



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

# **Directorate of Higher Education Reviews**

## **Programme Follow-Up Visit Report**

**Master of Arts in Applied English Language Studies  
College of Arts  
University of Bahrain  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**First Follow-up Visit Date: 21-23 September 2020**

**Review Date: 3–7 December 2017**

**HC119-C2-F020**

## Table of Contents

Acronyms .....	2
The Programme Follow- up Visit Overview .....	4
1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme .....	6
2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme .....	6
3. Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates.....	16
4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance .....	25
5. Conclusion .....	30
Appendix 1: Judgement per recommendation.....	31
Appendix 2: Overall Judgement.....	32

## Acronyms

BAEL	Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature Programme
BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
DCC	Department Curriculum Committee
DELL	Department of English Language and Literature
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
DHSC	Department Higher Studies Committee
IT	Information Technology
LMS	Learning Management System
MAEL	Master of Arts in Applied English Language Studies
PAC	Programme Advisory Committee
PEO	Programme Educational Objective
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
QA	Quality Assurance
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre
QAC	Quality Assurance Committee
QAO	Quality Assurance Office
SAC	Students' Academic Committee
SER	Self-Evaluation Report

SIS	Student Information System
UoB	University of Bahrain

## **The Programme Follow-up Visit Overview**

The follow-up visit for academic programmes conducted by the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR) of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA) in the Kingdom of Bahrain is part of a cycle of continuing quality assurance reviews, reporting and improvement.

The follow-up visit applies to all programmes that have been reviewed using the Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework, and received a judgement of 'limited confidence' or 'no confidence'.

This Report provides an account of the follow-up process and findings of the follow-up panel (the Panel), whereby the Master of Arts in Applied English Language Studies (MAEL), at the University of Bahrain (UoB) was revisited on 21-23 September 2020 to assess its progress in line with the published Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework and the BQA regulations.

### **A. Aims of the Follow-up Visit**

- (i) Assess the progress made against the recommendations highlighted in the review report (in accordance with the four BQA Indicators) of UOB's MAEL since the programme was reviewed on 3-7 December 2017.
- (ii) Provide further information and support for the continuous improvement of academic standards and quality enhancement of higher education provision, specifically within the MAEL programme at UoB, and for higher education provision within the Kingdom of Bahrain, as a whole.

### **B. Background**

The review of the MAEL programme, at UOB in the Kingdom of Bahrain was conducted by the DHR of the BQA on 3-7 December 2017.

The overall judgement of the review panel for the MAEL programme of UOB was that of 'limited confidence'. Consequently, the follow-up process incorporated the review of the evidence presented by UOB to the DHR, the Improvement Plan submitted to BQA in March 2019, the progress report and its supporting materials, which were submitted in December 2019, and the documents submitted during the follow-up site visit and those extracted from the interview sessions.

The external review panel's judgement on the UOB's MAEL programme for each Indicator was as follows:

**Indicator 1:** The learning programme; '**satisfied**'

**Indicator 2:** Efficiency of the programme; '**satisfied**'

**Indicator 3:** Academic standards of the graduates; '**not satisfied**'

**Indicator 4:** Effectiveness of quality management and assurance '**satisfied**'

The follow-up visit was conducted by a panel (the Panel) consisting of two members. This follow-up visit focused on assessing how the Institution addressed the recommendations of the report of the review conducted on 3-7 December 2017. For each recommendation given under the four Indicators, the Panel judged whether the recommendation is 'fully addressed', 'partially addressed', or 'not addressed' using the rubric in Appendix 1. An overall judgement of 'good progress', 'adequate progress' or 'inadequate progress' is given based on the rubric provided in Appendix 2.

### **C. Overview of the Master of Arts in Applied English Language Studies**

The Department of English Language and Literature (DELL) offers the Master of Arts in Applied English Language Studies (MAEL) programme at Sakhair campus. The programme was first offered in 1996. However, enrolment in the programme was suspended between the years 2003 and 2007. The programme was revised and offered again in 2008. The DELL also offers a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature (BAEL) programme as well as 16 service courses to various colleges. At the time of the virtual site visit, the total number of students enrolled in the MAEL programme was 33, with the total number of graduates since inception being 48. Currently, there are five full-time faculty members, supported by four administrative staff members, contributing to the delivery of the programme.

## 1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

*This section evaluates the extent to which the MAEL programme of UOB, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of December 2017, under Indicator 1: The learning programme; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.*

**Recommendation 1.1:** *consider injecting practical aspects into the theoretical courses, in line with the programme objectives.*

**Judgement:** *Fully Addressed*

The 2017 BQA report recommended that the MAEL programme inject practical aspects into the theoretical courses, particularly as the MAEL programme is in Applied English Studies and the programme outcomes state that graduates should be able to 'produce written critical reviews', 'apply specialized research methods' and 'apply knowledge of key theories, principles, and concepts'. To address this recommendation, the Department Higher Studies Committee (DHSC) reviewed all MAEL courses to ensure inclusion of practical aspects of the course concepts in the assessment scheme.

The Panel reviewed a large sample of course specifications offered and found that project (ENGL541, ENGL547) or portfolio-based work, practical assignments such as research papers (ENGL543), critical reviews and presentations (ENGL548) and authentic text and linguistic features analysis (ENGL542, ENGL545) have been introduced, described, and implemented in all courses as part of the assessment scheme across the MAEL programme. Based on the course specifications submitted as evidence and interview responses of members of the DHSC, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation has been fully addressed.

**Recommendation 1.2:** *revise the course specifications to ensure that these follow the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre's template, the information included is accurate and updated, and that the assigned references and text books are current.*

**Judgement:** *Partially Addressed*

To address the recommendation of revising course specifications, ensuring that their format follows that of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee (QAAC), and that course textbooks are updated, the MAEL programme, following protocol from the Quality Assurance Office (QAO) and the department's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), has undergone course specifications' and portfolio reviews focusing on ensuring consistency of the format and the updating of textbooks and

references. Primary textbooks have been updated across the MAEL courses to include main course textbooks and references published primarily between 2007-2018, as shown in the Progress Report and course specifications. The Panel found that textbooks are sufficiently current, and the references provided to broaden students' awareness and knowledge are extensive in several courses. Moreover, the Panel understands that classical linguistic textbooks and references are vital and should remain in some courses as important resources for students.

