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

Directorate of
Higher Education Reviews
Programme Review Report

University of Bahrain
College of Business Administration
Master in Human Resource Management
Kingdom of Bahrain

Site Visit Date: 16–18 May 2022

Extension Visit Date: 4 December 2023

HA101-C3-R101

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Acronyms

AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CoB	College of Business Administration
CSB	Civil Service Bureau
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
IT	Information Technology
MHRM	Master in Human Resource Management
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PAC	Programme Advisory Committee
PEO	Programme Educational Objective
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
QA	Quality Assurance
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre
SAC	Students Advisory Committee
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SHRM	Society for Human Resource Management
SIS	Student Information System
UILO	University Intended Learning Outcome
UoB	University of Bahrain
UTEL	Unit for Teaching Excellence and Leadership

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I. Introduction

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

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

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

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

Standard 1: **The Learning Programme**

Standard 2: **Efficiency of the Programme**

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

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

The Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as 'the Panel') decides whether each indicator, within a standard, is 'addressed', 'partially addressed' or 'not addressed'. From these judgments 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	

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The APR Review Report begins with providing the profile of the programme under review, followed by a brief outline of the judgment 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.

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II. The Programme's Profile

Institution Name*	University of Bahrain
College/ Department*	College of Business Administration Department of Management and Marketing
Programme/ Qualification Title*	Master in Human Resource Management
Qualification Approval Number	University Council Decision No (255/2017) of 29 May 2017
NQF Level	Level 9
Validity Period on NQF	5 years from the validation date
Number of Units*	9
NQF Credit	122
Programme Aims*	1. Apply knowledge of Human Resource Management generally and strategically. 2. Exhibit leadership and communication skills. 3. Evaluate global, cross-cultural and ethical issues in Human Resource Management. 4. Develop research and analytical skills to identify innovative solutions for problems in the field of Human Resource Management.
Programme Intended Learning Outcomes*	a. Demonstrate extensive knowledge and skills in Human Resource Management. b. Critically discuss current issues in Human Resource Management. c. Effectively exhibit leadership and communication skills. d. Articulate ethical issues in Human Resource Management.

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	e. Integrate Human Resource Management practices on a global context.
	f. Critically develop research and analytical skills on a scientific basis.
	g. Demonstrate a critical analysis of diversity and inclusiveness at workplace.

* Mandatory fields

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III. Judgement Summary

The Programme's Judgement: Confidence

Standard/ Indicator	Title	Judgement
Standard 1	**The Learning Programme**	**Satisfied**
Indicator 1.1	The Academic Planning Framework	Addressed
Indicator 1.2	Graduate Attributes & Intended Learning Outcomes	Partially Addressed
Indicator 1.3	The Curriculum Content	Addressed
Indicator 1.4	Teaching and Learning	Addressed
Indicator 1.5	Assessment Arrangements	Addressed
Standard 2	**Efficiency of the Programme**	**Satisfied**
Indicator 2.1	Admitted Students	Addressed
Indicator 2.2	Academic Staff	Partially Addressed
Indicator 2.3	Physical and Material Resources	Addressed
Indicator 2.4	Management Information Systems	Addressed
Indicator 2.5	Student Support	Partially Addressed
Standard 3	**Academic Standards of Students and Graduates**	**Satisfied**
Indicator 3.1	Efficiency of the Assessment	Addressed
Indicator 3.2	Academic Integrity	Addressed
Indicator 3.3	Internal and External Moderation of Assessment	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.4	Work-based Learning	Not Applicable

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

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IV. Standards and Indicators

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

Indicator 1.1: The Academic Planning Framework

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

Judgment: *Addressed*

- The University of Bahrain (UoB) has a set of regulations and a clear planning process in place to ensure that its programmes are relevant and fit for purpose. The Master in Human Resource Management (MHRM) programme was first launched in 2017. At that time, a market study involving a web-based survey of alumni, employers, faculty and experts was conducted to assess the relevance and feasibility of the programme. No formal reviews of the MHRM have been undertaken since its introduction, however, the relevance of the programme has been assured through the Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) which meets twice every academic year. A College-wide stakeholder conference was also held in June 2021 to obtain feedback about the programme. This ongoing input from key stakeholders ensures that the MHRM remains relevant and fit for purpose.

- The Panel was provided with the MHRM Risk Register which identifies several potential risks related to the programme, including staff retention and reduced funding. During interviews with senior management, the Panel learned that the risks related to the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards are being monitored and mitigated with the involvement of other units at the University.

- The programme title is concise and indicative of the type and content of a Master level qualification in Human Resource Management (HRM). It is accurately documented on the university's website, the Programme Specification document and the samples of certificates and transcripts that were provided to the Panel. As per the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), the MBA adheres to the design requirements of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as well as the related mapping and confirmation processes.

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- The programme has four Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs) in *lieu* of programme aims, which contribute to the achievement of the missions and strategic goals of UoB and the College of Business Administration (CoB). During the Extension Visit, the Panel learned that the PEOs were revised as part of a benchmarking exercise that was recently conducted to ensure that the PEOs are appropriate for an MHRM programme, and include references to relevant skills such as leadership, recruitment and compensation, performance and talent management, strategic aspects of HRM, and diversity and cross-cultural management, which are all typical *foci* of MHRM programmes internationally. However, the Panel notes that the revised PEOs are expressed as learning outcomes rather than programme objectives. The Panel also notes that the second PEO, which refers to leadership and communication skills may not be achieved since the 'Leadership and Innovation Skills' (MGT684) course that teaches leadership skills is an elective and may not be chosen by students. None of the core courses or other electives are related to leadership. Moreover, the third PEO which refers to global, cross-cultural and ethical issues in HRM requires further elaboration because it does not specify why students should be able to evaluate various issues in HRM and for what purpose. The Panel recommends, therefore, that the College should consider revising the PEOs to ensure that they are phrased in appropriate form, achievable, and aligned with the revised programme curriculum.

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.

Judgment: *Partially Addressed*

- UOB has six University Intended Learning Outcomes (UILOs) that are *de facto* graduate attributes. The programme contributes fully to the achievement of the UILOs. During the Site Visit, the Panel noted that the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) are generally appropriate for an MHRM programme, however, they needed to be reviewed and revised for better alignment with the actual MHRM curriculum and content. Furthermore, the Panel noted that some of the PILOs were not clearly written nor easily measurable, and there were no PILOs related to managing human resources strategically, managing diversity in the workplace or employee relations which are key skills taught in an MHRM programme.

- During the Extension Visit, the Panel learned that the PILOs were reviewed and revised as part of the benchmarking exercise. The Panel notes that the revised PILOs are clearer, more measurable and better aligned with the updated PEOs. The number of PILOs has also been reduced from eight to seven and their wording has been modified to better

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reflect the knowledge, skills and competencies students are expected to have upon completing the programme. However, the Panel is of the view that further minor edits are needed to some PILOs (e.g., '*Students will exhibit effective leadership and communication skills*' instead of '*Students will effectively exhibit leadership and communication skills*'; and '*Students will develop critical research and analytical skills on a scientific basis*' instead of '*Students will critically develop research and analytical skills on a scientific basis*'). The fifth PILO ('*Students will integrate Human Resource Management practices on a global context*') is unclear and needs to be re-written so that it is not only coherent, but also measurable. The last PILO ('*Students will demonstrate a critical analysis of diversity and inclusiveness at workplace*') is awkwardly expressed. Students should be able to 'critically analyse' rather than 'demonstrate'; however, the PILO also needs to be extended to include the purpose of critically analysing diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace. In addition, the Panel notes that the third PILO ('*Students will effectively exhibit leadership and communication skills*') and fourth PILO ('*Students will be able to articulate ethical issues in Human Resource Management*') may not be achieved by students because the courses that teach leadership skills and ethics, 'Leadership and Innovation Skills' (MGT684) and 'Business Ethics' (MGT635), are electives and may not be chosen by students. None of the core courses are primarily related to leadership or ethics. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should ensure that PILOs are clearly expressed and aligned with the curriculum so that students can achieve them.

- The Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) were examined by the Panel during the Site Visit and found to be lacking in a number of areas. For example, some CILOs were poorly worded and difficult to understand and measure. In some courses, relevant CILOs were missing. Some CILOs are also too advanced for students to achieve and not always reflective of the course contents. Furthermore, the Panel examined the mapping of the CILOs to PILOs in the provided course syllabi and found that some of the CILOs were incorrectly mapped to the PILOs.

- During the Extension Visit, the Panel noticed that all of the CILOs have been benchmarked and revised as shown in the updated syllabi. Furthermore, the CILOs were submitted for programme placement on the NQF and underwent three rounds of verification. The Panel examined the updated course syllabi with the new course descriptions and CILOs and found the revised CILOs to be generally appropriate, relevant and measurable in the majority of cases. Exceptions were noted in MGT683 (CILOs 2 and 3 are not clearly expressed), MGT682 (CILO3 is difficult to assess and measure) and MGT635 (CILOs 1, 2, and 4 are overlapping). Some CILOs are also beyond the scope of a Master degree (e.g. CILO 4 in MGT682). Overall, the Panel is satisfied with the progress observed during the Extension Visit and advises the College to consider reviewing the CILOs of the few courses mentioned above.

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- The Panel noted that the provided course syllabi, during the Extension Visit, contain references to eight PILOs in the CILO to PILO mapping matrix, and not the seven revised PILOs. The Panel was informed that a full mapping of CILOs to PILOs had not yet been undertaken because the revised PILOs were not yet formally approved, and that appropriate mapping matrices would be included in the syllabi in due course. The Panel acknowledges that the revisions to learning outcomes are subject to relevant institutional approval processes but recommends that the College should review and update the mapping of the CILOs to the PILOs to ensure that it is complete and accurate.

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.

Judgment: *Addressed*

- The study plan is available in the Programme Specification document and shows that students need at least one and a half years (three semesters) to complete the MHRM programme in full time mode. During the first two semesters, students take four courses each semester and in the final semester they complete the thesis. All of the courses are three credit hours, except the thesis which is nine credit hours. There are no pre-requisites listed in the Programme Specification document for any of the courses, except for the thesis (MGT695), which requires students to complete at least 18 credits before they can enrol. The Panel is of the view that the progression of courses is generally appropriate in terms of NQF levels and credits, with suitable student workload. The Panel is also of the view that a strategy course, such as 'Strategic HRM' (MGT682), is typically a capstone course that requires students to complete a certain number of credit hours to enrol. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should define a pre-requisite requirement for the Strategic HRM course to ensure that students have the required knowledge and skills to study a strategy course.

- There are two optional courses which students choose from a list of six courses. During the Site Visit, the Panel noted that only one of the six optional courses is directly related to HRM, and the other five courses are in accounting, economics, corporate finance, Islamic jurisprudence and business ethics. During the Extension Visit, the Panel noted that a desktop-based benchmarking exercise was undertaken by the College, which resulted in some changes being made to the curriculum. The title of one course (MGT681) was revised from 'Labour and Civil Service Bureau (CSB) Regulations' to 'Labour Relations'. Four out of the six electives were deleted, which the Panel welcomes as they were not directly related to HRM. Two new elective courses have been introduced based on the recommendations listed in the benchmarking report. Feedback from the PAC and

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Students Advisory Committee (SAC) was also taken into consideration when introducing the new electives.

- During the Extension Visit, the Panel noticed that in addition to benchmarking with programmes at other universities, the College has initiated contact with two professional bodies – the UK-based Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and the US-based Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). Initial meetings have been held with both bodies and an action plan has been developed for securing CIPD recognition by the end of 2023, although the Panel was informed during the Extension Visit that SHRM recognition would be pursued instead based on resource availability. The Panel considers the actions taken by the College to be positive developments which will improve the MHRM programme standards.

- The examination of the Course Specifications, during the Site Visit, demonstrated that there is appropriate coverage of theoretical concepts which is complemented with the use of practical artefacts and learning methods such as field trips, case studies, simulations, videos and guest speakers. During the Extension Visit, the Panel noted that several courses such as 'Human Resource Management' (MGT631), 'Labour and Civil Service Regulations' (MGT681), and 'Strategic Human Resource Management' (MGT682) were revised to ensure that all the expected elements are covered in terms of depth and breadth. However, the Panel noted that many of the prescribed textbooks listed in the Course Specifications are outdated, with some dating back to 2011 and 2013. The Panel also notes that in addition to prescribing texts dating back to 2008, the 'Labour and Civil Service Regulations' course lists books which are based on laws in the United Kingdom, which are not relevant to HRM practices in Bahrain. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should review prescribed textbooks for the MHRM courses and replace them with current editions and materials which are appropriate to the Bahraini and/or regional context.

Indicator 1.4: Teaching and Learning

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

Judgment: *Addressed*

- According to the MHRM Course Specifications, a range of teaching methods are deployed to deliver courses, including lectures, class discussions, guest speakers, videos, case studies and presentations. The appropriateness of these methods is evaluated in the Course Evaluation Surveys. The Panel appreciates the use of a variety of teaching and learning methods on the MHRM programme to enhance the learning experience.

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- UoB does not have a separate e-learning policy, however, the Teaching and Learning Policy calls for integrating technology into the learning experience 'to support delivery, engagement and assessment'. During the global pandemic, all of the MHRM courses were delivered online based on the 'Instructions for e-learning during the Precautionary Period'. The shift to e-learning was supported through workshops by the Unit for Teaching Excellence and Leadership (UTEL) and UoB's E-Learning Centre.

- One of the principles in the Teaching and Learning Policy requires that 'students are empowered to take responsibility of their own learning to develop their lifelong learning skills'. Many of the teaching methods listed in the course specifications such as group discussions, presentations and projects, are participative and student-centred, and expose students to professional practice through case studies and videos. During the interviews, students expressed a desire for more practical assessments and exposure to industry practices, which was also evident in CoB alumni survey results and Course Evaluation Reports. The Panel was also informed during the interviews that the College has developed an action plan to increase students' exposure to industry practices and practical assessments. The Panel is of the view that having more applied assessments will ensure that more informal and non-formal learning opportunities are integrated into the MHRM programme.

- The MHRM programme strengthens the students' perceptions and research capabilities. Several of the MHRM PILOs are related to research and critical analysis, and all students are required to complete a course on research methods (QM650) which prepares them to undertake the thesis in their third semester. These elements of the programme are aimed at strengthening students research capabilities and enable them to design innovative solutions to business problems in their project.

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.

Judgment: *Addressed*

- UoB has adopted an outcomes-based assessment approach which is outlined in its IDEAS Handbook. The provisions for moderation of assessments are outlined in the Assessment Moderation Policy. The University also has Study and Examination Regulations and a Teaching and Learning Policy, which call for the use of formative and summative assessments. Although UoB claims to adopt formative and summative assessments on the MHRM programme, the Panel established that continuous assessments were considered formative, even though the marks awarded for these assessments contribute towards the final grade. For example, the use of online quizzes in MGT680 was cited as an example of

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formative assessment, but an examination of the MGT680 course specification shows that up to 15% of a students' final mark is based on 'engagement' activities which include online quizzes. The Panel advises CoB to adopt clear definitions for formative and summative assessments. The Panel also advises CoB to increase the use of formative assessments on the MHRM programme. In addition, The Panel notes that while some assessments had clear marking criteria and rubrics (e.g. MGT680, MGT682 and QM650), others did not (e.g. MGT681, MGT683). The Panel advises CoB to ensure that all assessments have clear marking criteria and rubrics.

- The MHRM thesis takes into account ethics and principles of scientific research by requiring students to seek formal approval of any surveys or questionnaires used for primary data collection. Furthermore, students are also required to sign a pledge that they will adopt an ethical approach in their research and uphold academic integrity. The Teaching and Learning Policy also requires that academic integrity is upheld. This is achieved through the provisions and deployment of the Anti-Plagiarism Policy and the use of plagiarism detection mechanisms, such as Turnitin. The Regulations of Study and Examinations at UoB detail the procedure to be followed for academic appeals and are made available to students in the UoB Student Guide which can be found on the University's website. Over the last three years, there were 25 appeals made by MHRM students, of which 19 were in one course – the 'Research Methods and Statistical Analysis' (QM650) course. Only one appeal was upheld. The Panel recommends that UoB should investigate the reasons for the large number of appeals by MHRM students in the 'Research Methods and Statistical Analysis' courses and address any underlying issues that are contributing to this anomaly.

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Indicator 2.1: Admitted Students

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

Judgment: *Addressed*

- UoB has admissions procedures which specify the entry requirements for all its programmes. The UoB website and the MHRM Programme Specification list the admission requirements for the programme. During the interviews with administrative and academic staff, they confirmed that the admission requirements ensure that appropriate students are accepted on an equal basis between females and males, and that the admission procedures are consistently implemented.

- As per the admission requirements, students who do not have a business background are required to study three foundation courses in Accounting (ACCM500), Economics (ECONM500) and Finance (FINM500) before they can start the MHRM programme. None of the students admitted to the programme since its inception needed to do these foundation courses. The Course Specifications were examined by the Panel and were found to be appropriate as 'bridging' courses to ensure students without a business background are provided with the prerequisite knowledge to study MHRM.

- UoB's Study and Examination Regulations clearly spell out the rules and procedures to be followed for internal and external transfers. These are also replicated in the Graduate Studies Regulations. Only one student transferred to the MHRM programme in 2017-2018, and there have been no transfer students since then.

- The Panel requested evidence of admission criteria being reviewed and was informed that in 2021 conditional admission was introduced, and the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) requirement was lowered to 2.33 provided that the students register for three 'background' courses in the first semester and pass them with a minimum grade of 'B'. However, these amendments have not been reflected in all the related documents and it

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was not clear to the Panel why these amendments were made. The Panel, therefore, recommends that the College should regularly benchmark and revise the admission requirements in light of student performance and feedback from relevant stakeholders.

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.

Judgment: *Partially Addressed*

- UoB has appropriate policies and procedures in place for staff recruitment, appraisal and promotions which are governed by the CSB regulations. The policies are available on the university's website and disseminated transparently to stakeholders. The promotion regulations and criteria are used in faculty promotions for which a college-level Promotion Committee has been created. As confirmed during the virtual interviews, four CoB academic staff were promoted between 2017 and 2020.

- CoB applies the university's Scientific Research Regulations which are implemented at the college-level by the Graduate Studies and Research Committee of which the MHRM Programme Coordinator is a member. CoB aims to have 68 research papers indexed in Scopus and 50 funded research projects by 2024. As per the evidence provided, this will be achieved by recruiting research-active faculty, encouraging the development of research groups and other initiatives that have been identified, although they will need to be supported with adequate funding. The Panel was provided with details of three faculty members' publications along with the faculty CVs which showed that some faculty members were more research active than others. The Panel suggests that UoB examines the reasons for this disparity in research outputs and provides appropriate incentives to faculty members who are less research active to engage in scholarly activities.

- Faculty workload in CoB has been raised as an area for improvement in academic staff surveys due to high administrative workloads. Faculty members who teach on the MHRM programme also teach on other CoB programmes. Programme Coordinators do not get any teaching relief, despite their additional administrative responsibilities. In 2019, the Staff to Student ratio in the CoB was 1:56 and the College has set a target to reduce this to 1:35 by 2024. All faculty members are academic advisors with 85 or more students allocated to them. During interviews with staff, the Panel learned that some faculty are advising up to 120 students. In addition to teaching and academic advising, academic staff are expected to produce Scopus indexed research papers, participate in various departmental, college and institutional committees, ensure that all activities related to quality assurance at the course and programme levels are completed, develop their

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teaching skills through professional development courses organised by UTEL, and participate in community outreach activities. The Panel was informed that Tuesdays every week are teaching-free days to allow faculty to focus on research, however, during interviews, it was found that in practice Tuesdays are used to 'catch up' on overdue work. The Panel is concerned with the overall workload of academic staff which does not allow for sufficient time to engage in research and other important scholarly activities. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should develop an effective mechanism for ensuring appropriate and balanced academic staff workloads are developed and implemented as a priority in order to maintain teaching quality and academic standards on the programme.

- Staff turnover is monitored and the rate in the Department of Management and Marketing over the past five years has been low, with three faculty members leaving during this period. There were 76 full-time faculty members in the CoB in 2021-2022, of which five were involved in teaching MHRM courses, in addition to their other responsibilities as detailed above. An examination of their CVs shows that they have appropriate qualifications and expertise to teach on the programme.

- UTEL is responsible for professional development training of faculty and is supported by other units, such as Information Technology (IT) Centre, E-Learning Centre, Library, and the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre (QAAC), for specialised training and seminars. The Panel was informed during interviews and provided with evidence of a number of internal and external professional development workshops, seminars and training programmes. Although UoB does not offer any professional development training aimed specifically at faculty teaching on postgraduate programmes, the Panel learned during interviews that UTEL organises bespoke workshops, which are externally facilitated, if required and the Panel was provided with examples of these for the CoB. Despite this, the Panel found limited capacity building for research supervision. Feedback from the SAC indicates that there is a need to improve supervision, and this is further reinforced by the long time it takes students to complete their thesis. Therefore, the Panel recommends that UoB should enhance faculty capacity for supervising research theses and projects through the implementation of effective relevant professional development programmes.

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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.

Judgment: *Addressed*

- The College has 36 classrooms, with capacities ranging from 35 to 100, in addition to five multipurpose halls. Students have access to relevant IT facilities including eight shared computer laboratories in the CoB and a campus-wide Wi-Fi connection. From interviews, the Panel learned that student satisfaction with IT facilities is evaluated using the general UoB Student Survey which is not programme specific. IT concerns were not raised by the SAC, however the Faculty Survey highlights the need to improve the IT environment by upgrading the IT infrastructure and providing more IT training workshops. The Panel was informed that the IT Centre had developed a roadmap to address the IT issues.

- Students have access to the main Library at the Sakhir campus, which houses the majority of materials relevant to business programmes. There are more than 300,000 volumes in print and 27,000 e-journals available through eight databases such as ScienceDirect, Scopus, IEEE and Springer. According to the SER, more than 26,000 resources are relevant to CoB's programmes. Student satisfaction with the library provision is evaluated through different surveys, including the Student Experience Survey as confirmed during interviews, however programme-specific data is not available.

- UoB has a Health Centre on campus and appropriate health and safety policies and procedures in place which are applied within the CoB through the Infrastructure, Health and Safety Committee. In all, the Panel is satisfied that current arrangements are robust. While it was evident to the Panel from interviews with staff members that these resources are maintained and readily available, their adequacy for the MHRM programme also needs to be monitored through survey mechanisms (see Indicator 4.4).

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.

Judgment: *Addressed*

- UoB uses the Student Information System (SIS) to manage student enrolments and personal and academic records. The system was demonstrated to the Panel during the Site

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Visit and consists of nine modules including admissions, registration, fees, academic advising, grades, student appeals, course evaluations and graduation. The Panel confirmed during the virtual interviews that the data on the system is used to generate a range of reports and enables informed decision-making. