Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
Programme Review Report

**University College of Bahrain
Department of Business Administration
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Site Visit Date: 12 – 14 December 2022

HA088-C3-R088

Table of Contents

Acronyms

AMR	Annual Monitoring Report
BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
BScBA	Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
H&S	Health and Safety
HEC	Higher Education Council
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
IAB	Industrial Advisory Board
IT	Information Technology
LMS	Learning Management System
LOGSIS	Management Information System
LTARC	Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Review Committee
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PEO	Programme Educational Objective
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
PIP	Programme Improvement Plan
QA	Quality Assurance
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee
QAAO	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office
QMS	Quality Management System
RIT	Research Informed Teaching
SRC	Scientific Research Council

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *3*

UCB	University College of Bahrain
UILO	University Intended Learning Outcome

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *4*

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 form the basis 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	No Confidence

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *5*

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.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *6*

II. The Programme's Profile

Institution Name*	University College of Bahrain
College/ Department*	Department of Business Administration
Programme/ Qualification Title*	Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (B.Sc. in Business Administration)
Qualification Approval Number	1649-03
NQF Level	-
Validity Period on NQF	-
Number of Units*	43 courses (128 credit hours) *
NQF Credit	-
Programme Aims*	**PEO1**. To provide students with an interdisciplinary knowledge of concepts, theories, and practices within core academic areas of business **PEO2**. To enable students to operate in global business environments and understand different business cultures **PEO3**. To apply critical and reflective thinking skills to evaluate business information and make sound decisions **PEO4**. To understand ethical and professional responsibilities within business and society **PEO5**. To equip students with the capability to work in teams and collaborate with external agencies **PEO6**. To enable students to communicate effectively using appropriate technologies in business organization
Programme Intended Learning Outcomes*	**PILO1**. Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of major issues, facts, theories, concepts, and practices in the different functional areas of business to solve organizational problems **PILO2**. Apply knowledge of the ethical obligations, social responsibility, and accountability of business in making business decisions.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   7

	PILO3. Employ specialized knowledge and competencies in their areas ofconcentration.
	PILO4. Undertake critical analysis, evaluation of information to addressspecific problems in making informed decisions
	PILO5. Communicate effectively using information communication technology for business applications for the interpretation of graphical and numerical data
	PILO6. Practice teamwork, leadership, independent learning with decision-making responsibility.

*   Mandatory fields

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *8*

III. Judgement Summary

<div style="border: 2px solid; background-color: #d9dcc0; padding: 20px; text-align: center;">

The Programme's Judgement:
No Confidence

</div>

Standard/ Indicator	Title	Judgement
Standard 1	The Learning Programme	Not Satisfied
Indicator 1.1	The Academic Planning Framework	Partially 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	Not Satisfied
Indicator 2.1	Admitted Students	Partially Addressed
Indicator 2.2	Academic Staff	Not Addressed
Indicator 2.3	Physical and Material Resources	Partially Addressed
Indicator 2.4	Management Information Systems	Partially Addressed
Indicator 2.5	Student Support	Addressed
Standard 3	Academic Standards of Students and Graduates	Not Satisfied
Indicator 3.1	Efficiency of the Assessment	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.2	Academic Integrity	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.3	Internal and External Moderation of Assessment	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.4	Work-based Learning	Partially Addressed

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *9*

Indicator 3.5	Capstone Project or Thesis/Dissertation Component	Addressed
Indicator 3.6	Achievements of the Graduates	Not Addressed
Standard 4	Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance	Not Satisfied
Indicator 4.1	Quality Assurance Management	Partially Addressed
Indicator 4.2	Programme Management and Leadership	Partially Addressed
Indicator 4.3	Annual and Periodic Review of the Programme	Partially Addressed
Indicator 4.4	Benchmarking and Surveys	Partially Addressed
Indicator 4.5	Relevance to Labour Market and Societal Needs	Partially Addressed

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *10*

IV. Standards and Indicators

<div style="border:1px solid #000; background:#dde3c6; padding:10px;">

Standard 1

The Learning Programme

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

</div>

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: *Partially Addressed*

- The University College of Bahrain (UCB) has an Academic Planning Framework 2018-2024; however, this framework does not contain any information about programme planning and development at the Institution and is almost identical in content to its Strategic Plan. The Panel noted a Development of New Programmes of Study procedure, but it is dated 2016 and has references to committees which are obsolete in the current structure. There is also a quality management system, which includes academic policies and procedures, which guide the design and review of the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BScBA) programme on the basis of relevant information drawn from discussions with the Industrial Advisory Board (IAB) and compiled through an annual monitoring and review processes. However, some of these policies and procedures are not consistently implemented as indicated in different parts of this Report. Therefore, the Panel, recommends that UCB should develop and implement a clear programme planning framework which involves a broad range of stakeholders, to ensure that the BScBA programme remains relevant and fit for purpose.

- The Institutional Risk Management Policy details key risks and how they are managed. Risks are distributed among various categories based on their nature, such as: academic, financial, health and safety, and physical infrastructure. The BScBA Risk Register shows how these categories of risks have been applied at the programme level; however, none of the risks in the Register are related to the current challenges for the programme, including declining enrolments and lack of sufficient faculty to teach on the programme (see Indicator 2.2), as was reported in interviews. There are also no action plans associated with these risks. Therefore, the Panel recommends that UCB should update the BScBA Risk Register to include actual and current programme risks, and urgently deploy effective

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *11*

mitigation strategies to address the decline in student enrolments and recruit sufficient faculty to teach on the programme. Related to this, the Panel recommends that UCB should review the number of concentrations in the programme, to maintain the feasibility and financial sustainability of the BScBA. With only 10 new enrolments in September 2022, as was confirmed in interviews, and 20 in the 2021-2022 academic year, the Panel does not find it realistic to offer five concentrations with very low enrolments. Internal discussions have already taken place at UCB about merging concentrations, but they have not yet been implemented.

- The title of the programme is consistent with international norms for the qualification type and is accurately documented on certificates, in the Programme Specification document, and on the UCB website.

- The BScBA has not yet been placed on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and there is very limited evidence that it adheres to NQF's qualification design requirements. The Programme Specification categorises each course at a specific NQF level (5 to 8), but only a small number of mapping scorecards have been developed for the programme. An NQF workshop was held for staff in November 2022 with the aim of training faculty on NQF requirements.

- Appropriate Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs) have been defined *in lieu* of programme aims, and they are clearly stated, contribute to institutional goals and include broad objectives typically found in a general business administration degree at the level of the programme.