While the QAAC format is used consistently with 21 different sections throughout each form, as a minor note, completion of Item 19 on the form, course assessment, slightly varied between courses with forms showing extended assessment descriptions (ENGL548) while others (ENGL541, 543) showed limited description; however, the majority of MAEL courses reviewed included mapping of assessments to Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs). Only one course specification reviewed (ENGL541) did not include required information such as course textbook and description of topics covered. The Panel was also presented with a Course Portfolio Inspection Report for the majority of courses. Thus, the Panel found that the vast majority included the required information. However, it should be noted that in several course specifications, older programme outcomes, representing past versions, were included rather than the newest programme outcomes (see recommendations 1.3 and 1.4 for further information).

Taking into consideration the actual recommendation of using the QAAC format and ensuring accuracy of data {which is mostly accurate and updated with the exception of the updated Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) in a few cases as discussed in paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4}, the Panel finds this recommendation partially addressed.

**Recommendation 1.3:** *update all aspects of the programme documentation to reflect the corrected version of the programme intended learning outcomes and to assure meeting the programme's aims and objectives.*

**Judgement:** *Partially Addressed*

To address the recommendation of updating all aspects of the programme documentation to reflect the updated version of the PILOs, the Department Quality Assurance Committee reviewed all MAEL course specifications forms to ensure updated information from the 2016-2017 academic year. Further, the Department Curriculum Committee (DCC) and the DHSC initially revised the PILOs for the MAEL programme, which were further modified twice in 2019 and were approved by the DELL Council. The Panel found the modified PILOs (2019-2020) measurable and appropriate for the MAEL programme and appropriately mapped to the Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs). Moreover, the consistent review of measurable

outcomes was confirmed through interviews with the DHSC and various other stakeholders.

Based on the review of some course specifications from the academic year 2019-2020 submitted by MAEL as evidence (e.g. ENGL540, 541, 542, 543, 544), the Panel noticed that the programme outcomes had been updated. However, as the PILOs were modified twice in 2019, it seems that not all course specifications were updated as per the course specifications from Semester II, 2019-2020. Some courses did reflect updated programme outcomes (ENGL541, ENGL548), some reflected a modified version of the new PILOs (seemingly an earlier draft before approval) such as ENGL540, ENGL547, ENGL549, and other courses documented the previous PILOs that were in effect before the revisions like, for example those of 2018-2019, such as in the case of ENGL542 and ENGL545.

Although the PILOs and PEOs are measurable and clearly linked and have been revised significantly and extensively, yet they have not been updated to reflect the most current, approved version, the Panel concludes that this recommendation has been partially addressed.

**Recommendation 1.4:** *revise the mapping of the course intended learning outcomes to the programme intended learning outcomes, to ensure that they are adequately mapped with the updated programme intended learning outcomes and that the mapping method is consistent across all courses.*

**Judgement:** *Partially Addressed*

Based on the 2017 BQA report, which recommended a review of the mapping of the CILOs to PILOs for consistency across all MAEL courses, the department's QAC organized workshops to ensure measurable course outcomes and accurate mapping to programme outcomes with a review by MAEL course coordinators in 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020.

The Panel reviewed a sample of course specifications from the 2019-2020 academic year, including those of ENGL540, 541, 542, 543, 544 as well as specifications from the 2018-2019 courses, such as ENGL545, 547, 548, and 549. This is in addition to reviewing some course portfolios such as ENGL540 and ENGL548, which showed the mapping of course outcomes to individual programme outcomes as recommended. Moreover, as evidenced in the course specifications, such as ENGL540 and ENGL545, previously mentioned in the BQA 2017 report, the majority of course outcomes now state measurable and diverse behaviors or 'action verbs'.

Nevertheless, as evidenced in Semester II course specifications from 2019-2020 and course assessment Excel Sheets, several courses did not state the final version of the

programme outcomes as written in the Progress Report, but rather a modified version or the version from 2018-2019 (such as ENGL540, ENGL547, ENGL549). Thus, the Panel is unable to conclude that the course outcomes are mapped accurately to the programme outcomes, as not all course specifications consistently reflect the 2019-2020 version.

While there has been a significant effort in internally auditing, revising and mapping course outcomes to programme outcomes, another systematic review of all MAEL course specifications is suggested to ensure programme outcomes are consistently updated and mapped with course outcomes. For the aforementioned reasons, the Panel concludes that this recommendation has been partially addressed.

**Recommendation 1.5:** *develop and implement a plan that ensures a proper and effective use of e-learning in the delivery of the programme courses.*

**Judgement:** *Not Addressed*

To address the recommendation, the QAO in the College of Arts and the department's QAC organized a number of workshops to help faculty members use e-learning, specifically Blackboard, more effectively and there has been a clear emphasis in university policy to use Blackboard and an increased concern for issues of cybersecurity. Also, as indicated in the Progress Report and from interviews with various stakeholders, several MAEL courses are now available on Blackboard (as shown between the 2016-2017 and 2019-2020 academic years). Further, during the COVID-19 pandemic, as indicated in interviews and from evidence of content, assessments, and assignments on Blackboard per MAEL courses, the e-learning platform has been used extensively in all classes.

Nevertheless, no clear indication or evidence was presented to the Panel of an actual e-learning plan for the Department or MAEL programme, which clearly indicates which content areas, tools, or other features, for example, are to be used. According to interviews with various stakeholders, before the COVID-19 pandemic, usage of e-learning in courses was not necessarily regular but rather dependent on the instructor's discretion. The Learning Management System (LMS) Report generated by the university's E-Learning Centre illustrated that about 16% of College of Arts' courses, ranking fourth at the University, were using e-learning/e-courses; however, numbers/percentages for DELL/MAEL programme were not available. Moreover, as discussed in interviews, some courses were reportedly active in several areas (e.g. content, assessment, tools, etc.) on the e-learning platform while other courses had minimal content on the LMS prior to the COVID-19 transition to online teaching. In addition, there was no indication that e-learning platform usage is systematically monitored or that reports were regularly requested or analysed by the Department.

Although there is clear increased e-learning usage in MAEL courses, yet, the Panel did not receive evidence of development or implementation of an actual DELL/MAEL e-learning plan as per the recommendation. Thus, the Panel concludes that this recommendation has not been addressed.

## 2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

*This section evaluates the extent to which the MAEL programme of UOB, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of December 2017, under Indicator 2: Efficiency of the programme; and as a consequence, provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.*

**Recommendation 2.1:** *investigate the reasons behind low student progression rates and establish remedial measures for academically struggling students, to ensure appropriate progression in line with the programme aims.*

**Judgement:** *Fully Addressed*

The Progress Report of the MAEL programme mentions that the DHSC was behind the suggestion of having the programme make utmost use of the data generated by the university's Student Information System (SIS) to help with addressing the recommendation related to the low student progression rates in the MAEL programme, as was also confirmed by minutes of meetings submitted as evidence.

