هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
Education & Training Quality Authority
KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN مـمـلـكـة الـبـحـريـن

Directorate of
Higher Education Reviews
Programme Review Report

University of Bahrain
College of Arts
Bachelor in Arts & Design
Kingdom of Bahrain

Site Visit Date: 22 – 24 April 2024

HA125-C3-R125

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Acronyms

BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
CoA	College of Arts
DCTA	Department of Communication, Tourism, and Arts
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
HoD	Head of Department
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
ITC	Information Technology Centre
LMS	Learning Management System
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PC	Programme Coordinator
PAC	Programme Advisory Committee
PEO	Programme Educational Objective
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAC	Student Advisory Committee
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SIS	Student Information System
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre
QAC	Quality Assurance Committee
QAO	Quality Assurance Office
UILO	University Intended Learning Outcome
UoB	University of Bahrain

I. Introduction

In keeping with its mandate, the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), through the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR), carries out two types of reviews that are complementary. These are: Institutional Reviews, where the whole institution is assessed; and the Academic Programme Reviews (APRs), where the quality of teaching, learning and academic standards are assessed in academic programmes within various colleges according to specific standards and indicators as reflected in its Framework.

Following the revision of the APR Framework at the end of Cycle 1 in accordance with the BQA procedure, the revised APR Framework (Cycle 2) was endorsed as per the Council of Ministers' Resolution No.17 of 2019. Thereof, in the academic year (2019-2020), the DHR commenced its second cycle of Programme reviews.

The Cycle 2 APR Review Framework is based on four main Standards and 21 Indicators, which forms the basis of the APR Reports of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

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

Standard 1: **The Learning Programme**

Standard 2: **Efficiency of the Programme**

Standard 3: **Academic Standards of Students and Graduates**

Standard 4: **Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance**

The Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as 'the Panel') decides whether each indicator, within a standard, is 'addressed', 'partially addressed' or 'not addressed'. From these judgements on the indicators, the Panel additionally determines whether each of the four standards is 'Satisfied' or 'Not Satisfied', thus leading to the programme's overall judgement, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Criteria for Judgements

Criteria	Judgement
All four Standards are satisfied	Confidence
Two or three Standards are satisfied, including Standard 1	Limited Confidence
One or no Standard is satisfied	No Confidence
All cases where **Standard 1** is not satisfied	

The APR Review Report begins with providing the profile of the programme under review, followed by a brief outline of the judgement received for each indicator, standard, and the overall judgement.

The main section of the report is an analysis of the status of the programme, at the time of its actual review, in relation to the review standards, indicators and their underlying expectations.

The report ends with a Conclusion and a list of Appreciations and Recommendations.

II. The Programme's Profile

Institution Name*	University of Bahrain (UoB)
College/ Department*	College of Arts/ Mass Communication, Tourism, and Arts Department
Programme/ Qualification Title*	Bachelor in Arts & Design
Qualification Approval Number	-
NQF Level	-
Validity Period on NQF	-
Number of Units*	60
NQF Credit	-
Programme Aims/ Educational Objectives*	**Arts & Design Programme** 1. To provide students with a cultural foundation that includes up- to -date information and skills in the areas of fine arts and graphic design in order to enable them to keep up with the rapid and continuous technological developments, and to enable them to provide artistic and technological solutions for social problems. 2. To provide a learning environment that encourages and stimulates students' creativity and innovation through the design and production of unique artworks, and the design of aesthetic and effective artistic solutions, which qualify them to work in print and electronic media, as well as the acquirement of good communication skills and appropriate work ethics. 3. To prepare specialized cadres in graphic design and fine arts who have the ability to criticize and evaluate and possess a sense of artistic and cultural awareness which qualifies them to work in various sectors including culture and heritage, as well as the private sector. 4. To equip students with practical and artistic skills in design, fine arts and scientific research in order to qualify them to pursue higher studies and compete for employment opportunities in the public or private sector. 5. To help students graduate with distinct competencies in self-development through scientific research and exploration, and professional creation of artworks that are in pace with modern developments and that contribute to the economy at the local and regional levels.

A. Graphic Design Major

1. To update the information, skills, software and techniques learned by the students in order to keep pace with the rapid and continuous technological developments and artistic innovations in the field of graphic design.

2. To provide a learning environment that motivates students and encourages their creativity and innovation in the design of aesthetic and effective solutions while working not only on print but also on electronic media (which include movement and sound) and emphasizing communication skills and work ethics.

3. To teach students how to design and evaluate professional artworks that reflect their sense of artistic and cultural consciousness, their perception of social and moral responsibilities, and their ability to think critically and philosophically and thus have a positive persuasive impact on society.

4. To equip students with the skills needed to proficiently pursue graduate studies in this area, or to compete in getting several career opportunities in design firms, advertising agencies, web development and media firms, publishing and printing firms, TV Studios, or even entrepreneurship.

5. To emphasize self-development skills and the ability to learn individually through the Internet, self-learning resources, exploration, and research in order to keep up-to-date with new programs and technologies in the design world.

B. Fine Arts Major

1. To provide students with a cultural foundation in arts to rely on in forming their philosophical and critical ideas, in order to study the problems facing society and contribute to providing solutions from an artistic perspective.

2. To provide an educational environment based on motivating students and encouraging them to be creative and innovative in their artistic works; in a manner that reflects their individual styles and the various schools of art they studied in art history, as well as developing new futuristic techniques.

3. To train and qualify specialized personnel in the fields of art to work in the culture and heritage sectors (such as the Arts Center in Bahrain National Museum as well as Bahrain National Museum) on preparing and supervising seasonal and periodical art exhibitions, including all print and media materials related to these exhibitions.