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*

- UCB has defined four University Intended Learning Outcomes (UILOs) *in lieu* of graduate attributes, which have been mapped to the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs). The UILO related to 'internationalization'is not referenced in the BScBA PEOs or PILOs, and the Panel recommends that UCB should embed 'internationalization' into the PILOs to ensure that students achieve a global perspective upon graduating from UCB. There are also five programme graduate attributes which have been mapped to the PEOs and PILOs. It is not clear how these attributes are related to the UILOs. The Panel advises UCB to clarify the relationship between the programme graduate attributes and the UILOs in the BScBA Programme Specification.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *12*

- The PILOs were reduced from 21 to six following a benchmarking exercise with a local university and desktop benchmarking with other institutions. The change was recommended by the Benchmarking Committee and presented at the IAB meeting. The reduction in PILOs has been achieved by integrating the pervious outcomes, resulting in multi-faceted, complex, and narrowly focused PILOs. For example, PILO 5 references communication skills only in the context of using technology, while PILO 6, which is considered as a complex PILO, includes teamwork, leadership, and decision-making skills, along with independent learning. Communication skills do not necessarily involve technology, while assessing the achievement of a complex PILO is challenging because any related CILOs must include all the different skills listed in the PILO. The Panel, therefore, recommends that UCB should review the BScBA PILOs for clarity, conciseness, and coherence to ensure their attainment can be effectively assessed. Furthermore, separate PILOs for each of the concentrations have not been defined, even though graduates will have achieved skills that are specific to a discipline. PILO 3 is intended to address these skills, however, it is broadly stated and cannot be effectively measured because each concentration entails specialized knowledge and skills. The Panel, therefore, recommends that UCB should develop appropriate PILOs for each of the BScBA concentrations.

- A curriculum map showing the BScBA courses which contribute to each PILO was submitted with the SER; however, it is outdated because it references the old PILOs and also incomplete because it does not contain all of the courses in the programme. The Panel requested the current and complete curriculum map but was provided with the Programme Specification document in response, which does not contain the map. CILOs have been defined for each course but need to be reviewed and revised to contribute to the achievement of the new PILOs. The CILOs have also not been mapped to the new PILOs, with the exception of those courses which were offered in the first semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. As such, it is not clear how the CILOs are being used to evaluate the achievement of the PILOs. The Panel recommends that UCB should, as a matter of priority, review the CILOs for alignment with the appropriate NQF level, and then map them to the revised BScBA PILOs.

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 BScBA curriculum was revised over the course of a three-month period in 2022. The Panel sought to clarify the curriculum review process that was followed in the absence of

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022 13

a formal policy and was informed through interviews that the review was triggered based on feedback from the IAB about the need to update the curriculum. Neither the annual programme review nor the periodic programme review procedures were applied however, feedback from the IAB, employer surveys, a market study and benchmarking was used. The Panel urges UCB to formally document its curriculum review process in a relevant policy document. Also, professional body requirements were not considered during the review although UCB is aware of the need to align the programme with professional bodies, as was revealed through interviews. Alumni were also not consulted, and benchmarking was conducted only with one regional and two local universities. The Panel recommends that UCB should extend its curriculum review process to include consultation with additional external stakeholders (such as alumni and professional bodies) and regional/international benchmarking reference points.

- The BScBA programme consists of 128 credits, which is comparable to similar programmes in the region and internationally and represents a manageable student workload. Eight new courses, including 'Research Methods' (REM301) and 'Graduation Project' (BUS491), were added to the curriculum following the review. The updated Study Plan for each concentration suggests a year-on-year progression in terms of NQF levels based on pre-requisites. An examination of the Course Specifications and course files shows that there is an appropriate balance between theory and practice, and between knowledge and skills in the curriculum. This was confirmed by the Panel in interviews with students and faculty during the virtual visit, although this observation is based on the previous versions of the courses.

- The Panel notes that the electives in the Study Plans are not fully aligned with the programme aims. For example, CIT231 Cloud Computing and CIT262 Multimedia Systems are Departmental Electives despite being purely Information Technology (IT) courses. Marketing concentration electives include 'Financial Accounting II' (ACT102) and 'Human Resource Management' (MGT305), which are not related to marketing. All of the Islamic Finance concentration electives are related to general, rather than Islamic Finance. The Panel recommends that UCB review the departmental and concentration electives to ensure they are consistent with the programme aims and outcomes.

- The textbooks and references in the Course Specifications are generally appropriate, however they are not always current, with some being more than ten years old. Faculty are being encouraged to make use of Research Informed Teaching (RIT), as was confirmed in interviews, but this has not yet been systematically adopted across all courses. The Panel recommends that UCB should review the textbooks and references used in the programme to ensure their currency, and should consistently integrate research publications and professional practice into course materials.

Indicator 1.4: Teaching and Learning

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *14*

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

Judgement: *Addressed*

- UCB has a Learning, Teaching, and Enhancement (LTE) Policy which was revised in June 2022. The policy refers to the use of different teaching methods including interactive lectures, class debates, guest lectures, field trips and RIT. Specific teaching methods for each CILO are detailed in the Course Specifications, with some methods being more prevalent than others. UCB adopted online learning during the global pandemic and has e-learning guidelines to facilitate online teaching, which continues to be deployed in a hybrid format, with students attending classes in person and through MS Teams simultaneously. While the e-learning guidelines are being utilised as part of the hybrid approach, an underlying policy is not available, and the LTE Policy does not refer to e-learning. The Panel recommends that UCB should review and update relevant policies to reflect the current use of e-learning methods and should develop mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of its hybrid approach to e-learning.

- The LTE policy encourages students to actively participate in their learning through student-centred approaches such as problem-solving exercises, discussions, and peer learning, all of which were evidenced by the Panel in Course Specifications, course files and in interviews with students. The recent update to the BScBA curriculum also provides students with opportunities to engage in research and develop their research capabilities through a research methods course and a research-based graduation project. Student exposure to professional practice is assured through guest speakers, field trips, internships (see Indicator 3.4), and a range of informal and non-formal learning activities, such as online webinars, workshops, and industry-based events. The Panel learned from students and alumni in interviews that there was sufficient emphasis on practical and applied learning opportunities in the programme, but additional activities and events would be welcomed. The Panel encourages UCB to respond to this feedback.

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*

- The Assessment and Moderation Policy defines the institutional assessment framework and includes appropriate procedures for assessing student work at undergraduate and postgraduate level. The Policy is consistent with the Higher Education Council (HEC) regulations and is disseminated to students in the Student Handbook and to faculty

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022 15

during their induction. Course Specifications detail the summative and formative assessments used to assess CILOs, which are based on a specific schedule where coursework assessments count for 40%, mid-term examinations are worth 20% and final examinations contribute 40% towards a students' final grade. Every assessment is mapped to specific CILOs, although this mapping will need to be updated in line with the new Study Plan and revised Course Specifications (see Indicators 1.2 and 1.3). Samples of assessments were provided in some of the course files submitted. Although the Assessment and Moderation Policy stipulates the use of marking criteria, the Panel noted that this was not consistently implemented in all courses. This impacts the fairness and rigour of the assessment process, as well as the provision of feedback to students which is typically based on assessment criteria. The Panel recommends that UCB should consistently use marking criteria in all BScBA courses and assessments, which also function as a mechanism for providing students with feedback on their progress and performance. Appropriate provisions for internal and external moderation of assessment are detailed in the Policy, although coursework assessments are not moderated and there is no external post-assessment moderation (see Indicator 3.3).