In support of this suggestion, the department's QAC organized in collaboration with the university's Information Technology (IT) Centre a workshop for faculty members to train them on the use of the SIS and on ways of extracting data from it to help them in fulfilling their student advising duties, especially those related to tracking and following up on their advisees' academic progress. The utilization of the SIS data in this way was also confirmed to the Panel through interview sessions with various stakeholders, where reference was made in particular to academic warnings issued by the SIS, which help in identifying academically struggling students before their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) drops below 3.0. In addition to making use of the SIS to follow up on students' academic progress and grades, the new strategy of the MAEL programme that was being implemented before the COVID-19 pandemic was the increase of interaction between faculty and students either through online communication or face-to-face meetings during instructors' office hours to discuss issues and problems students are facing and to help them progress. After COVID-19, the interaction was restricted to WhatsApp calls and messages as a measure of remaining up-to-date with the students, especially those in need of additional support. This was confirmed through the faculty members' interview and the interview with the members of the DHSC, who explained that in very rare cases were students dismissed from the programme because of low academic achievement and that most of the time dismissals or long durations of enrolment in the programme were due to personal problems or to other commitments such as work/employment. The interview with the MAEL students confirmed the same and students' expressed satisfaction with

how their instructors reach out to them whenever they are not doing academically well. Furthermore, the interviews with the MAEL alumni referred to an exit survey including items investigating their satisfaction level with the advising services provided to them during their enrolment in the programme. Both alumni and students expressed satisfaction with the advising services and also with the guidance provided by their theses' supervisors and any extra support they received from them in the process.

Based on the above and considering the MAEL students' satisfaction with the measures in place to follow up on their academic progress, the Panel finds this recommendation as fully addressed.

**Recommendation 2.2:** *investigate ways of ensuring that faculty members are assigned courses within their areas of specialization and reducing staff teaching load and student-to-faculty ratios, to enable efficient delivery of the programme and allow time for faculty involvement in research and community engagement activities.*

**Judgement:** *Partially Addressed*

In response to the recommendation of the BQA review report of 2017 in relation to ensuring a proper match between MAEL faculty members' areas of specialization and the courses they are assigned to teach, and with respect to reducing their teaching load and the student-to-faculty ratios, the programme managed to hire in 2018 one associate professor specialized in the area of linguistics. Together with four other full-time faculty members (specialized in linguistics, applied linguistics, and literature), they all contribute to the delivery of the MAEL courses. A review of these faculty members' qualifications by the DHSC and QAC confirmed their compatibility with the courses they teach on the programme. Additionally, their research profiles are in line with the university's Graduate Studies Regulations and this is why they had been approved to teach on a graduate programme such as MAEL. A look at the list of research works published in the last 3 years by the MAEL faculty members proved to the Panel that they are research active in their areas of specialization. The Panel acknowledges the steps taken by MAEL to ensure compatibility between the faculty members' areas of specialization and the courses they teach. Despite this, the Panel came to know through interviews with the programme's senior management that, to date, the three new faculty members that had been successfully recruited by the DELL in general, including the new associate professor of linguistics; continue to teach on both the BAEL and the MAEL programme at the same time, just like the situation was during the last BQA review of the programme. With this situation persisting, the MAEL faculty members continue to have a heavy workload. This is in addition to their other duties such as supervising MAEL theses, being involved in committee work, as well as advising

students and sometimes in large numbers too (up to 55 in some cases), as was confirmed through the faculty interview.

Moreover, although steps were taken by the BAEL programme- on which the MAEL faculty members also teach- to try to keep the class size up to no more than 35 students in most cases; interviews with various stakeholders (among them mainly faculty and students), however, confirmed that the number of students in classes continues to be quite large, ranging from 40-80 students per class. Obviously, this negatively impacts the MAEL faculty workload just as it does the BAEL's. DELL faculty members from both BAEL and MAEL also explained that it is still challenging to conduct research and get promoted academically, mainly due to their heavy workload. Thus, although the Panel acknowledges the efforts of MAEL in trying to address this recommendation, the Panel is of the view that it is partially addressed.

**Recommendation 2.3: *implement systematic and formal arrangements for the induction of newly appointed staff.***

**Judgement: *Fully Addressed***

In response to the recommendation of there being no systematic and formal arrangements implemented for the induction of newly-appointed faculty members, the Quality Assurance (QA) Office of the College of Arts at UoB organized several faculty induction sessions over the last two years and mainly for the part-time teaching staff. Evidence of these sessions was submitted to the Panel in the form of a faculty induction policy being in place; a memo being sent from the College of Arts QAO to the Heads of Departments informing them of an induction day for new academic staff and an analysis report of faculty induction evaluation surveys also from the QAO. The Panel noticed in this analysis report the name of the newly hired MAEL faculty member, who expressed great satisfaction towards the induction session during the Panel's interview with the DELL faculty members and confirmed evaluating it. The Progress Report also mentions other induction sessions organized at the departmental level for new part-time instructors. While the Panel advises the DELL to include in its departmental induction sessions both part-time and full-time faculty, the Panel nonetheless is of the view that this recommendation is fully addressed.

**Recommendation 2.4: *further utilise the information obtained from tracking reports to inform the process of decision-making with regards to the programme.***

**Judgement: *Not Addressed***

With respect to tracking reports, the 2017 BQA report of the MAEL programme clearly refers to tracking reports of a number of services at the departmental, college, and university level. Specifically, it mentions tracking reports from the E-Learning Centre

indicating usage of the learning management systems such as Blackboard and MOODLE; tracking reports from the reading laboratory related to a manual system of lending and borrowing of resources; in addition to timetables posted on classroom and laboratory doors to track usage of facilities. Thus, when the 2017 review panel had made the recommendation for the programme to utilize such reports in the process of decision-making, it was clearly referring mainly to the services listed above and to ones similar to them. Thus, the expectation of the Panel was to find something in the Progress Report mentioned about these services and/or their reports under this recommendation. Instead, however, these services were not referred to at all and in their place there was reference to reports generated from the SIS regarding, for example, course schedules, grades, grievances, absence, warnings, at-risk students, academic advising, course evaluations, faculty profile, and student profile.