	4. To allow students to acquire drawing, painting and composition skills in order to execute structural art works; through research, experimentation and analysis using a variety of artistic materials and modern computer software to enable them to keep pace with the rapid developments in the local and global art scenes. 5. To train and qualify fine art students to produce professional art works that qualify for participation in local, regional and international exhibitions – thus supporting economic investment in the field of fine arts
Programme Intended Learning Outcomes*	**Arts & Design Programme** a. To creatively and innovatively produce high- quality artworks that combine technical and artistic skills, taking into account the principles and elements of design, color theory, and aesthetic values. b. To acquire verbal and written expression and persuasion skills, as well as the necessary skills to implement, evaluate, analyze, and criticize the theoretical aspects related to practical artworks, and to present them for constructive public criticism. c. To acquire cognitive curiosity that extends beyond the scientific content provided by the course instructor, and gain self-motivation to self-learn strategies and technical skills in the field of art and design. d. To gain professional and functional expertise that qualifies students to work in all areas of art and design, or to pursue higher studies in these areas. e. To gain intense cultural familiarity with the psychological, social, ethical and legal considerations in any artwork. f. To gain enough knowledge of artistic research methods in the field of Arts and Design and the ability to undertake research and studies that reflect student s' understanding of the economic, historical, political, artistic and philosophical concepts and aspects of civilization. g. To produce effective and influential artworks that can have an impact on social issues and public opinion. **A. Graphic Design Major** 1. To use various computer programs to create and edit graphic designs and manage visual content that consist of design elements which adhere to the aesthetic principles of design, layout, typography, and color harmony. 2. To individually and collectively be able to brainstorm, create, develop, implement, analyze, and criticize innovative ideas and

	projects, and acquire the necessary oral and written expression skills to present them to the public for constructive criticism.
	3. To innovate and develop strategies to solve design problems and overcome the challenges and obstacles that may arise throughout the project research, planning, development, and implementation phases including technical barriers related to printing, color separation, and programming.
	4. To gain knowledge and awareness of the cultural, psychological, social, ethical and legal considerations in Graphic Design.
	5. To learn additional and up-to-date skills through self-development over the Internet and through other resources and gain professional and functional expertise that qualifies the student to work in all areas of graphic design.
	6. To undertake research studies that reflect the student's absorption of the concepts of civilization and of the economic, historical, political and artistic aspects related to graphic design.
	B. Fine Arts Major
	1. To be knowledgeable and aware of the cultural, philosophical and critical aspects of arts that allow for researching, studying and producing artworks which reflect the students' ability to absorb the concept of civilization and the role of art in its development.
	2. To produce artworks using drawing and coloring skills, taking into account the principles and elements of design and color theories as well as aesthetic values to meet the challenges of a rapidly developing fine art scene, both locally and globally.
	3. To organise art exhibitions characterized by highly aesthetic and original artworks, which reflect the spirit of fair competition among participants in these exhibitions.
	4. To support the economic investment in good artworks that are characterized by originality and sophistication in an effort to reflect the ethics of artistic proficiency, including mastery, honesty, responsibility, commitment and patience.
	5. To improve public taste in society by unlocking and implementing the art skills gained from producing art works, and using innovative techniques that add value to what is commonly practiced and what the viewer has gotten used to.

*   Mandatory fields

III. Judgement Summary

The Programme's Judgement: Confidence

Standard/ Indicator	Title	Judgement
Standard 1	**The Learning Programme**	**Satisfied**
Indicator 1.1	The Academic Planning Framework	Addressed
Indicator 1.2	Graduate Attributes & Intended Learning Outcomes	Partially Addressed
Indicator 1.3	The Curriculum Content	Partially Addressed
Indicator 1.4	Teaching and Learning	Addressed
Indicator 1.5	Assessment Arrangements	Addressed
Standard 2	**Efficiency of the Programme**	**Satisfied**
Indicator 2.1	Admitted Students	Addressed
Indicator 2.2	Academic Staff	Partially Addressed
Indicator 2.3	Physical and Material Resources	Partially Addressed
Indicator 2.4	Management Information Systems	Addressed
Indicator 2.5	Student Support	Addressed
Standard 3	**Academic Standards of Students and Graduates**	**Satisfied**
Indicator 3.1	Efficiency of the Assessment	Addressed
Indicator 3.2	Academic Integrity	Addressed
Indicator 3.3	Internal and External Moderation of Assessment	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.4	Work-based Learning	Addressed

Indicator 3.5	Capstone Project or Thesis/Dissertation Component	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.6	Achievements of the Graduates	Addressed
Standard 4	**Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance**	**Satisfied**
Indicator 4.1	Quality Assurance Management	Addressed
Indicator 4.2	Programme Management and Leadership	Addressed
Indicator 4.3	Annual and Periodic Review of the Programme	Partially Addressed
Indicator 4.4	Benchmarking and Surveys	Addressed
Indicator 4.5	Relevance to Labour market and Societal Needs	Addressed

IV. Standards and Indicators

> ## Standard 1
>
> ### The Learning Programme
>
> *The Programme demonstrates fitness for purpose in terms of mission, relevance, curriculum, pedagogy, intended learning outcomes and assessment.*

Indicator 1.1: The Academic Planning Framework

There is a clear academic planning framework for the programme, reflected in clear aims which relate to the mission and strategic goals of the institution and the college.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The Bachelor in Arts & Design programme was introduced in 2015 by the Department of Communication, Tourism, and Arts (DCTA) at the College of Arts (CoA) of the University of Bahrain (UoB). The programme planning and development process has been carried out in line with UoB bylaws, regulations, and policies to ensure that the programme is relevant and fit for purpose. As per the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), the programme consists of two major specializations: graphic design and fine arts.

- The College Risk Management Register and the Programme Risk Management Register have been developed in accordance with the Academic Risk Management Guide. The programme faces several risks that include the potential future shortage of academic staff members available to support students. To mitigate this risk, the DCTA has enlisted a group of part-time faculty members who contribute their expertise and knowledge to student teaching and learning. Additionally, efforts are underway to recruit new faculty members, with the most recent recruitment request submitted in June 2023.