- UCB recently introduced a new course 'Graduation Project' (BUS491) in the BScBA programme, which involves research. At the time of the review, the course had not yet commenced, however a Course Specification for it was available. The Panel found no information in the Specification about research ethics. UCB has defined Guidelines for the Undergraduate Research Project and there is an institutional Research Policy; however, neither of these documents have provisions for ethical issues in conducting research. This omission will need to be addressed before the Graduation Project commences (see Recommendation in Indicator 3.2).

- The Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy contains guidance on dealing with academic misconduct by students. The Policy is comprehensive and covers different types of misconduct, including repeated misconduct, and disciplinary actions and penalties. However, it is not fully deployed in practice (see Indicator 3.2). The procedure for grade appeals is detailed in the Student Handbook and samples of appeals have been provided to demonstrate how it is implemented.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022 16

<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #dde5cc; padding: 10px;">

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.

</div>

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: *Partially Addressed*

- UCB has an Admission Policy with unified admission requirements for all Bachelor programmes at UCB. The admission requirements are published in the Student Handbook and on UCB's website. The Policy covers the admission criteria and process for all types of students, including new students, transfer students and special needs students. Based on interviews with different stakeholders during the review and samples of Admission Letters, the Panel concluded that the admission criteria are consistently implemented, ensuring that equal opportunities are provided to male and female applicants, and suitable arrangements are in place for internal and external credit transfer.

- The BScBA admission requirements were benchmarked with several local universities, although it was not clear from the Department Council or the IAB meeting minutes how the results of this benchmarking have been used to determine that UCB's criteria are consistent with local standards. Furthermore, no benchmarking with international Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) was undertaken to verify alignment with international standards. Student performance or related data was also not considered to confirm appropriateness for the programme level. Therefore, the Panel recommends that UCB should conduct a review of the BScBA admission requirements that is informed by international benchmarking and performance data, to ensure that the requirements are aligned with the programme level and international academic standards.

- Students are required to provide proof of proficiency in English (e.g., IELTS or TOEFL) or sit for a placement test in English prior to admission. The Panel requested evidence of the placement test being benchmarked to relevant external reference points and was provided with a report of how the test was developed. The report referred to benchmarking with three local and one regional institution, and the use of resources from the British Council

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *17*

and TOEFL, however, no evidence of this was available in the report. The Panel recommends that UCB should benchmark the in-house English Placement Test for alignment with international English testing standards and practices to ensure that it is a valid and reliable measure of applicants' English language proficiency. Students who do not meet the English language entry criteria are required to do the English Foundation Programme as a remedial support measure. The Panel was informed, however, that all students in the past few years have met the entry requirements and no remedial courses were necessary. This information reinforces the need to benchmark the in-house English placement test.

- The Panel notes that UCB does not conduct Math and IT placement tests for BScBA applicants despite students needing Math and IT knowledge to study specific courses in the programme. The Panel, therefore, advises UCB to include Math and IT placement tests in the admission requirements for the BScBA programme, to ensure students have the pre-requisite knowledge in these areas.

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: *Not Addressed*

- UCB has relevant policies and procedures for the recruitment, induction, appraisal and promotion of academic staff, which are detailed in the Human Resources (HR) Policies and Procedures document and the Faculty Guidebook. Evidence of the consistent and transparent implementation of these procedures was provided to the Panel in the form of samples of recruitment documents, induction materials, filled in Appraisal Forms and Promotion Applications, as well as committee reports and meeting minutes. Further confirmation was received during interviews with faculty members.

- Despite having all the relevant HR procedures in place, there are insufficient faculty members to teach on the programme. In 2021-2022, five full-time and two part-time faculty taught a limited number of BScBA courses, and in the Fall Semester of 2022, there were three full-time faculty members and one part-time academic involved in delivering the programme. Most of the academic staff are at an Assistant Professor rank. Owing to low student enrolments, many courses are not offered, and a large number of the department and concentration compulsory courses which students must take is missing from the list of courses delivered. This suggests that students are not studying the programme according to the prescribed study plan due to lack of staff, which will also eventually impact the supervision of the Graduation Project (see Indicator 3.5). The Panel

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *18*

recommends that UCB should, as a matter of urgency, develop and implement a long-term recruitment strategy, to ensure there are sufficient faculty members available to deliver the programme, including senior-ranked faculty.

- Faculty workloads are affected by the lack of academic staff, with fewer faculty members available to undertake a range of responsibilities related to research, supervision, community engagement, quality assurance and service on committees, in addition to having excess weekly contact hours. While faculty are teaching within the credit limits prescribed by the HEC, the actual face-to-face teaching hours per week are higher than the limits and inconsistent with UCB's workload expectations. Some faculty are also teaching courses outside their area of specialisation due to insufficient staff. Thus, the Panel recommends that UCB should align actual faculty workloads with UCB's workload expectations to ensure a balance between teaching, research, community engagement, graduation project supervision, quality assurance and administrative responsibilities. Despite the high workloads, the Panel noted a genuine commitment by academic staff to discharge their responsibilities and, thus, appreciates the dedication of the BScBA faculty members in fulfilling their roles, supporting students, and having a clear understanding of UCB's policies and procedures.

- Strengthening research is a goal in UCB's Strategic Plan 2018-2024 and to this end the Faculty Guidebook states that faculty members should publish two peer-reviewed journal articles per year, although awareness of this requirement varied amongst faculty, as was evident from the interviews. A Research Policy and Institutional Research Strategy have been defined and facilitate research initiatives that BScBA faculty are involved in, including the Research Dialogue series and conference participation. All faculty members have annual Research Plans which are aligned with UCB's Strategy, and outcomes are documented by the Scientific Research Council (SRC) in their report.

- The development and capacity building of faculty members is also a strategic priority, and a Staff Professional Development Policy was recently developed. UCB regularly organises professional development workshops for faculty, including workshops related to supervision; however, these general all-staff workshops are not linked to specific professional development needs identified in performance evaluations or based on institutional needs. Prior to 2022-2023, professional development training requests were related to conference funding support. Following a recommendation in the 2021-2022 Faculty Survey to formalise professional development for staff, a new Staff Training Needs form was developed and implemented. The Panel is satisfied with this initiative and recommends that UCB should use the Staff Training Needs forms to develop and implement for faculty members formal professional development plans, which are also informed by performance appraisals.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022 19

- Staff retention has fluctuated over the last five years, with significant changes to staffing taking place in 2021 and 2022. Faculty Surveys do not shed any light on the reasons for this, but opportunities for improvement can be gleaned from Faculty Exit Surveys. The Panel recommends that UCB should monitor faculty turnover and retention rates and use data from faculty satisfaction surveys to make improvements which will reduce fluctuations in retention rates.

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*

- UCB has three buildings with two auditoriums, 21 classrooms, one computer laboratory, one network laboratory, and two graphic design laboratories as part of its physical infrastructure, which are sufficient to accommodate the current student body, as confirmed in interviews. All classrooms and laboratories are equipped with appropriate equipment including data projectors and computers, although student satisfaction with these resources is not formally measured at the programme-level (see Indicator 4.4). The Panel noted during the campus tour that there are no lifts available in one of the buildings to allow students with special needs to access upper floors. and these students are accommodated instead by classes being scheduled on the ground floor if required. In the Panel's view, this is not a feasible long-term solution and also does not account for other stakeholders. Therefore, the Panel recommends that UCB should ensure that all stakeholders with mobility issues are able to access classrooms and other facilities on upper floors.