In addition, although some documents indicating decisions made on the basis of tracking reports were submitted to the Panel as extra evidence based on the panel's request; still, the total absence of mention of the facilities or systems highlighted in the 2017 BQA review report in the Progress Report does not contribute at all toward showing how the recommendation has been addressed. Not only that, but also interviews with various stakeholders did not help in informing the panel members much with respect to how the recommendation in concern was addressed; as, most interviewees were focused on mentioning the types of reports generated in or for the programme (e.g. committee reports, English Language Centre reports, Central Library e-databases usage reports and reports on the usage of hard/printed copies and physical resources), instead of providing concrete examples on how information obtained from tracking reports is being systematically utilized to inform the process of decision-making with regard to the programme. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the DELL raise awareness among its staff members about the criticality and significance of this important quality assurance practice (i.e. systematically utilizing information from tracking reports to inform strategic and operational decision-making processes in the programme) and, thus, finds this recommendation as not addressed.

**Recommendation 2.5:** *investigate ways to provide more effective academic advising and to utilize proactive advising for possible at-risk students, in order to identify them early and to systematically monitor them, so as to ensure their successful academic progress.*

**Judgement:** *Fully Addressed*

The BQA 2017 review report highlighted some issues in relation to academic advising, among them the lack of systematic follow-up or monitoring of academically at-risk

students and lack of a mechanism for identifying such students before their CGPAs drop below 3.0 or before they end up having more than two courses below a 'B' grade.

To address these issues, the MAEL programme took several measures among them one that was led by the Head of Department who sent out several emails to the academic advisors requesting them to follow up on their academically at-risk students and to provide them with the needed guidance and support. Complying with these requests, the academic advisors arranged meetings with their at-risk students. Another measure taken was by the DHSC members who invited all MAEL academically at-risk students for an open discussion about their academic problems and offered them advice accordingly, guiding them toward ensuring future progress in their studies. All these measures were taken after a workshop had been organized by the department's QAC to train academic advisors on how to use the SIS to track students' grades and progress before they become at-risk and how to provide them with appropriate academic advising.

From interviews, it was confirmed that the Head of Department receives the advisors' reports and then discusses them in DELL council meetings. When asked about a policy stipulating the number of times an advisor must meet with their advisees per semester or year, the Panel was informed that there is no set policy and that this is left to the students' needs. Faculty members confirmed the absence of such a policy and emphasized the importance of the SIS in identifying students at risk of academic failure, which helps them in fulfilling their advising duties more easily. Furthermore, as was mentioned earlier in Recommendation 2.1, the interviews with the MAEL alumni referred to an exit survey including items investigating their satisfaction level with the advising services provided to them during their enrolment in the programme, and they expressed satisfaction with the advising they had received as students. Similarly, current MAEL students reported in interviews with the Panel that they are satisfied with their advisors' willingness to guide and support them when needed. For now, however, they prefer to ask for help directly from their course instructors rather than from their advisors, mainly because of the COVID-19 situation during which they find it easier to be in direct contact with those instructors who are teaching them.

Based on the above, the Panel appreciates the different measures taken by the MAEL to improve its academic advising practices and, thus, finds this recommendation as fully addressed.

### 3. Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates

*This section evaluates the extent to which the MAEL programme of UOB, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of December 2017, under Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.*

**Recommendation 3.1: *implement a formal benchmarking exercise of all aspects of the programme, including academic standards and admission criteria, in accordance with the university's benchmarking policy.***

**Judgement: *Not Addressed***

To implement a benchmarking exercise of all aspects as per the UOB benchmarking policy, the MAEL programme was informally benchmarked with three universities in four main areas: programme structure, admission, assessment, and curriculum. The QAAC -benchmarking report and Progress Report show a table comparing the four areas for each university to the MAEL programme; however, in the report, there is no comparison summary between universities, general findings or comments, or recommendations. Benchmarked programmes were selected based on their similarity to the MAEL programme and also due to their world rankings. The MAEL programme team, however, mentioned other measures for benchmarking in the Progress Report, including: external examiner reports and University of Bahrain's Higher Studies Regulations and Thesis Writing Guide.

While the benchmarking report mentions the metrics of programme structure, curriculum, admission, and assessment for benchmarking and the Progress Report includes an introduction and general comments on benchmarking, no in-depth analysis, overall findings, recommendations, or benchmarking outcomes, appear in either reports. Thus, there is no indication of the final result of the benchmarking. Further, in the Benchmarking Report, for example, statements of similarity are general and inconsistent such as 'the programme is similar in title, all aspects of admission, curriculum, structure, and assessment.' Furthermore, when looking at the programme structure, for example, one university's MA programme has 12 credit hours, another 39 credit hours, and another 5 courses prior to dissertation. In the area of curriculum, one university offers 5 courses, another 14, and the third 5 courses, seemingly core courses, while the MAEL programme offers 10 courses. No indication was given of how the structure or curriculum of the programmes compares to the MAEL programme or how the benchmarking supports or confirms the same elements/metrics in the MAEL programme. i.e. the equivalence of its academic standards.

While the MAEL programme did complete an informal benchmarking exercise based on three regional and international universities in four aspects including admission criteria, the Panel did not receive sufficient evidence of a completed benchmarking report with an in-depth analysis of the elements benchmarked, findings or recommendations to verify academic standards. Thus, the Panel finds this recommendation as partially addressed.

**Recommendation 3.2:** *implement a formal system with clear lines of responsibility to ensure that the programme applies all aspects of the university's assessment policy, including moderation of assessment, the use of rubrics for marking, and the handling of plagiarism.*

**Judgement:** *Partially Addressed*

Based on the 2017 BQA report for implementation of a formal system regarding the university's assessment policy, the DELL has implemented the UOB Moderation of Assessment Regulations and, in 2019-2020, there was a Moderation Committee formed under the department's QAC. The QAO also organized professional development workshops for faculty, for example, on writing examination items and linking formative assessment to learning. The DELL has also begun implementation of the University Anti-Plagiarism Policy and organized workshops on using SafeAssign through Blackboard in collaboration with the university's e-learning centre to generate plagiarism reports that include written assignments and projects. The Department has further implemented internal and external moderation across the MAEL programme, formed an ad hoc moderation committee, and recommended attendance at a moderation workshop organized by the University QAAC.

While internal and external moderation procedures have been implemented and reports offered, a formalized system and lines of responsibility regarding moderation follow-up and feedback (closing the loop), missing documents, procedures for choosing external moderators have not been indicated in the evidence presented to the Panel (See Recommendations 3.4-3.5). Moreover, although evidence presented illustrates strong examples of use of SafeAssign and low similarity percentages in MAEL projects and assignments, as evidenced by interviews with various stakeholders and documents presented, there is no apparent departmental policy or practice regarding plagiarism notification or threshold for similarity reports on written assignments. Interviewees reported that multiple submissions are sometimes allowed and the similarity threshold varies depending on instructor. Regarding using rubrics for marking, evidence presented to the Panel in the form of two MAEL course portfolios, ENGL540 and ENGL548, illustrates that rubrics are still not used consistently for marking, in ENGL540 for example.

Since the last 2017 BQA visit, DELL has initiated and implemented several measures and organized faculty trainings regarding various aspects of assessment including internal moderation, external moderation, and the use of anti-plagiarism tools, all toward clear implementation of the University Assessment Policy. However, a formalized system with clear lines of responsibility regarding assessment including the handling of plagiarism, the consistent use of rubrics, and the follow-up on the moderation process has not been indicated in the evidence. Thus, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is partially addressed.

**Recommendation 3.3** *revise the alignment of course assessments with learning outcomes to ensure the achievement of academic standards of graduates.*

**Judgement:** *Partially Addressed*

To address the recommendation of revising course assessment alignment with learning outcomes and ensure achievement of academic standards, the MAEL programme, as part of DELL, has taken several steps. MAEL course specifications and portfolios were reviewed and revised by the department's QAC as per the Progress Report. The QAC also organized a workshop for MAEL instructors to revise CILOs and align them with assessment tools. Course specifications for all MAEL courses and course portfolios for two courses reviewed by the Panel indicate an improvement and revision in writing and revising of CILOs to more measurable verbs better aligned with course assessments, as indicated through course specifications and CILOs' alignment.

While materials in the course portfolios presented to the Panel (ENGL540, ENGL548) did state that the CILOs were achieved, as was discussed in the MAEL Progress Report and in separate evidence of Excel files, the course assessment area in the e-portfolio did not include the Excel Sheet with alignment to course or programme outcomes or the alignment of the assessment questions (mapping breakdown) to course outcomes. A couple of course specifications did not indicate the alignment between the course outcomes and the assessments. However, overall, there is clear indication that the majority of assessments are well-aligned and the learning outcomes are achieved by the students in the MAEL programme through the course assessment Excel forms.

Overall, apart from a few cases, there is thorough evidence of alignment in course assessment forms, outcome mapping, course specifications and examples of students' works as shown in the course portfolios, which show that the assessments in each course have been reviewed and aligned with course and programme outcomes to ensure the academic standards of graduates. Thus, the Panel finds this recommendation partially addressed.

**Recommendation 3.4:** *implement formal internal moderation in line with the university's procedures; and develop mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of internal moderation to ensure fair and rigorous assessment.*

**Judgement:** *Partially Addressed*

To implement formal internal moderation, the MAEL programme follows the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy, the Program Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy and UOB moderation regulations and guidelines. In the Progress Report, through interviews with various stakeholders and evidenced in the MAEL Course Rolling Plans, Internal Moderation Forms and meetings about revising the forms, implementation of formal pre-and post-internal moderation is clearly indicated. The MA Course Rolling Plans, reviewed by the department's QAO and the University QAAC, also outline courses and assessments to be moderated, and the Course Moderation Forms and Reports and Departmental Meeting Minutes offer an overview and recommendations for moderation and improvement on the internal pre-and-post moderation forms.

The MAEL programme has taken significant steps toward effective and fair internal moderation as shown in the Rolling Plans and reports provided. Nevertheless, there is limited indication of follow-up on recommendations and mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of internal moderation. In the Moderation Reports, it is clearly indicated which courses have been moderated; although few missing documents were reported for the MAEL courses. At the same time, there is no real indication of recommendations for improvement of assessment for the MAEL programme courses to ensure rigorous assessment and thorough internal moderation. The Panel was not presented with evidence of follow-up procedures on improvement of assessments and/or the minimal suggestions offered in the course moderation forms. For example, in one course internal pre-moderation (ENGL542), it is mentioned that 'a more detailed assessment guide is needed including assessment criteria and performance indicators,' yet the 'yes' box is checked regarding 'marking guide information' and the 'provided evidence' does not show a 'marking guide' was provided as evidence. Thus, the moderation report was not seemingly detailed enough or thorough in addressing the issue of an assessment guide, and there is no indication on how that was revised or followed. From the moderation reports, completed forms, and meeting minutes, it is unclear if thorough moderation, i.e. the effectiveness of internal moderation, and follow-up procedures are applied.

The MAEL programme has clearly begun implementation of internal pre-and-post assessment moderation. The programme has taken steps to integrate and document internal moderation as part of the departmental assessment process. Nevertheless, evidence of mechanisms that promote thoroughness/accuracy of the internal

moderation process (i.e. accurate, detailed documentation and thorough review of assessments) and measuring the effectiveness of internal moderation (follow-up mechanisms) to ensure rigorous assessment were not indicated. Thus, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is partially addressed.

**Recommendation 3.5: *implement the university's external moderation system and assess its effectiveness.***

**Judgement: *Partially Addressed***

To address external moderation, the MAEL programme has begun external moderation based on the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy, the Program Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy and UOB moderation regulations and guidelines. In the Progress Report, through interviews with groups of stakeholders and the departmental QAC, and evidenced by the External Moderation Reports, there has been external moderation of MAEL programme courses in the 2019-2020 academic year. The MAEL external examiners, as evidenced by their CVs, have the appropriate experience and academic background for external examination. However, there was no indication that the MAEL programme external moderators were formally invited to participate (i.e. through written invitation) or were given a fixed term as an external moderator or guidelines of moderation, other than the moderation form and course portfolios.

Further, the Course Rolling Plans for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 provided to the Panel did not indicate specific courses and assessments to be moderated externally. Moreover, the Moderation Reports, Departmental Meeting Minutes discussing moderation, and interviews with various stakeholders did not specify follow-up procedures on the external moderators' recommendations nor is there evidence that external moderators were notified of any changes/decisions based on their feedback. Ad Hoc Moderation Committee meeting minutes were also not provided. Further, no comments for improvement or general comments were written in any external moderation reports provided; only checkmarks indicating all criteria were satisfied, which poses a question of the thoroughness of the external moderation and, thus, its effectiveness. As shown through the presented evidence, there does not appear to be a clear systematic plan for which courses are externally moderated (e.g. in the Rolling Plan), guidelines on follow-up procedures on recommendations, or assessment of the effectiveness of external moderation.

The Panel considers the initial integration of external moderation as a positive step toward systematic external moderation of assessment in the MAEL programme. Nevertheless, complete implementation and thorough mechanisms including processes for notification of external moderators, integration of external moderation in the MAEL Rolling Plan, and follow-up and assessment of the effectiveness of the

external moderation are still being developed. Due to the aforementioned, the Panel finds this recommendation as partially addressed.

**Recommendation 3.6:** *implement effective measures to ensure that the level of graduates' achievement meets the programme aims and its intended learning outcomes.*

**Judgement:** *Partially Addressed*

To implement effective measures to ensure that the level of graduates' achievement meets the programme aims and learning outcomes, the Panel was presented with evidence of programme achievements including master's theses, internal/external moderation of assessments (see recommendation 3.4 -3.5), Course-Program outcomes assessment Excel sheets for each course, and Achievement of PILOs report and minimal responses on Employer/Alumni Surveys. The Progress Report mentions measures taken according to UOB policies of moderation, quality assurance and enhancement, and CILO/PILO Achievement Measures including the Excel sheet, as mentioned to statistically analyse the achievement of both course and programme outcomes in each course. Despite minor inconsistencies, as shown by statistical evidence and course specifications, the Panel finds that assessments are aligned with course outcomes, which are met at the course level.

In the 'Course-Programme Outcomes Assessment' Excel sheet for each course in the MAEL programme, there is a clear indication of course achievement and mapping of assessment to outcomes. However, in some courses, the PILOs mentioned are the old PILOs (e.g. ENGL541, ENGL542), and in another course (ENGL549), the PILOs mentioned refer to the BAEL programme, and in others, the heading of the PILOs reads "BA" but the actual PILOs are from the MAEL programme (ENGL547 and ENGL544). Nevertheless, in Semester 2, 2019-2020 programme outcome statistical analysis, it is clear that students from that semester achieved the programme outcomes in their coursework, and the Panel finds that, as evidenced by the Excel Sheets from Semester 1, 2019-2020, the course work supports the programme outcomes and aims.

The theses presented to the Panel and the PILO/CILO outcomes for each course consistently show the programme outcomes are met through increasing systematic internal measurement of the programme aims. However, external verification measures of the level of graduates' achievement is needed. For the MAEL programme, the review by an external examiner of theses is a significant indicator of external verification illustrating the achievement of the graduates as per the programme aims of a final research-based project. While external moderation, as mentioned in Recommendation 3.5, is still in its initial stages for course assessment, external moderation of the courses also supports the thesis moderation and programme aims. Regarding external surveys for verification, an Employer survey based on an online

survey designed by the College QAC and distributed to public and private institutions that employ several DELL graduates, was completed in 2019 in addition to another survey in 2020 about the relationship of the MAEL programme and graduates to the job market and their satisfaction with the programme (Stakeholder's Survey) as they move on in their career. Both surveys received positive responses but had very low response rates (only 2 responses clearly indicated for the MAEL programme); the sample size of distribution was not reported. It is not evident how DELL or the MAEL programme uses these reports to inform or improve the programme or to ensure that the level of graduates meets the programme aims.

There is a clear indication of effective measures implemented to ensure course and programme outcome achievement such as implementation of the course assessment form, positive steps toward internal and external moderation of assessment for courses (with some improvements as recommended in 3.5), and strong Master's theses and external examiners' reports which clearly indicate graduates are comparable to their regional counterparts in higher studies. With the inconsistencies in reporting noted, the Panel finds this recommendation as partially addressed. At the same time, the Panel urges the MA programme to actively and systematically increase measures to obtain feedback from alumni and employers and use this feedback to inform the programme.

**Recommendation 3.7:** *implement a systematic cohort analysis; study the reasons for the long duration needed to complete the programme requirements; develop a mitigation plan; and gather data on graduates' first destinations.*

**Judgement:** *Partially Addressed*

In response to the recommendation, of a systematic cohort analysis and mitigation plan the MAEL programme, as mentioned in the Progress Report refers to its annual Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and cohort analysis, which displays all current enrolled students' status, CGPA, graduation rate, and graduate CGPA. The analysis presents data about enrolled students, retention rates, gender and nationality, analysis of CGPA, semesters remaining, under probation students, full-time students. The data shows a full view of the current status of each student and the CGPA trend over the past five semesters. The data presented shows some statistics on progression of the cohort from 2017-2018 (retention rates only). Further, destination of employment was shown as 'all employed', meaning all currently enrolled and recently graduated students are employed, which explains the reason for the most frequent amount of time to complete the programme as nine semesters. Most students are part-time.

The current analysis shows 28 currently enrolled MAEL students and their individual enrollment status (courses completed, awaiting the award of the MA degree, etc.); prior numbers are not provided, but the currently enrolled student information goes

back to those admitted in 2017. A noticeable trend found in the data, which was discussed in the brief analysis, was that a quarter of the students enrolled currently are under probation from 2018 and 2019 admission cohorts. It is stated that these students were provided with advice from their advisors and faculty about repeating the courses and improving their CGPA. According to interviews with various stakeholders involved in the MAEL programme and e-mail correspondence, the MAEL faculty members actively advise at-risk students. To back up this analysis, the data offered includes a five-semester CGPA trend which shows a decline in CGPA in 2018-2019. To explain the data, there are written comments on each spreadsheet that provide some insight and analysis of the data. While increased data has been collected on students' and there is some analysis of data that shows some trends, such as CGPA, over the last two years, the analysis is not very detailed and there is no clear mitigation plan, other than advice from faculty members, to support those newly enrolled struggling students or investigate why nearly a quarter of students are on probation. Further, it is not clear if those current numbers are based on a previous trend, as the data, other than the CGPA, is not built on previous years, i.e. showing progression. A brief analysis/a few pieces of data of student numbers, nationality, gender, and CGPA are provided in the SER but again do not show trends over years.

Based on the evidence provided to the Panel, which includes increased data and some analysis for current students, both individually and as a group, and CGPA trends over the past five semesters, no evidence or indication was provided of a mitigation plan or a systematic analysis that occurs annually. Based on the aforementioned reasons, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation has been partially addressed.

**Recommendation 3.8:** *expedite the implementation of policies and procedures related to programme advisory committees, to obtain feedback and act on their recommendations to improve the programme.*

**Judgement:** *Not Addressed*

The two main advisory committees for DELL's MAEL programme are the Programme's Advisory Committee (PAC) and Students' Advisory Committee (SAC). In the 2017 initial review, it was noted that these committees were recently formed and had just begun meeting at that time. In the 2019 Progress Report, it is mentioned that in accordance with the QAAC Manual, meetings are held annually with the committees as shown through meeting minutes and the list of advisory committee members is officially updated annually. According to the meeting minutes, the PAC seems to support both the MAEL and BAEL programmes while there is a separate MAEL SAC. As stated in the meeting minutes, the advisory committees are informed of their scope. In addition, the College QAO met with the MAEL SAC to obtain opinions and feedback on the MAEL programme.