- The title of the programme is concise and indicative of its type and content. However, there is inconsistency in the usage of the programme title, with some documents referring to it as Bachelor in Arts & Design, while in other documents it is referred to as Bachelor in Fine Arts and Design. The Panel recommends that the CoA should ensure that the title of the programme is accurately documented in all the related documents.

- The Panel was not provided with sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the programme adheres to the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The Panel is of the view that it is crucial for the programme to adhere to qualification design requirements as well as the related mapping and confirmation processes. Therefore, the

Panel urges the CoA to expedite the programme placement process on the NQF Level 8 and to ensure that the programme adheres to the NQF requirements in terms of course levels and credits, as recommended in Indicator 1.3.

- There are clear educational objectives for the programme and its two majors that were developed in consultation with internal and external stakeholders. As per the SER, the programme contributes to the achievement of the mission and strategic goals of DCTA, CoA and UoB. It seeks to 'prepare specialized cadres in graphic design and fine arts' and to 'qualify them to pursue higher studies and compete for employment opportunities in the public or private sector'. Graduates are also expected to have 'distinct competencies in self-development through scientific research and exploration, and professional creation of artworks'.

Indicator 1.2: Graduate Attributes & Intended Learning Outcomes

Graduate attributes are clearly stated in terms of intended learning outcomes for the Programme and for each course and these are appropriate for the level of the degree and meet the NQF requirements.

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

- There are institutional-level generic graduate attributes that are clearly stated in the University Intended Learning Outcomes (UILOs). The evidence provided to the Panel includes the mappings of the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) to the PEOs and the UILOs. The Panel notes that the programme and its two majors have well-defined PEOs and PILOs, which align with the mission and vision of DCTA and CoA. However, there is a need to revise and rephrase the PILOs, as some of PILOs are not measurable and written as educational objectives. Additionally, there is insufficient supporting evidence to demonstrate the programme's compliance with the NQF's qualification design requirements as stated in Indicator 1.1. Furthermore, although benchmarking has been conducted, the findings have not been clearly presented or incorporated into the programme's changes. The Panel also notes that there is overlap and repetition between the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) of the programme and the ILOs of each major. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CoA should revise the intended learning outcomes of the programme and its two majors to ensure that they are appropriately written (measurable) and meet the NQF requirements and international norms through benchmarking.

- The Panel notes that there is an excessive mapping between the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) and the PILOs. In some courses (e.g., FA329, FA410), one CILO is mapped to five PILOs. This excessive mapping raises concerns regarding the clarity and specificity of the learning outcomes, and potentially impacts the ability to effectively

evaluate and track student progress. It also poses challenges in accurately assessing and measuring the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Moreover, as discussed under Indicator 1.1, the Panel was not provided with sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the CILOs are appropriate in terms of NQF levels and credits. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CoA should revise the mapping between the CILOs and the PILOs and ensure that the programme adheres to the NQF requirements in terms of course levels and credits.

Indicator 1.3: The Curriculum Content

The curriculum is organised to provide academic progression of learning complexity guided by the NQF levels and credits, and it illustrates a balance between knowledge and skills, as well as theory and practice, and meets the norms and standards of the particular academic discipline.

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

- The programme has a clear study plan that outlines the course progression over eight semesters with an appropriate list of courses that includes university requirements, college requirements, core programme requirements, core major requirements, and elective courses. However, the Panel suggests reducing the number of elective courses in the study plan. Currently, there is a significant number of elective courses (17 courses), which can lead to notable variations in students' learning experience. The Panel is also of the view that there is a need to revise the list of prerequisites to ensure that students possess essential foundational skills such as drawing, fundamental of graphic design, 3D design principles and interactive design concepts before progressing to the core major courses.

- The Panel notes that the workload in the eighth semester is high as the students are required to undertake three courses including their graduation project along with their field work. There are also discrepancies between the study plan displayed on the website, the Graduation Plan and the Programme Study Plan document that was provided to the Panel. The Panel was informed during the interviews that the study plan of 2015 was revised in 2023. However, the Panel was not provided with sufficient details on the development and review process of the 2015 study plan or how the CoA ensures appropriate course-by-course progression in terms of NQF levels and credits. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CoA should regularly revise the study plan of the programme and ensure appropriate course-by-course progression in terms of NQF levels and credits, with an appropriate list of prerequisites and suitable student workload.

- The curriculum has an appropriate balance between theory and practice and knowledge and skills. The balance between theory and practice is further supported through the graduation project. The curriculum also provides students with a well-rounded education

that meets the demands of industry and prepares them for a variety of careers in the field. The Panel acknowledges that the programme's courses cover a wide range of topics; however, it falls short in providing in-depth knowledge, particularly in the higher-level courses. The Panel, therefore, recommends that the CoA should conduct a thorough review of the programme's curriculum, specifically focusing on higher-level courses to identify areas where in-depth knowledge and specialization are necessary.

- Faculty members ensure textbooks are regularly updated and encourage students to access current resources and research findings. Furthermore, the Scientific Research and Innovation Committee organises training sessions for students and instructors to increase awareness of available resources and databases at UoB.

Indicator 1.4: Teaching and Learning

The principles and methods used for teaching in the Programme support the attainment of Programme aims and intended learning outcomes.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The programme adheres to UoB Teaching and Learning Policy, which reflects the institution's teaching and learning philosophy. As per the SER, the programme employs various teaching methods which incorporate e-learning and promote the students' independent and life-long learning. The employed teaching methods also enable the students to attain the ILOs, which include producing creative and innovative artworks, and conducting research and studies in the field of Arts and Design. The programme also encourages students' participation in learning and exposure to professional practice through work-placement and group projects. Furthermore, students are provided with training workshops, which are organised by various committees and centers within the University, covering topics such as e-learning, design skills, Adobe software, and entrepreneurship.