- UCB has an ICT Learning Resources Policy with appropriate procedures to ensure that IT services are adequate for student needs in the BScBA programme. Students have access to computers in the laboratories and the library, and Wi-Fi is available across the campus. No special software is required in the programme and all software is licensed. Overall, the Panel is of the view that the IT facilities are appropriate, although it is noted that additional software licenses are needed according to the 2021-2022 Faculty Survey.

- The library has approximately 2,500 books and a subscription to ProQuest for BScBA staff and students to access, along with private study areas. The Panel was informed that the textbooks specified in Course Specifications are available in the library. Workshops on Library resources are organised. Interviews with faculty and students during the review visit indicated that the resources in the library were generally adequate, but they are not formally evaluated for appropriateness at the programme-level (see Indicator 4.4). A

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022 20

benchmarking exercise with the library of a local university was conducted in 2022 which highlighted gaps in the online resources provision. The Panel advises UCB to subscribe to additional online databases, particularly since it intends to strengthen its research profile.

- The maintenance of facilities is outsourced and there are no institutional policies related to facilities management. Oversight of this area lies with the Head of HR, although this is limited to passing on *ad hoc* maintenance requests to the external service provider and ensuring timely completion, as was reported in the interviews. This arrangement is not effective because it does not allow for planning or appropriate monitoring of campus resources, and the Panel recommends that UCB should implement formal mechanisms to ensure that maintenance of its facilities is undertaken systematically.

- UCB has an Occupational Health and Safety (H&S) Policy and conducts H&S training for staff and students. A first aid room is available and appropriately equipped. The Panel was informed that there were five staff members trained in first aid, but no dedicated nurse or first aid responder on campus at all times. The Panel finds the lack of availability of a full-time health professional on campus concerning. Therefore, the Panel recommends that UCB should make appropriate arrangements to ensure stakeholders have access to timely first aid on campus in case of a medical emergency.

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: *Partially Addressed*

- The Student Information System (LOGSIS) is the institutional management information system used to manage student enrolments and academic records and is accessible through UCB's Portal. It is used to manage admissions and registration, schedule classes and examinations, maintain records of grades, track attendance and academic advising, generate reports and audit graduation requirements, amongst other functions, some of which were demonstrated to the Panel during the virtual visit. Training sessions for staff and students on LOGSIS features are conducted. Although the effectiveness of the system is not formally evaluated (see Indicator 4.4), the Panel heard positive views about LOGSIS in interviews with faculty and students and noted that data reports generated through the system were discussed in committee and departmental meetings. The demonstration of the system further confirmed that it provides a robust tool to support managing and decision-making in the BScBA programme.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *21*

- UCB uses Microsoft Teams as the virtual learning platform to support learning and teaching activities, even though it is not intended to be used as a Learning Management System (LMS). Feedback from faculty surveys supports the Panel's view, with staff recommending the adoption of a conventional LMS as being more effective and efficient for both faculty and students in a hybrid learning environment (see Indicator 1.4). This was also confirmed in interviews with faculty. Thus, the Panel recommends that UCB should deploy a more suitable virtual learning platform to deliver academic programmes, which includes features that support learning in a blended learning environment.

- The utilization of resources has not been systematically tracked and monitored until recently, and more efforts need to be made in this area to evaluate if Library and e-resources are being used effectively. There is also limited evidence of utilization data being discussed in committee meetings or being used to inform decision making. The Panel, therefore, recommends that UCB should undertake systematic and formal monitoring of the utilisation of e-resources and implement action plans to enhance the utilisation rates where required.

- The Security of Learner Records and Certificates Issuance policy details processes related to the safekeeping of students' records which are stored in LOGSIS. Access to the system is password controlled and restricted by the Admission and Registration Unit, which is responsible for releasing students' grades and making changes based on the outcome of grade appeals, as confirmed in interviews. The ICT Operational Plan and ICT Learning Resources Policy include actions related to disaster recovery and system and data backups, which further assures the security of records through an ICT Maintenance Agreement with the external vendor that developed the system. The awarded certificates and transcripts are accurate in describing the achieved learning by the students, and graduates confirmed in interviews that they 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*

- The academic support and guidance provided to BScBA students is detailed in the Student Support Policy, and information about support services is also included in the Student Handbook. The Panel considered evidence related to the provision of different types of support services and found them to be generally appropriate, as discussed below, although more needs to be done to regularly assess and improve these services in line with BScBA students' needs (see Indicator 4.4).

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   22

- Career guidance is provided by the Student Affairs and Alumni unit which organises career fairs and workshops to help students achieve their career objectives, in addition to other initiatives aimed at enhancing graduates' employability. Students were aware of the career support available to them, and some graduates made use of the services, as reported in interviews. While the Panel finds the career support provision appropriate and acknowledges that the Alumni Survey has a brief question about career support, the Panel is still of the view that such support needs to be formally evaluated by current students at the programme-level (see Indicator 4.4).

- All newly admitted students receive the Student Handbook during their orientation which covers all aspects of the programme, including the Library and IT resources. Feedback on the orientation is collected from students and analysed in the Student Induction Report and shows that the arrangements for newly admitted and transfer students are satisfactory. This was confirmed in interviews during the virtual visit.

- Academic advising processes are defined in the Bachelor degree By-Laws, while faculty are provided information in the Faculty Guidebook and through training workshops about their advising responsibilities, which form part of the workload. Students meet with their assigned advisor every semester and records of meetings are maintained in LOGSIS. Low performing students who are deemed to be academically at risk are provided with additional guidance and support by academic advisors and monitored closely to ensure their performance improves. The results of this approach are evident in the students' Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) scores and completion rates. The Panel appreciates the timely support provided to at-risk students through academic advising and performance monitoring. UCB has a Policy for Enabling Learners with Special Needs to support this group of students, although improvements still need to be made in supporting students with low mobility (see Recommendation in Indicator 2.3).

- The Student Affairs and Alumni Unit runs a diverse range of services and activities aimed at enhancing the learning experience, including Student Clubs, counselling events and seminars. Nevertheless, students reported in interviews that there were limited opportunities for social and recreational events due to a lack of facilities on campus. This was also observed by the Panel during the campus tour. Therefore, the Panel recommends that UCB should provide students with appropriate social and recreational facilities, which are evaluated for effectiveness.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022 23

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

Standard 3

Academic Standards of Students and Graduates

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

</div>

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: *Partially Addressed*

- The Assessment and Moderation Policy details the processes to be followed to ensure assessment methods are valid and reliable. The Course Specifications contain information about the assessments used in a course (Section 12), as well as a mapping of the assessments to CILOs (Section 15), to evaluate student achievement. The Panel examined all the BScBA Course Specifications and found a number of inconsistencies, discrepancies and errors in the mapping of assessments to CILOs, which affect the reliability of the assessments. For example, the information presented in Section 12 does not necessarily correspond to the mapping in Section 15. In many courses (especially Finance and Marketing), every assessment is mapped to all or most of the CILOs, which is not realistic or feasible. The action verbs used to define the CILOs are not always measurable (e.g., 'appreciate' in BUS310). In some courses (e.g., MGT301, MGT420), the final examination is mapped to a CILO related to teamwork. Therefore, the Panel recommends that UCB should carefully review and update the mapping of assessments to CILOs in all BScBA course specifications, to ensure its appropriateness and validity.

- Samples of students' assessments were provided in the Course Files. The Panel identified several areas of improvement in the approaches used to evaluate students' achievement of the CILOs, particularly in relation to the coursework component which carries a weight of 40% but is not moderated. Only some of the coursework assessments had marking rubrics which consisted of a breakdown of the total marks, but no descriptors of achievement. Even if a marking rubric was defined, it was not applied in the evaluation of the assessment. Only some of the assessment samples seen by the Panel had a marking rubric and/or feedback to the student, with many course files incomplete. Student participation, as reported in interviews, is assessed subjectively by the instructor, in the absence of an appropriate marking rubric to ensure fairness. The Panel recommends that UCB should ensure the consistent use of marking rubrics and descriptors to evaluate

---

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   24

students' assessments and ensure the provision of constructive feedback to students in all BScBA courses.

- The End of Course Report includes a section for analysing the achievement of CILOs based on the assessments. A separate CILO achievement spreadsheet is also generated and included in the Course File; although not all the CILOs listed in the Course Specifications are included in the achievement spreadsheet (e.g., CILO D6 is missing in ACT102). This demonstrates that the mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of assessment processes do not always function effectively and the data presented in the End of Course Reports is not always valid and reliable. The Panel has already noted that the CILOs are not mapped to PILOs (see Recommendation in Indicator 1.2) and as such, the Panel concludes that the academic standards in the BScBA programme are not consistently met. It is recommended that UCB should develop and implement mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of its assessment processes and make improvements to assessment practices accordingly, to ensure that they are consistently and robustly deployed.

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: *Partially Addressed*

- UCB has an Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy covering all aspects of academic integrity, including plagiarism and cheating, as well as disciplinary procedures. Elements of the policy have been replicated in the Student Handbook, and the Panel found through interviews that students and staff are generally aware of the policy. Students are informed during their orientation and through information presented in Course Specifications about how to avoid academic misconduct. UCB subscribes to Turnitin which students must use to submit their coursework. A maximum similarity index threshold of 20% has been set for all coursework submissions and students can re-submit their work up to three times to ensure that the threshold is not exceeded. The penalties for plagiarism are defined in the Policy and consistent with HEC regulations. The Panel requested samples of plagiarism cases to verify how the Policy is implemented; however, since multiple submissions are allowed to reduce the similarity index below the threshold, no plagiarism violations have been reported. The Panel does not consider this approach to be pedagogically sound because it does not promote awareness of what constitutes plagiarism and only focuses students on an arbitrary threshold that represents a similarity percentage, rather than the plagiarism percentage. Submissions which are below the 20% threshold may still contain plagiarised text copied from unacknowledged sources. Therefore, the Panel strongly recommends that UCB should review the effectiveness of

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *25*

the institutional processes for deterring, detecting, penalising, and monitoring plagiarism, and develop a holistic approach which fosters a culture of academic integrity. There are appropriate processes in place for detecting academic misconduct in final examinations and records of these cases are maintained by the Examination and Scheduling Committee. However, misconduct in mid-term examinations is dealt with by the instructor, as reported in interviews, which may result in inconsistencies in the penalties applied by different instructors. Thus, the Panel advises UCB to standardise the management of misconduct in mid-term examinations.

- UCB has defined Guidelines for Ethical Research which specify the requirements related to research ethics, however these are not referenced in the 'Graduation Project' (BUS491) course specification or the Guidelines for the Undergraduate Project. The Project has not yet been undertaken by students since it was recently introduced (see Indicator 3.5), and so it is not clear how ethical issues will be accounted for when students conduct their research. Based on the information available to the Panel from the MBA programme which includes a thesis, ethics approvals are not currently given to students to collect primary data within confidentiality and privacy parameters. If the same practice is followed in the BScBA programme, UCB will need to ensure that clear processes are in place to manage ethical considerations. Therefore, the Panel recommends that UCB should implement mechanisms to effectively address research ethics and ethical considerations and should ensure that these are clearly understood by all stakeholders.

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*

- The Assessment and Moderation Policy details the internal and external moderation processes followed at UCB. A suite of moderation forms for pre and post as well as for internal and external moderation have been developed and the entire process has been benchmarked with a local university. The Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Review Committee (LTARC) Chair oversees the moderation arrangements and appoints the moderators. Due to the small size of the Department, there are insufficient faculty members to ensure appropriate moderation across all the different specialisations in the programme (see also Indicator 2.2).

- Both the mid-term and final examinations are pre-moderated internally and externally to ensure that they are fit for purpose and consistent with the CILOs. Samples of internal pre-moderation forms were provided which the Panel noted consisted mainly of ticks, with no comments or feedback provided. A total of 25% of courses in a semester are

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *26*

selected for external pre-moderation in line with the External Moderators Policy; however, based on the Course Files provided for 2021-2022, the Panel could not verify that this was complied with. Also, general, rather than course-specific, reports by external moderators were available for the Business courses.

- The BScBA Programme Co-ordinator prepares a report based on the feedback from internal and external pre-moderators and follows up on any comments made to ensure they are implemented. Coursework assessments are not moderated but verified by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee (QAAC) during the course file audit, as was reported in interviews. The Panel is of the view that since these assessments contribute towards 40% of the assessment schedule and are mapped to a number of CILOs in most courses, it is important to ensure that they are also fit for purpose. As noted above (see Indicator 3.1), the Panel was concerned with the mapping of the CILOs to coursework assessments and recommends that UCB should apply internal moderation processes to coursework assessments to ensure they are valid and adequately aligned with CILOs.

- Post-moderation of mid-term and final examinations is undertaken internally to determine if the marking criteria was applied fairly. Samples of student work (high, average, and low), depending on the number of enrolments in a course, are double marked. External post-moderation of assessments is not undertaken and is not mentioned in the Assessment and Moderation Policy. However, the Panel learned through interviews that it was conducted before the global pandemic when a decision was made to suspend it due to logistical difficulties. The Panel recommends that UCB should implement external post-moderation of assessments to verify student achievement of PILOs and ensure academic standards in the programme are met (see also Indicator 3.1).

- The effectiveness of the moderation arrangements is verified by following up on the moderators' feedback through Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) and during the course file audit by the QAAC. Issues raised by moderators are also discussed and reviewed in departmental meetings.

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: *Partially Addressed*

- All BScBA students must complete a 200-hour internship which is built into the Study Plan as a three-credit course in the final year under the name 'Internship/Practicum' (BUS315). Internships are secured through agreements and the support of the IAB. The Panel was

provided with previous and current versions of the Course Specifications as well as the Course Files with samples of student reports, which indicate how the work-based learning component is aligned with the BScBA PILOs and assessed. There is no institutional policy related to internships, and an Internship Handbook has been developed *in lieu* of a policy. The Panel thus advises UCB to formalise internship arrangements in a policy document.

- The Internship Handbook and Course Specifications detail the roles and responsibilities of the site and academic supervisors, and students. The Panel explored in interviews with site supervisors and students how these roles were being implemented in practice. While site supervisors showed a clear commitment to supporting students during their internship, they were not provided with any orientation or training by UCB to ensure that they are aware of the expectations of their role, particularly in relation to assessment. The site supervisors' assessment accounts for 60% of the students' grade and is mapped to all the CILOs in the 'Internship/Practicum' (BUS315) course. The Panel is concerned with site supervisors, who are not pedagogically trained, being responsible for the majority of the students' assessment and, thus, recommends that UCB should reduce the assessment weighting allocated to the site supervisor, to ensure that CILOs and PILOs are appropriately assessed by the academic supervisor. Related to this, the Panel also recommends that UCB should provide an orientation or training session for site supervisors and ensure that regular site visits are undertaken by the academic supervisors throughout the duration of the internship. The Panel learned in interviews that no site visits by academic supervisors had taken place, and students are not expected to maintain a logbook of their internship, which does not constitute good practice. UCB is, therefore, advised to provide students with logbooks which can be used to record their learning experience in the internship and serve as a resource for preparing their final report.

- Upon completing the internship, the academic supervisor receives feedback from the site supervisor about the students' performance; however, feedback from the student about their internship experience and how it was managed, is not collected, as confirmed in interviews. Site supervisors are also not asked to evaluate their experience, including the relationship with the academic supervisor and support from UCB in general. The Panel, therefore, recommends that UCB should develop and implement a formal mechanism for evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of the internship arrangements, which involves gathering feedback from students and site supervisors and is used to make improvements to the management of the internship.

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.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   28

Judgement: *Addressed*

- One of the changes resulting from the 2022 review of the BScBA programme was the introduction of a capstone component into the Study Plan. All students enrolling in the programme from September 2022 will have to do a graduation project in their final semester of study. The Course Specification for the 'Graduation Project' (BUS491) course has been produced but not yet implemented, and as such the Panel was not in a position to verify that all the expectations related to this Indicator have been addressed. The pre-requisite for the Project is Research Methods REM301, which students will study in their third year to prepare them to undertake a research-based project. The Guidelines for the Undergraduate Graduation Project have also been developed but will need to be enhanced to include research ethics (see Indicator 3.2). Furthermore, UCB must also ensure that there are sufficient faculty members to supervise the Graduation Projects (see Indicator 2.2) and that students will not encounter any delays in being assigned a supervisor.

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: *Not Addressed*

- The students' level of achievement in individual courses is measured though the assessments which are mapped to CILOs and is reported in the End of Course Reports as well as CILO achievement spreadsheets at the end of each semester. However, as discussed previously (see Recommendation in Indicator 3.1) the mapping of assessments to CILOs is not always accurate or consistent. The mapping of CILOs to PILOs has also not been completed for all the BScBA courses (see Recommendation in Indicator 1.2), and therefore the students' achievement of learning outcomes is not robustly evaluated. Nevertheless, some aspects of student achievement can be discerned from End of Course Reports and AMRs; however, the former are course-level reports, while the latter are related only to the PILOs of the courses offered in a specific semester or academic year. Furthermore, UCB's alumni and employer surveys do not differentiate between undergraduate and postgraduate alumni and, as such, they are of limited value in evaluating student achievement. Also, graduate destination surveys do not collect data about graduate learning outcomes.

- UCB maintains BScBA cohort, retention and completion data, although these are recently implemented initiatives. The ratios of admitted students to successful graduates were provided but are incomplete. Since the BScBA programme has had low enrolments for the past few years, tracking graduates and completion rates is critical to ensure students complete the programme on time and achieve all of the PILOs. Some of the performance

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022 29

data collected is reported in the AMRs but it is based on annual enrolments, rather than cohorts. Therefore, the Panel recommends that UCB should systematically monitor and report the cohort completion rates and ratios of admitted students to successful graduates in the BScBA programme. The Panel also could not find evidence of student performance data being used to ensure that academic standards are met. While the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office (QAAO) produces a cohort analysis report, it is not discussed or acted on, even though retention rates have declined in recent years. The Panel recommends that UCB should utilise and follow up on student retention and progression data to ensure that academic standards in the programme are met.

- Employer satisfaction with BScBA graduates is not monitored at the programme level through the Employer Survey and there was no evidence of employer feedback about graduates in the IAB meeting minutes. Although employers were mostly positive about the BScBA graduates, feedback needs to be formally collected to assure student achievement of learning outcomes and academic standards and make programme improvements. Therefore, the Panel recommends that UCB should systematically monitor employer satisfaction with BScBA graduates and use the collected feedback to inform programme reviews.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *30*

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: *Partially Addressed*

- UCB's Quality Management System (QMS) is described in the institutional Quality Manual. Resources related to quality assurance and management, such as policies, procedures, guidelines, forms and templates are also available to staff electronically through the QMS One Drive, although the Panel notes that the drive needs to be organised for ease of access. The QAAO has oversight of the QMS at the institutional level, along with UCB's QAAC. At the programme level, the Department Council is responsible for implementing the Quality Assurance (QA) policies and procedures in the BScBA programme. As was reported in interviews, the QAAC monitors the implementation of the policies and provides advice and guidance to the Department Council to ensure deployment. This arrangement was noted by the Panel in QAAC and Department Council meeting minutes and confirmed in interviews with staff. Staff members are oriented about QA requirements through guidance documents and training workshops, for example on PILOs and the NQF. The Panel noted during interviews with the staff that their roles and responsibilities in assuring the quality of the BScBA programme were well understood.

- UCB has a suite of relevant policies in place to meet the needs of the BScBA programme, with some exceptions (see Indicators 1.4 and 3.4 for missing policies). The policies are reviewed and updated by the Policy Steering Committee based on a four-year cycle which has generally been followed except in isolated cases. Staff and students are well versed with key policies, as was evident from the interviews. However, the implementation of the policies is not always consistent, as noted throughout this Report (see Indicators 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.3, and 4.4), resulting in gaps in critical areas such as assessment, moderation, academic integrity and programme reviews. The Panel recommends, thus, that UCB should ensure that all institutional policies related to the BScBA programme are effectively and consistently implemented.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *31*

- An examination of the QAAC meeting minutes and interviews with QA staff revealed that oversight of QA processes is mainly focused on course file audits, policy and form revisions, collating survey results (see also Indicator 4.4) and ensuring that AMRs were followed up upon. The QAAO went through a number of changes in recent years and a new Head was appointed in the Fall semester of 2022. The Panel noted a lack of human resources dedicated to the QA function considering the QAAO's remit. In response to the Panel's question about how the implementation of recommendations arising from AMRs or surveys is followed up, staff indicated that UCB is a small institution which makes it possible to stay informed. The Panel accepts that UCB's size facilitates more efficient communication, however, the QMS is complex and requires more robust and formal oversight to verify that it is being fully implemented and improved over time. The Panel recommends that UCB should undertake more rigorous monitoring of its QMS to ensure that it is being deployed consistently and effectively, and that improvements are made in response to recommendations and action plans.

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: *Partially Addressed*

- The BScBA programme is housed within the Department of Business Administration and managed by a Programme Coordinator who reports to the Head of Department (HoD). The HoD, in turn, reports directly to the Vice President (Academic Affairs). This structure is appropriate for the delivery of the programme because there are clear reporting lines to ensure effective communication and decision-making, and well-defined job descriptions to delineate the roles of the Programme Coordinator and HoD in relation to the programme. There is also a Department Council, consisting of all the departmental academic staff, which meets every month and makes decisions about the BScBA. These decisions are disseminated and discussed in the University College Council. Nevertheless, based on the several areas of improvement identified by the Panel in this report, particularly in relation to academic standards not being met, the Panel is of the view that, in practice, the programme management is not quite appropriately implemented in terms of demonstrating effective leadership.

- A total of 11 institutional committees with defined terms of reference support the academic provision at UCB, including the LTARC and QAAC. The committee structure was reviewed and revised in 2022, with changes made to the composition and remits of some committees. For example, the mandate of the LTARC was expanded to include the Programme Review and Development Committee. While there is a sound awareness of the revised committees' functions, as evident from interviews, the terms of reference had

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022 32

not yet been updated at the time of the virtual visit, mainly due to the changes in the QAAO and resourcing issues (see Indicator 4.1). The Panel recommends that UCB should update the terms of reference for all its committees to reflect their new remit and composition. The Panel noted that the Vice President (Academic Affairs) assumed the QAAC chair role in March 2022. It is common and good practice for the QA head to hold the chair of the QA committee and the Panel advises UCB to consider aligning its QAAC leadership with this common practice.

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*

- UCB has an Annual and Periodic Programme Review Policy, which provides a framework for annual QA monitoring and periodic review of the BScBA programme. The AMR was implemented in 2021-2022 and the Report template includes student performance data; issues related to the curriculum, CILOs, teaching and learning methods, assessments, and resources; feedback from external stakeholders; and issues raised by students in surveys. Actions should be identified to address opportunities for improvement and added to the Programme Improvement Plan (PIP). A commentary on the previous PIP and areas of good practice are also expected in the AMR. While this AMR template is comprehensive and covers key reference points, the actual information contained in the BScBA AMRs is a high-level summary with limited critical analysis and reflection. The source of the information is also not evident even though the template requires that the feedback source and date are referenced. Similarly, the PIP update in the following academic year which needs to show the status of the proposed actions lacks detail. Perplexingly, UCB provided the BScBA PIP for 2022-2023 which includes 'Actions Implemented' even though the academic year had commenced only a couple of months prior to the review visit. It was not clear how the actions for the entire academic year could be completed in such a short period of time. The Panel recommends that UCB should implement the annual programme reviews more rigorously, with appropriate reflection and critical analysis of the data, and ensure that the review outcomes are fully aligned with the Programme Improvement Plans.

- Comprehensive periodic reviews of programmes are undertaken every four years and intended to involve a broad range of stakeholders and reference points, in order to ensure that the programme is achieving its PILOs, meeting academic standards and the needs of students and employers. The last periodic review of the BScBA took place in May 2019 and involved a broad evaluation of all aspects of the programme, including entry

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022 33

requirements, learning outcomes, teaching and learning methods, assessments, student support services and quality assurance arrangements. A Review and Revalidation Action Plan was generated based on the outcomes and the majority of the recommendations were completed. In 2022, another major review of the BScBA was undertaken (see Indicator 1.1) outside the regular four-year cycle. The Panel learned that this was triggered by feedback from the IAB. However, the process for periodic programme reviews was not followed and there was a lack of stakeholder representation. The review was not linked to the AMRs, feedback from external moderators, student data and feedback, or other relevant reference points, such as professional body requirements. The Panel could not establish a link between the changes made and the data used in the review. The Panel, therefore, recommends that UCB should ensure that its periodic programme reviews are consistently implemented and involve a broad range of internal and external stakeholders and a variety of reference points, which are used to inform changes in the BScBA programme.

- **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: *Partially Addressed*

- UCB has a Benchmarking Policy which has been applied to the BScBA programme. Most of the benchmarking undertaken has involved desk-based comparisons with a range of different universities. The Panel could not confirm how benchmarking partners were selected, with some being chosen because they are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, as reported in interviews. As a result, various aspects of the programme, including PEOs, PILOs, study plans and admission criteria have been benchmarked with mostly local, and some regional (Lebanon, Jordan, UAE) and international (Malaysia) HEIs. The Panel also noted that the benchmarking was done at different times and not necessarily linked to programme reviews. Benchmarking reports have been produced but are of varying quality and contain errors (e.g., the PILO Benchmarking Report refers to the University of Bahrain in the section about Ahlia University). Recommendations for changes are included in some reports, but not always followed up on or deployed. The only formal benchmarking conducted has been with a local university with which UCB has a Memorandum of Understanding. A detailed report was compiled in September 2021 following a benchmarking exercise which included a recommendation to increase the number of PILOs, although this was not implemented. The Panel recommends that UCB should adopt a more systematic and rigorous approach to benchmarking in the BScBA programme, which includes appropriate and carefully selected reference points and uses benchmarking outcomes to inform improvements in the programme.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *34*

- The QAAO is responsible for collecting feedback from internal and external stakeholders. This is primarily done through six survey instruments, including the Course Evaluation Survey at the end of each course, the Alumni Survey, the Employer Survey, the Faculty Survey, the Staff Exit Survey and the Graduate Destinations Survey. However, the Panel noted a number of weaknesses in the scope, design, analysis and use of these instruments. A summary report of all of the Course Evaluation Surveys at UCB is produced and a distinction is only made between undergraduate and postgraduate results, but not individual programmes. This is particularly relevant for the evaluation of student support services (see Indicators 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5). Graduates are not surveyed when they complete the programme, while the Staff Survey is aimed at academic staff based on the survey questions. Furthermore, some of the surveys are not administered at regular intervals, the survey instruments used are inconsistent which impacts on longitudinal comparisons, and response rates are low. The Panel also could not find sufficient evidence to show how survey data is used to inform improvements or how changes made are conveyed to stakeholders. Based on the findings, the Panel recommends that UCB should expand the range of surveys used to collect data from stakeholders, deploy surveys regularly and systematically, increase response rates to enhance data validity and reliability, use survey results to make improvements and inform decision-making, and communicate changes made to stakeholders.

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: *Partially Addressed*

- The BScBA programme has an IAB which functions in accordance with its prescribed terms of reference and UCB's Expectations Matrix. The Board consists of industry representatives and alumni and meets annually, except for 2019-2020 when the meeting was not held due to the global pandemic. Meeting minutes are recorded and indicated that the IAB discharges its responsibilities in line with its remit. Feedback is sought from the IAB and used to inform changes to the BScBA. As mentioned previously, comments from the IAB were the main impetus for review undertaken in 2022 and the introduction of new courses to meet labour market needs and align with industry trends. The minutes also show that UCB informs the IAB about changes that have been made to the programme. One of the key strengths of the IAB for the programme is the assistance members provide to students undertaking internships. The Panel appreciates the advice and expertise of the IAB, which have been used to improve the programme, and the support given through securing student internship opportunities.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022 35

- A Market Needs Analysis was conducted in 2022 in response to a previous BQA Recommendation. The study was also intended to support the review of the BScBA programme. The main purpose was to gain a clear understanding of the labour market requirements and job-related skills that employers are seeking. However, the response rate was low, with only 13 out of the 25 companies contacted to participate taking part. Furthermore, the study was not specific to the BScBA programme, but also included data for the MBA programme. This impacts on the usefulness of the data collected since the skills identified by employers cannot be differentiated between undergraduate and postgraduate students. The Panel recommends that UCB should conduct a more comprehensive and programme-focused market study which is effectively used to inform the BScBA programme, its curriculum reviews and improvements.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *36*

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 No Confidence in the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration programme of the Department of Business Administration offered by the University College of Bahrain.**

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

1. The dedication of the BScBA faculty members in fulfilling their roles, supporting students and having a clear understanding of UCB's policies and procedures.

2. The timely support provided to at-risk students through academic advising and performance monitoring.

3. The advice and expertise of the IAB, which have been used to improve the programme, and the support given through securing student internship opportunities.

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

1. Develop and implement a clear programme planning framework which involves a broad range of stakeholders, to ensure that the BScBA programme remains relevant and fit for purpose.

2. Update the BScBA Risk Register to include actual and current programme risks, and urgently deploy effective mitigation strategies to address the decline in student enrolments and recruit sufficient faculty to teach on the programme.

3. Review the number of concentrations in the programme, to maintain the feasibility and financial sustainability of the BScBA.

4. Embed 'internationalization' into the PILOs to ensure that students achieve a global perspective upon graduating from UCB.

5. Review the BScBA PILOs for clarity, conciseness, and coherence to ensure their attainment can be effectively assessed.

6. Develop appropriate PILOs for each of the BScBA concentrations.

7. As a matter of priority, review the CILOs for alignment with the appropriate NQF level, and then map them to the revised BScBA PILOs.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022

37

8. Extend the programme's curriculum review process to include consultation with additional external stakeholders (such as alumni and professional bodies) and regional/international benchmarking reference points.

9. Review the departmental and concentration electives to ensure they are consistent with the programme aims and outcomes.

10. Review the textbooks and references used in the programme to ensure their currency, and consistently integrate research publications and professional practice into course materials.

11. Review and update relevant policies to reflect the current use of e-learning methods, and develop mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of its hybrid approach to e-learning.

12. Consistently use marking criteria in all BScBA courses and assessments, which also function as a mechanism for providing students with feedback on their progress and performance.

13. Conduct a review of the BScBA admission requirements that is informed by international benchmarking and performance data, to ensure that the requirements are aligned with the programme level and international academic standards.

14. Benchmark the in-house English Placement Test for alignment with international English testing standards and practices, to ensure that it is a valid and reliable measure of applicants' English language proficiency.

15. As a matter of urgency, develop and implement a long-term recruitment strategy, to ensure there are sufficient faculty members available to deliver the programme, including senior-ranked faculty.

16. Align actual faculty workloads with UCB's workload expectations to ensure a balance between teaching, research, community engagement, graduation project supervision, quality assurance and administrative responsibilities

17. Use the Staff Training Needs forms to develop and implement for faculty members formal professional development plans, which are also informed by performance appraisals.

18. Monitor faculty turnover and retention rates and use data from faculty satisfaction surveys to make improvements which will reduce fluctuations in retention rates.

19. Ensure that all stakeholders with mobility issues are able to access classrooms and other facilities on upper floors.

20. Implement formal mechanisms to ensure that maintenance of its facilities is undertaken systematically.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *38*

21. Make appropriate arrangements to ensure stakeholders have access to timely first aid on campus in case of a medical emergency.

22. Deploy a more suitable virtual learning platform to deliver academic programmes, which includes features that support learning in a blended learning environment.

23. Undertake systematic and formal monitoring of the utilisation of e-resources and implement action plans to enhance the utilisation rates where required.

24. Provide students with appropriate social and recreational facilities, which are evaluated for effectiveness.

25. Review and update the mapping of assessments to CILOs in all BScBA course specifications, to ensure its appropriateness and validity.

26. Ensure the consistent use of marking rubrics and descriptors to evaluate students' assessments and ensure the provision of constructive feedback to students in all BScBA courses.

27. Develop and implement mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme's assessment processes and make improvements to assessment practices accordingly, to ensure that they are consistently and robustly deployed.

28. Review the effectiveness of the institutional processes for deterring, detecting, penalising, and monitoring plagiarism, and develop a holistic approach which fosters a culture of academic integrity.

29. Implement mechanisms to effectively address research ethics and ethical considerations, and ensure that these are clearly understood by all stakeholders.

30. Apply internal moderation processes to coursework assessments to ensure they are valid and adequately aligned with CILOs.

31. Implement external post-moderation of assessments to verify student achievement of PILOs and ensure academic standards in the programme are met.

32. Reduce the assessment weighting allocated to the site supervisor, to ensure that CILOs and PILOs are appropriately assessed by the academic supervisor.

33. Provide an orientation or training session for site supervisors and ensure that regular site visits are undertaken by the academic supervisors throughout the duration of the internship.

34. Develop and implement a formal mechanism for evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of the internship arrangements, which involves gathering feedback from students and site supervisors and is used to make improvements to the management of the internship.

35. Systematically monitor and report the cohort completion rates and ratios of admitted students to successful graduates in the BScBA programme.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022   *39*

36. Utilise and follow up on student retention and progression data to ensure that academic standards in the programme are met.

37. Systematically monitor employer satisfaction with BScBA graduates and use the collected feedback to inform programme reviews.

38. Ensure that all institutional policies related to the BScBA programme are effectively and consistently implemented.

39. Undertake more rigorous monitoring of the QMS to ensure that it is being deployed consistently and effectively, and that improvements are made in response to recommendations and action plans.

40. Update the terms of reference for all committees to reflect their new remit and composition.

41. Implement the annual programme reviews more rigorously, with appropriate reflection and critical analysis of the data, and ensure that the review outcomes are fully aligned with the Programme Improvement Plans.

42. Ensure that the periodic programme reviews are consistently implemented and involve a broad range of internal and external stakeholders and a variety of reference points, which are used to inform changes in the BScBA programme.

43. Adopt a more systematic and rigorous approach to benchmarking in the BScBA programme, which includes appropriate and carefully selected reference points and uses benchmarking outcomes to inform improvements in the programme.

44. Expand the range of surveys used to collect data from stakeholders, deploy surveys regularly and systematically, increase response rates to enhance data validity and reliability, use survey results to make improvements and inform decision-making, and communicate changes made to stakeholders.

45. Conduct a more comprehensive and programme-focused market study which is effectively used to inform the BScBA programme, its curriculum reviews and improvements.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– University College of Bahrain – Department of Business Administration – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – 12-14 December 2022 40