Evidence was submitted to the Panel based on an online survey designed by the College QAC and distributed in 2019 to public and private institutions that employ several DELL graduates and on another survey that was completed in 2020 about the relationship of the MAEL programme and graduates to the job market and their satisfaction with the programme (Stakeholder's Survey) as they move on in their career. Both surveys received positive responses but had very low response rates (only 2 responses clearly indicated for the MA programme); the sample size of distribution was not reported. Further, it was not seemingly distributed through/to the DELL advisory committees. It is not clear if or how advisory committees are informed of the decisions or changes being made on the basis of their recommendations. For example, the MAEL SAC met in 2019 with well-defined topics of a focus group toward improving the programme, post-graduate curricula, MA SAC suggestions on allocating more marks for research, rubric use, syllabi, etc. but there is no follow-up indication on how that feedback informed the programme other than the Progress Report mentioning that "the minutes of these meetings were sent to the Higher Studies Committee for discussion and implementation". For those outside of the advisory committees, as evidenced by interviews, the role and presence of the committees are not clear. Moreover, for the MAEL programme, there is only one member of the 12 PAC members, as per the CVs, that has an MA in English from the University of Bahrain and two of the PAC meeting minutes seemingly focused primarily on the new BA programme. In other words, the indication is that the MAEL programme is not regularly represented or followed in the PAC membership or meeting agendas.

While evidence from interviews, meeting minutes showing an increased number of meetings, a separate MA programme SAC, and reported feedback surveys have shown some effort by the MA programme to obtain feedback from stakeholders, the response rates are low and there is no indication of real continuity between meetings; each meeting does not seemingly revisit recommendations from the previous meetings. Moreover, as in the 2017 report, there is no evidence that committee members receive feedback on their recommendations from previous meetings or that feedback is regularly and systematically obtained. Further, as per the recommendation, no evidence of a plan or procedures was provided to the Panel showing that the advisory committees' recommendations were systematically acted upon or used to inform decision-making. Thus, the Panel finds this recommendation as not addressed.

#### **4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance**

*This section evaluates the extent to which the MAEL programme of UOB, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of December 2017, under Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.*

**Recommendation 4.1:** *ensure the consistent implementation of all the institution's quality assurance policies and procedures, and monitor and evaluate their effectiveness with regard to the MAEL programme.*

**Judgement:** *Partially Addressed*

As a response to the 2017 BQA review report which highlighted several issues in relation to the communication and consistent implementation of quality assurance related policies and procedures, the DELL- as indicated in the Progress Report - relied mainly on the policies, procedures, and regulations available through a number of channels, such as: the UoB official website; the Faculty Guide; and the Quality Manual. In addition, the MAEL programme focused on following and abiding by the procedures set by its QAAC and the college QAO, which both adhere to the internal quality assurance system and policies set and implemented by the university's QAAC and Quality Assurance Executive Committee.

Attempting to comply with all these entities' quality assurance policies and procedures helped the MAEL raise the level of consistency of policy implementation across its different aspects and among its various stakeholders. This was implied in the Progress Report and also explicitly articulated in interviews with multiple groups of stakeholders, where examples were provided regarding some practices being unified and consistently implemented across the programme, such as: the design and development of the course specifications, the alignment of intended learning outcomes, the formation and functioning of committees, the mapping of assessments to intended learning outcomes, the moderation of assessments, and the development of course portfolios, to mention only a few.

Additionally, the Panel repeatedly heard from members of the MAEL DHSC how consistent implementation of institutional quality assurance policies and procedures is being monitored through the work of several committees at the department level, such as the Inspection Committee that is in charge of reviewing all contents of the course portfolios and the Textbook Committee that is responsible for ensuring the relevance, currency, and adequateness of textbooks requested by the programme.

Such committees, along with the initiatives or actions included in the University QAAC's Operational Plan, which DELL applies, as well as the advice provided by the PAC and SAC, help guarantee that changes happen systematically rather than haphazardly in the programme and its courses.

Based on what the Panel has gathered over the course of the review of the MAEL programme, and relying on a variety of data sources (e.g. interviews with different stakeholders, examination of supporting materials, review of extra evidence submitted), the Panel is convinced that DELL is on the right track in terms of paving the way for the spread of a quality culture among all its components. Nevertheless, some improvements in a few of the programme's aspects are still needed, as was clearly explained in several parts of this report. Examples include improvements in: strategic decision-making based on systematic tracking of facilities; updating of course documentation according to the latest revisions of PILOs; mechanisms used to elicit stakeholders' feedback; and workload distribution, to ensure equal opportunities for all faculty members to fulfill their potential in the three core functions of university life (teaching, research, and community service).

Considering the aforementioned, thus, the Panel finds this recommendation as partially addressed and, at the same time, advises the programme to expedite the achievement of the needed improvements outlined in this report and to provide the needed support and capacity building for those overlooking quality matters at the department and college level.

**Recommendation 4.2:** *ensure that the programme is subjected to a periodic programme review systematically, which evaluates the programme holistically and includes both internal and external input and uses the outcomes to improve the programme.*

**Judgement:** *Partially Addressed*

At the time of reviewing the MAEL programme in 2017, the review panel then noticed that the programme had not been subject to any kind of systematic periodic review, which incorporates all its aspects and external feedback. Nor was there any clear evidence of improvements having been made to the programme on the basis of evidence-based findings. To address this issue, the QAC at the department level in collaboration with the Curriculum Committee developed a relevant improvement plan including among many areas of focus the implementation of an annual self-evaluation review for the programme. Additionally, the Progress Report mentions a number of reports resulting from reviews and moderations of separate aspects of the MAEL programme, such as reports on the assessment tools and their adequacy for measuring CILOs, reports on the quality of MAEL student theses, CILO-PILO assessment reports, and a British Council report on the quality of MAEL teaching

methods. This is in addition to a report that is expected to result from a review of the programme by the Quality Assurance Executive Committee.

