuously develops the Bachelor of Law programme to ensure its alignment with the labour market needs. The Panel also learned, during interviews, that practical training is also considered as a means for gaining insight into the recent labour market needs and trends. The Panel acknowledges that these are good developments; however, the Panel did not find any clear approach for collecting initial basic data directly related to scoping the labour market of the Bachelor of Law programme. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College conduct formal studies of the target market, in order to identify the latest trends and to ensure that the Bachelor of Law programme meets the local and regional labour market needs. The Panel also encourages the College to enhance its utilization of the advisory committees members' expertise as another resources to scope labour market, by activating the role of these committees and organizing regular meetings (see section 4.11).
- 5.11 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- The institutional policies and procedures are implemented effectively and systematically in the College of Law.
  - The Programme is effectively-managed indicating a responsible academic leadership at the college and department levels.
  - A clear system for quality assurance management is well-implemented and is subject to monitoring and evaluation.
  - Students participate positively in the quality system of the Bachelor of Law programme, and have good understanding of their role in assuring the effectiveness of the teaching.
  - Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the development of new programmes, and are effectively implemented to ensure that these programmes are relevant and meet the labour market needs.
  - Appropriate arrangements are implemented for the annual evaluation of the Bachelor of Law programme, which result in continuous improvement.

- The College utilizes the expertise of external entities such as Pantheon-Assas-Paris 2 University and the American Bar Association, to review the Bachelor of Law programme and provide suggestions for its improvement.
- The College conducts a number of stakeholders surveys which are analyzed and results are forwarded to the College Deanship for discussion and taking appropriate actions.

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

- conduct more training workshop for academic and administrative staff to enhance their understanding of quality assurance practices at the programme as well as college level
- develop and implement a strategy for the professional development of academic and administrative staff, which includes mechanisms to identify their training needs and link them to their annual performance evaluation
- conduct formal studies of the target market, in order to identify the latest trends and to ensure that the Bachelor of Law programme meets the local and regional labour market needs.

### 5.13 **Judgement**

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

## 6. Conclusion

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

**There is confidence in the Bachelor in Law programme offered by the College of Law in the University of Bahrain.**