- The Panel notes with appreciation that the programme employs a 'Teaching by Recycling' method, which involves reusing knowledge acquired by a student or delivered by a faculty member in private tutorials for broader educational use, either through public tutorials or peer-based learning. The Panel also notes with appreciation that students are provided with valuable opportunities to engage in INJAZ and other organisations' projects and gain knowledge through hands-on experience.

Indicator 1.5: Assessment Arrangements

Suitable assessment arrangements, which include policies and procedures for assessing students' achievements, are in place and are known to all relevant stakeholders.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- UoB has a clear assessment framework which is outlined in the Student Outcome Assessment Policy, Study and Exam Regulations, the Assessment Moderation Policy, the Quality Manual, and the Teaching and Learning Policy. The Panel notes that the Student Outcome Assessment Policy includes clear guidelines for assessment design and development to ensure objective evaluation of students' achievements. However, it lacks explicit discussion or guidance on the formative aspects of assessments. Therefore, the Panel suggests revising the policy to include clear information and guidelines on formative assessment.

- The Bachelor in Arts & Design programme adheres to UoB assessment policies and regulations which are available to staff and students *via* the university website. The assessment strategy of the programme encompasses a range of summative and formative assessments, such as written examinations, quizzes, research, and project reports alongside other evaluation methods. The purpose of the programme assessment strategy is to evaluate students' theoretical understanding, practical application skills, and proficiency in arts and design. The programme Moderation and Exam Committee is responsible for the implementation of the moderation processes in line with the Assessment Moderation Policy to ensure the validity and reliably of assessments. As per the SER, faculty members provide timely feedback to students and guide them in enhancing their knowledge and skills.

- UoB Anti Plagiarism Policy and Regulations of Professional Conduct Violations provide guidelines and standards for maintaining academic integrity within the programme. There are also provisions for addressing appeals by the students. In line with UoB Anti-Plagiarism Policy, SafeAssign is used for detecting plagiarism in written research, assignments, and projects. Visual plagiarism is also detected using tools like Yandex, Google Image Search, and/or Pinterest Image Search. Moreover, students are asked to work on projects in class or submit time-lapse videos, which enable faculty members to monitor their performance and progress and ensure the work is their own.

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Standard 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.

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Indicator 2.1: Admitted Students

There are clear admission requirements, which are appropriate for the level and type of the programme, ensuring equal opportunities for both genders, and the profile of admitted students matches the Programme aims and available resources.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- UoB has general admission requirements, which are applicable to all UoB programmes and ensure that appropriate students are accepted on an equal basis. These requirements are published on the university website and include a secondary school certificate or its equivalent, with a total minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 70% and admission tests. In addition to the general requirements, there are portfolio submission and review procedures for applicants who wish to enroll in the programme.

- As per the SER, UoB provides appropriate remedial courses for inadequately prepared students to enter and progress in its programmes. There are also appropriate arrangements in place for internal and external credit transfer. The SER and the provided evidence confirm that the programme's admission requirements are regularly revised. The evidence comprises a benchmarking report which includes a comparison of the admission requirements of the programme with seven similar programmes offered by local, reginal and international universities. The SER includes some examples of the changes that were introduced in the programme's admission requirements based on stakeholders' feedback and the performance of students.

Indicator 2.2: Academic Staff

There are clear procedures for the recruitment, induction, appraisal, promotion, and professional development of academic staff, which ensure that staff members are fit-for-purpose and that help in staff retention.

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

- UoB has well-managed recruitment and induction processes that are consistently implemented in line with the related regulations. The evidence that was provided to the Panel includes evaluation reports of applicants' files, induction reports and minutes of meetings of the recruitment committees and the University Council. In relation to academic staff performance appraisal, there is evidence of the existence of a transparent and effective system for staff annual evaluation, which is outlined in the Faculty Performance Appraisal Policy. In relation to faculty promotions, the provided evidence indicates that there is also an effective system for academic promotions, which is outlined in the Academic Promotion Regulations.

- UoB has suitable and effective arrangements, policies and procedures for identifying and supporting the continuing professional development needs of all staff, which are consistently monitored and evaluated. The evidence that was provided to the Panel shows staff participation in several workshops and training programmes organised by the Unit of Teaching Excellence and Leadership (UTEL). The evidence also shows the research activities of DCTA faculty members, which include participation in conferences, seminars and publication in scientific journals. The Panel urges DCTA to encourage its faculty members to publish more research papers in high-impact journals.

- The Panel notes that there are an insufficient number of full-time academic staff compared to the number of enrolled students and the offered graphic design and fine arts courses. The evidence provided shows that the teaching workload is high in the presence of only four full-time and 12 part-time academic staff. Furthermore, the Panel notes that there are no full-time academic staff qualified to teach some of the programme's courses. The Panel is of the view that the current overreliance on part-time staff may negatively affect the stability of the programme's delivery and the quality of teaching and learning, as well as the academic support provided to students. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CoA should increase the number of the programme's full-time academic staff and reduce its reliance on part-time staff members.

- The Panel notes that the special needs of women are taken into consideration at UoB in line with the related policies and regulations. According to the Pay-Scale Equity Policy, UoB is subject to the laws and policies of the Civil Service Bureau. All academic and non-academic staff earn their wages, overtime, and all other remunerations according to the CSB rules and regulations that ensure equity and fairness for all government employees. There are also measures in place to monitor staff turnover.

Indicator 2.3: Physical and Material Resources

Physical and material resources are adequate in number, space, style and equipment; these include classrooms, teaching halls, laboratories and other study spaces; Information Technology facilities, library and learning resources.