Despite these initiatives, however, which can be considered a move in the right direction for continuously monitoring and measuring different programme aspects and which can act as a stepping stone for a more comprehensive review on the long run, none of them counts as a periodic review of the MAEL programme. Not only that, but also the Panel did not find any indication in the improvement plan document of a periodic review being planned for any given date or time in the future. The plan mentions the collection of stakeholders' feedback on an annual basis and mentions also the undertaking of a labour market study every four years; however, that does not count for a formal and systematic periodic review of MAEL. In fact, the stakeholders' feedback as well as the labour market study findings count only as internal and external sources of input among many others needed for the successful completion of a holistic periodic review of the programme.

This, too, is made clear through the UoB's Program Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy, which was put into effect in April 2015 and which includes the policy and procedures for annual and periodic reviews of programmes as an integral part of it. The Panel, thus, urges the programme to abide by this UoB policy and to adjust its improvement plan as soon as possible, in order to include a future initiative of conducting a comprehensive review of the programme every four or five years and that relies on a wide scope of feedback sources through which data is to be gathered and analyzed. The scope of sources should include everything from students' course evaluation forms to graduating students' exit surveys to internship surveys and alumni and employers' surveys, in addition to labour market research findings; feedback from the PAC and SAC; results of programme mapping to learning resources, staffing, infrastructure and facilities; benchmarking results; external reviewer's findings; and annual review reports of the programme, to mention only a few.

Conclusively, taking into account that the MAEL programme is aware of the UoB Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy to guide it, and that the improvement plan set by its QAC and Curriculum Committee are a step in the right direction to start preparing for a holistic periodic review; the Panel finds this recommendation as partially addressed, due to the fact that the MAEL programme has not yet undergone a review of this type.

**Recommendation 4.3:** *adopt more systematic and rigorous procedures to collect and use stakeholders' feedback to make informed decisions regarding the programme, and provide timely reports to the stakeholders on actions taken to address any identified issues.*

**Judgement:** *Not Addressed*

During the 2017 BQA review of the MAEL programme, collecting stakeholders' feedback was identified by the review panel as one of the programme's areas of improvement. This is mainly because of what was considered then as a poor response rate from the groups of stakeholders involved and also due to a lack of consistency in seeking feedback and in making use of outcomes to inform regular decision-making processes, which result in actions or changes that get clearly and systematically communicated to the relevant stakeholders. As stated in the Progress Report, to address this issue, the DELL started out with updating the membership of, as well as activating, the programme's SAC and PAC, in order to elicit feedback from them on a regular basis through annual meetings. Although some evidence was submitted to the Panel in the form of minutes of meetings for these committees, with several recommendations included in them, no clear evidence of improvement or action plans being developed on the basis of the feedback collected from them was found.

The DELL also, in collaboration with the department's QAC, took the initiative of organizing a meeting with the programme's alumni and employers (Stakeholders' Conference), to elicit their opinions on the programme both verbally and also through a questionnaire. Evidence was submitted to the Panel in the form of what the programme calls 'analysis reports' of the alumni and employers' survey results. However, upon examination of this evidence and other related evidence of surveys, the Panel easily realized that the numbers of respondents in the surveys was very low (only 13 in the October 2019 alumni survey) and (6 in the 2020 employers and graduates survey), as an example. Not only that, but there was no mention in this evidence of the percentage of the respondents in comparison to the total number of their group, whether alumni or employers or exiting seniors, etc. Once again no improvement plans were developed on the basis of their feedback and, in reality, what was submitted to the Panel as survey analysis reports was not so at all; as, these were mere summaries or descriptions of survey results with no authentic analysis or interpretation of data. Of equal importance is the fact that nowhere is it mentioned if or how stakeholders are informed of the decisions or changes being made on the basis of their input. Taking all this into account, the Panel considers this recommendation as not addressed.

**Recommendation 4.4:** *develop and implement a formal mechanism for systematic scoping of the labour market needs and utilize the data received to ensure that the programme is up-to-date and relevant to the market needs.*

**Judgement:** *Not Addressed*

The panel members of the 2017 MAEL review had arrived at the conclusion that the programme provided no evidence of a continuous or systematic scoping of the labour market needs and relied only on attempts that were often sporadic and limited in scope, such as collecting feedback from the PAC or through surveying the employers or the alumni. Analysing what is included for this recommendation in the Progress Report and what is submitted as supporting evidence for it (e.g. 2018 Alumni Survey and 2019 employers survey with a very small number of respondents in each), the Panel does not find any difference between the initiatives taken now at the programme level and those which existed during the 2017 review with respect to scoping the needs of the local labour market specifically for MAEL revisions and enhancement.

The only difference is the 2019 online study that the College QAO conducted to collect feedback about the labour market in general for all its programmes on offer, both undergraduate and graduate, and inclusive of all subject areas or disciplines, and which various programme stakeholders were not sufficiently informed about, if at all, as was clearly observed in interview sessions. Considering that no explanation was provided by the MAEL programme of how the findings of this college-wide study could inform future revisions of it, the Panel finds this recommendation as not addressed.

## 5. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own progress report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the follow-up visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/BQA Follow-up Visits of Academic Programme Reviews Procedure:

**The Master of Arts in Applied English Language Studies programme offered by University of Bahrain has made 'Adequate Progress'.**

## Appendix 1: Judgement per recommendation.

Judgement	Standard
<b>Fully Addressed</b>	The institution has demonstrated marked progress in addressing the recommendation. The actions taken by the programme team have led to significant improvements in the identified aspect and, as a consequence, in meeting the Indicator's requirements.
<b>Partially Addressed</b>	The institution has taken positive actions to address the recommendation. There is evidence that these actions have produced improvements and that these improvements are sustainable. The actions taken are having a positive, yet limited impact on the ability of the programme to meet the Indicator's requirements.
<b>Not Addressed</b>	The institution has not taken appropriate actions to address the recommendation and/or actions taken have little or no impact on the quality of the programme delivery and the academic standards. Weaknesses persist in relation to this recommendation.

## Appendix 2: Overall Judgement.

Overall Judgement	Standard
<b>Good progress</b>	The institution has fully addressed the majority of the recommendations contained in the review report, and/or previous follow-up report, these include recommendations that have most impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. The remaining recommendations are partially addressed. <b>No further follow-up visit is required.</b>
<b>Adequate progress</b>	The institution has at least partially addressed most of the recommendations contained in the review report and/or previous follow-up report, including those that have major impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. There is a number of recommendations that have been fully addressed and there is evidence that the institution can maintain the progress achieved. <b>No further follow-up visit is required.</b>
<b>Inadequate progress</b>	The institution has made little or no progress in addressing a significant number of the recommendations contained in the review report and/or previous follow-up report, especially those that have main impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. For first follow-up visits, a second follow-up visit is required,