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

- The Panel notes that the number and size of classes are adequate and are appropriately equipped. However, based on the interviews with different stakeholders, the site visit tour, and the video which shows DCTA facilities and buildings, it was noted that the art studios and workshops are inadequate for the number of students and their specialties. For example, there is a complete lack of some workshops, such as a ceramics workshop including a glazing laboratory and specialized fire kilns for fine arts. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CoA should provide appropriate and well-equipped workshops and studios for fine arts and graphic design students.

- There are ten computer laboratories adequately equipped to teach courses related to the fields of arts, design, and graphics. The Information Technology Center (ITC) and the E-Learning Centre provide students and faculty members with the needed ITC support. The UoB library has adequate resources for the programme needs and encompasses appropriate informal study places. The evidence that was provided to the Panel includes comprehensive information about the library, its internal regulations, search systems on its website, and other logistics services.

- There is a dedicated Buildings and Maintenance Department at the University that ensures the maintenance of the facilities including laboratories and measures their adequacy. There are also appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the health and safety of students and staff on campus, including safety systems and fire equipment safety training, and emergency plans.

Indicator 2.4: Management Information Systems

There are functioning management information and tracking systems that support the decision-making processes and evaluate the utilisation of laboratories, e-learning and e-resources, along with policies and procedures that ensure security of learners' records and accuracy of results.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The Student Information System (SIS) of the UoB provides a database that meets the programme's needs and enables informed decision-making related to the utilisation of resources and quality enhancement. Students use the SIS to register their courses and

check their grades. Academic staff use the SIS to manage academic advising and track students' performance and attendance. In addition, the SIS facilitates the management of students' admissions, academic advising, and the scheduling of examinations and courses. The Department depends on the information and statistics extracted from the SIS in the annual SERs and Advising Reports of the Bachelor in Arts & Design programme.

- There are several policies and procedures in place to ensure the security of students' records and accuracy of results, including the Information Technology Center Cyber Policies and Procedures, the Incident Management Policy, the Operations Security Policy, and the Access Control and Physical Security Policy. Regular audits of student records are conducted to ensure that the certificates and transcripts awarded by the University are accurate. Interviews with different stakeholders confirmed that students' certificates and transcripts are issued in a timely manner.

Indicator 2.5: Student Support

There is appropriate student support available in terms of guidance, and care for students including students with special needs, newly admitted and transferred students, and students at risk of academic failure.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- UoB provides students with appropriate support and counselling services, which are regularly assessed and improved in line with students' needs. Training and technical assistance are provided by the library, the E-learning Center, and the ITC to ensure the effective utilisation of online platforms, laboratories, and learning resources. The Career Guidance Center of the Deanship of Students' Affairs organises career counseling sessions, job fairs, and internships to assist students in achieving their career goals.

- Newly admitted students are provided with a comprehensive induction programme organised by the Guidance and Counselling Department of the Deanship of Students' Affairs to inform them about their rights, responsibilities and the different services offered by the University. The CoA also provides a brief presentation to its newly admitted students about the academic programmes. In addition, an academic advisor is assigned to each student to follow up on the student's academic achievements. The academic advisor documents all interactions, decisions, and guidance provided to the student in the Academic Advising Documentation Form and the SIS. Students at risk of academic failure are identified by the SIS and meet their academic advisors more frequently. The Panel notes that there are few students included in DCTA lists of at-risk students.

- UoB has an Anti-Discrimination Policy and a Non-Discrimination against Women Policy in place to prevent any form of discrimination. There are also effective provisions at UoB

to integrate women's needs and ensure equal opportunities for both genders. The Guidance and Counselling Department of the Deanship of Students' Affairs supports students with special needs and monitors their academic progress.

Indicator 3.1: Efficiency of the Assessment

The assessment is effective and aligned with learning outcomes, to ensure attainment of the graduate attributes and academic standards of the programme.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The programme adheres to UoB assessment policies, procedures, and guidelines. Various assessment methods are used to evaluate students' learning, including summative theoretical and practice-based assessments such as examinations, artworks, visual presentations, video & animated materials, digital illustrations, posters, and action-based research. All course specification documents include a mapping of the course assessments with the CILOs to ensure that assessments are appropriate for the course's level and complexity.

- To ensure the alignment of assessments with learning outcomes and graduate attributes, the mappings of the assessments to the CILOs and the CILOs to the PILOs are regularly checked by course coordinators and internal and external moderators. The Panel was provided with a sample of the PILO-CILO Assessment Sheets and the PILO Assessment Reports, which show the level of students' achievements of CILOs and PILOs.

- There are several mechanisms in place for monitoring the implementation and improvement of the programme's assessment methods. These mechanisms include course portfolio audits, internal and external moderations of assessments, annual programme evaluations, and assessment improvement plans.

Indicator 3.2: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is ensured through the consistent implementation of relevant policies and procedures that deter plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct (e.g. cheating, forging of results, and commissioning others to do the work).

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The Panel notes that the policies and regulations relating to academic integrity and research ethics are well-disseminated and known by students and staff. As per the SER students are provided with termly sessions and workshops about plagiarism and academic integrity. The University has also developed a Visual Plagiarism Manual, which is made available to staff and students, along with the related policies and regulations including the Regulations of Professional Conduct Violations and the Anti-Plagiarism Policy. Furthermore, students are required to sign and submit an academic integrity form along with the work submitted for grading.

- Written assignments are submitted by students *via* the Blackboard platform and checked by the SafeAssign plagiarism detection tool. The reports generated by SafeAssign are used by the academic staff to identify plagiarism cases and take appropriate actions in line with the related regulations. The artwork and/or visual material submitted by the students are checked by the academic staff through Yandex image search and Google reverse-image search to detect plagiarism. Students are also required to submit photographs or time-lapse video of their artmaking process to prevent plagiarism.

- Examinations are monitored by the assigned invigilators in the large halls and classrooms. Online assessments *via* Blackboard are monitored using the online proctoring tools Respondus and Lockdown Browser. Cases of academic misconduct are reported to the Head of Department (HoD) and referred to the Academic Misconduct Committee. Based on the SER, interviews, and the evidence provided, the Panel is satisfied that there are sound implemented processes for deterring and detecting plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct, which are consistently applied. Cases of academic misconduct are also recorded and the actions taken are guided by the related regulations.

Indicator 3.3: Internal and External Moderation of Assessment

There are mechanisms in place to measure the effectiveness of the programme's internal and external moderation systems for setting assessment instruments and grading students' achievements.

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

- In line with UoB Study and Exam Regulations, Moderation of Assessment Regulations, and the Quality Manual, the programme implements pre- and post-assessment moderation processes to ensures the appropriateness of assessments to the course level and fairness of grading. The Panel was provided with the Course Rolling Plan of 2021-2023, which shows that 12 courses were selected in 2021-2022 and 20 courses were selected in 2022-2023 to undergo internal moderation. It also shows that the internal moderation covers the project and mid-term and final examinations of the selected courses.

- As per the SER, the programme's Moderation and Examination Committee is responsible for allocating a suitable internal moderator for each course based on his/her field of expertise. The Panel is of the view that the small number of full-time academic staff is likely to negatively affect the selection of suitable internal moderators and the efficiency of the internal moderation processes (see the recommendation in Indicator 2.2).

- The Moderation of Assessment Policy includes external moderation procedures. Each semester the programme's Moderation and Examination Committee is responsible for the selection of the courses that will be subject to external moderation. The selected external moderators are required to sign a declaration form before receiving and reviewing the course documents.

- The evidence provided includes the completed internal and external moderation forms that were submitted by internal and external moderators to the Moderation and Examination Committee. The evidence also includes Moderation Analysis Reports, which include the most important recommendations per course. During the interviews, faculty members confirmed that the internal and external moderation of assessments led to some changes in the questions' structure, grammar, and examination duration.

- According to the SER, all the programme's courses should be moderated across two semesters. However, only four courses were externally moderated in 2022-2023 and 20 courses were internally moderated in 2022-2023. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CoA should ensure that all the programme's courses are internally and externally moderated each academic year.

Indicator 3.4: Work-based Learning

Where assessed work-based learning takes place, there is a policy and procedures to manage the process and its assessment, to assure that the learning experience is appropriate in terms of content and level for meeting the intended learning outcomes.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- Industrial training is a compulsory requirement for all final year fine arts and graphic design students. As per the SER, the industrial training is managed in line with UoB's Internship Training Guidelines and the Practical Training and Field Experience Handbook of the Bachelor in Arts & Design programme, which outlines the work-placement requirements for fine arts and graphic design students. The roles and responsibilities of the academic supervisors, training supervisors and students are set out clearly in the provided documents and are communicated to all the relevant stakeholders. During the interviews, the Panel was informed that the industrial training course specifications and all the related documents and forms are available for students on the Blackboard.

- The training supervisor provides students with a Training Venues Database/List and assists them in choosing appropriate training locations. However, the Panel notes that there are currently several students undertaking their internships concurrently in the same location. Therefore, the Panel suggests establishing a maximum capacity for the number of students that can be accommodated by a single organisation simultaneously. The Panel also suggests increasing the industrial training hours to ensure a valuable learning experience and providing students with more opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in professional settings.

- The industrial training course specifications of graphic design (FA498) and fine arts (FA496) include a clear mapping of CILOs to PILOs and assessment details, which are also outlined in the Practical Training and Field Experience Handbook. Students' performance is evaluated by their academic supervisors, and training supervisors. The effectiveness of work-based learning and its contribution to the achievement of the programme aims is evaluated by the students *via* an online survey, which covers training procedures, academic supervision, training providers, and training location/environment/hours.

Indicator 3.5: Capstone Project or Thesis/Dissertation Component

Where there is a capstone project or thesis/dissertation component, there are clear policies and procedures for supervision and evaluation which state the responsibilities and duties of both the supervisor and students, and there is a mechanism to monitor the related implementations and improvements.

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

- Upon completing 116 credit hours, fine arts and graphic design students are required to complete a graduation project course within one semester. The project components and requirements including the assessment process and marking rubrics are clearly stated in the graduation project's outline, manual, and guidelines. The roles and responsibilities of the supervisors and students are also clearly stated in the Graduation Project Manual. Academic supervisors are expected to conduct regular advisory and mentorship meetings to oversee student progress, address potential obstacles, provide necessary resources, and ensure that students remain on track.

- As per the SER, the graduation project enables students to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired throughout the programme in a real-world project and to showcase their creative and innovative skills. The graduation project course specifications of fine arts (FA497) and graphic design (FA499) include a clear mapping of the CILOs to the PILOs, which are aligned with the PEOs.

- Students are encouraged to form their groups and craft their project proposal as early as one semester before starting their project. The assessment of the graduation project courses is structured into three stages: project proposal, project documentation (including research and concept), and presentation and discussion. The assessment is conducted by a jury comprising both internal and external examiners. The Panel is of the view that the graduation project should be an individual project, and the assessment should be more focused on idea originality, creativity, layout and composition, and design skills and techniques. Therefore, the Panel suggests revising the assessment rubrics and processes to be more focused on the above-mentioned aspects and to ensure that each student achieves the CILOs.

- There are mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the graduation's project supervision and assessment processes and its contribution to the achievement of the PILOs, and this evaluation is used to identify areas for improvement. As per the SER, the satisfaction of students with the supervision process is surveyed at the end of each semester. The course portfolios of the graduation project, which include the course specifications, project outline, grading rubrics, and samples of students' work, undergo review by an external moderator to identify areas for improvement.

Indicator 3.6: Achievements of the Graduates

The achievements of the graduates are consonant with those achieved on equivalent programmes as expressed in their assessed work, rates of progression and first destinations.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The samples of students' assessed work and graduation projects confirm the appropriateness of the level of student achievements and their ability to create and innovate. This is also reflected in PILOs and CILOs Assessment Sheets and PILOs Assessment Reports. The Panel notes with appreciation that students' portfolios, curriculum vitae, virtual galleries, and samples of their work are featured on the programme's website and social media platforms, which serves as a platform for students to showcase their work to a broader audience including potential employers and clients. The Panel also appreciates the programme's commitment to research excellence and innovative pedagogy, which is highlighted by the collaborative publications that feature both students and faculty members.

- The SER refers to a recent cohort analysis that was conducted for the academic year 2022-2023 by the Deanship of Admissions and Registration. The cohort analysis covers six academic years 2017-2023 and shows that the ratio of admitted students to graduates is consistent as explained in the SER. However, the statistics provided in the cohort analysis do not reflect year-on-year progression, retention rates, and length of study. Therefore,

the Panel recommends that the CoA should ensure that the analysis of student cohorts is more detailed, reflects year-on-year progression, retention, and length of study for each cohort, and is conducted regularly.

- Annual surveys are conducted to follow the progression of the alumni in terms of employment and career opportunities. As per the SER, while the Alumni Survey shows that 85% of graduates who responded to the survey have been employed, the Graduate Exit Survey shows that 54% of graduates who responded to the survey were employed. Therefore, the Panel suggests including the graduate destinations data in the analysis of student cohorts to be able to compare between the different cohorts and identify areas for improvements.

- The results of the annual surveys indicate a high level of satisfaction with graduates' skills, particularly in creating innovative artworks. The interviews conducted with students, alumni and employers also confirmed their satisfaction with the academic standards of the programme and graduates' skills.

Standard 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.

Indicator 4.1: Quality Assurance Management

There is a clear quality assurance management system, in relation to the Programme that ensures the institution's policies, procedures and regulations are applied effectively and consistently.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- There are clear policies, procedures and regulations at the institutional level, which are regularly revised and improved to meet the needs of the programmes offered by UoB. During the interviews, the Panel confirmed that the institutional policies, procedures and regulations sufficiently cover all the academic and administrative aspects and are effectively communicated to all stakeholders and accessible *via* UoB website.

- UoB has a well-established quality assurance system that is overseen by various entities, including the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre (QAAC) at the institutional level, the College Quality Assurance Office and the Quality Assurance Committees at the college and department levels. The Panel notes that the Quality Manual clearly explains the roles and responsibilities of the different quality assurance entities. The Panel also notes that there are quality assurance processes at the different levels within the University, which ensure that the programme consistently implements the institutional policies and procedures.

- The Quality Assurance Office provides guidance and training sessions to faculty members and administrative staff to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the quality of academic programmes, through course portfolio audits, PILOs and CILOs assessments, moderation of assessments, and internal reviews of the programmes.

- As per the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy, the quality assurance system of the University undergoes monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvements. However, the Panel was not provided with sufficient evidence on the quality assurance system's evaluation process and improvements. Hence, the Panel recommends that the University should ensure that quality assurance system is regularly evaluated and improved.

Indicator 4.2: Programme Management and Leadership

The Programme is managed in a way that demonstrates effective and responsible leadership and there are clear lines of accountability.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The College has a hierarchical organisational structure with clear reporting lines that ensure efficient communication and decision making at the college and department levels. The College Council is chaired by the Dean and oversees all administrative, budgetary, and academic affairs, including teaching, learning, assessment, and research. Its membership comprises the HoDs, departmental representatives, the Quality Assurance Director, and external representatives. The programme is managed by the HoD and the Programme Coordinator. The Department Council is chaired by the HoD and its membership includes all faculty members in the Department who are involved in decision-making through the different committees at the college and department levels. Each committee has clear terms of reference outlining its membership structure and responsibilities.

- The programme is effectively managed in terms of demonstrating effective leadership at the institutional, college and department levels. The responsibility and custodianship of maintaining the academic standards of the programme are also clearly defined at the deferent levels within the University. The Panel notes the Department is responsible for the management of the programme, maintaining its academic standards, and contributing to the achievement of the strategic goals of the College and the University pertaining to teaching and learning, research and community engagement. The performance of the Department is overseen by the College and the University. The Department also monitors the implementation of the annual programme's operational plans, which is aligned with the operational plans of the Department, and the operational plans of the Quality Assurance Office. This was evident in the minutes of meetings and the reports submitted to the Department Council, which include Programme Committee Annual Reports, Faculty Task Allocation and Progress Reports, and Training Progress & Performance Reports.

Indicator 4.3: Annual and Periodic Review of the Programme

There are arrangements for annual internal evaluation and periodic reviews of the Programme that incorporate both internal and external feedback and mechanisms are in place to implement recommendations for improvement.

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

- The arrangements for the internal annual and periodic reviews of programmes are detailed in the Annual and Periodic Programme Review Policy, the Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy, the University-Wide Outcome-Based Assessment Process, and the Quality Manual. The Panel was provided with a sample of the annual SERs of the programme, which include inputs from different sources such as stakeholders' surveys, PILOs Assessment Reports, meeting minutes of different committees, and SIS reports, in addition to actions plans that address the identified areas of improvement. The Quality Assurance Committee at the department level is responsible for the preparation of the annual SERs which are discussed in the meetings of the Department Council before being endorsed. The implementation of the related action plans is monitored by the Department Council and the College Quality Assurance Office. The Panel is of the view that the arrangements for the internal annual programme reviews of the programme are appropriate.

- The Panel notes that the SER does not clearly distinguish between the programme's annual reviews, periodic reviews, and quality assurance audits. Periodic reviews of bachelor programmes are usually conducted every 4-5 years and involve a major revision of the curriculum. However, the Panel notes that the DCTA has conducted a comprehensive review of the programme in 2023. The evidence provided includes a detailed application form that was submitted to the Department Council to approve the proposed changes in the programme. The application form includes the results of benchmarking with other similar programmes and stakeholders' feedback. It covers different aspects including admission requirements, PEOs, PILOs, course descriptions, teaching and assessment strategies, and financial and human resources.

- The Panel was not provided with sufficient evidence of the mechanisms used to ensure regular implementation of the periodic reviews of the programme and the related action plans. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the CoA should develop a mechanism to ensure that the periodic review of the programme is conducted on a regular basis, and that the related action plans are monitored and implemented.

Indicator 4.4: Benchmarking and Surveys

Benchmarking studies and the structured comments collected from stakeholders' surveys are analysed and the outcomes are used to inform decisions on programmes and are made available to the stakeholders.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The UoB has a general Benchmarking Policy, which applies to all benchmarking activities that are undertaken at the university, college, and department levels. As per the SER, the programme was recently benchmarked against seven programmes that are offered by

local, regional, and international universities. The evidence that was provided to the Panel indicates that the benchmarking results have informed the programme's decision-making in various aspects, including curriculum enhancement, delivery methods, and allocation of resources. However, the Panel notes that some of these programmes are not the same as the Bachelor in Arts & Design in terms of the programme's structure and specializations. Therefore, the Panel suggests revising the criteria for selecting programmes to ensure that benchmarking is conducted against equivalent programmes.

- There are formal mechanisms in place for collecting feedback from internal and external stakeholders, including focus groups, meetings with different stakeholders, feedback forms, and stakeholders' surveys. As per the SER, the stakeholders' feedback is collected on a regular basis and the identified areas for improvement are addressed in the annual action plans. The Panel notes that stakeholders' feedback was taken into consideration in the revision of the study plan of the programme in 2023 and led to the introduction of new mandatory and electives courses to keep up with technological advancements and job market requirements. The interviews and the evidence that was provided to the Panel confirmed that, the programme's internal and external stakeholders are informed of the progress made towards implementing their recommendations through emails, events and meetings, which also serve as tools to assess the satisfaction of stakeholders with the introduced changes in the programme.

Indicator 4.5: Relevance to Labour market and Societal Needs

The Programme has a functioning advisory board and there is continuous scoping of the labour market and the national and societal needs, where appropriate for the Programme type, to ensure the relevancy and currency of the programme.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) has clear terms of reference. Its membership consists of students, alumni, and professionals from the fine arts and graphic design industry. As per the SER the PAC includes 18 professionals from the industry and their feedback assists faculty members in identifying areas of improvement and ensuring the currency of the programme and its alignment with industry requirements. The Panel was provided with a sample of meeting minutes, which shows that the programme-related matters, including industry collaboration, study plans, and survey results are discussed during the PAC meetings. It also shows that the PAC's feedback and suggestions for improvement inform the programme's decision-making process.

- In addition to the PAC and stakeholders' surveys, the programme relies on field research, feasibility and market studies as well as the published reports and statistics of the Higher Education Council and local and international researchers to ensure that the programme

is relevant to the labour market needs and up to date. As per the SER, the implementation of the surveys and other mechanisms that are used by the programme team to ensure its relevance to labour market needs is managed and monitored by the DCTA and overseen by the College Quality Assurance Office and the QAAC at the institutional level to ensure consistency and compliance with the related policies and procedures.

V. Conclusion

> **Taking into account the institution's own self-evaluation report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the virtual site visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/BQA *Academic Programme Reviews (Cycle 2) Handbook, 2020*:**
>
> **There is 'Confidence' in the Bachelor in Arts & Design of the College of Arts offered by the University of Bahrain.**

In coming to its conclusion regarding the four Standards, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

1. The programme employs a 'Teaching by Recycling' method, which involves reusing knowledge acquired by a student or delivered by a faculty member in private tutorials for broader educational use, either through public tutorials or peer-based learning.

2. Students are provided with valuable opportunities to engage in INJAZ and other organisations projects and gain knowledge through hands-on experience.

3. Students' portfolios, curriculum vitae, virtual galleries, and samples of their work are featured on the programme's website and social media platforms, which serves as a platform for students to showcase their work to a broader audience including potential employers and clients.

4. The collaborative publications that feature both students and faculty highlight the programme's commitment to research excellence and innovative pedagogy.

In terms of improvement, the Panel recommends that the University of Bahrain and the College of Arts should:

1. Ensure that the title of the programme is accurately documented in all the related documents.

2. Revise the intended learning outcomes of the programme and its two majors to ensure that they are appropriately written (measurable) and meet the NQF requirements and international norms through benchmarking.

3. Revise the mapping between the course intended learning outcomes and the programme intended learning outcomes and ensure that the programme adheres to the NQF requirements in terms of course levels and credits.

4. Regularly revise the study plan of the programme and ensure appropriate course-by-course progression in terms of NQF levels and credits, with an appropriate list of prerequisites and suitable student workload.

5. Conduct a thorough review of the programme's curriculum, specifically focusing on higher-level courses to identify areas where in-depth knowledge and specialization are necessary.

6. Increase the number of the programme's full-time academic staff and reduce its reliance on part-time staff members.

7. Provide appropriate and well-equipped workshops and studios for fine art and graphic design students.

8. Ensure that all the programme's courses are internally and externally moderated each academic year.

9. Ensure that the analysis of student cohorts is more detailed, reflects year-on-year progression, retention, and length of study for each cohort, and is conducted regularly.

10. Ensure that the quality assurance system is regularly evaluated and improved.

11. Develop a mechanism to ensure that the periodic review of the programme is conducted on a regular basis, and that the related action plans are monitored and implemented.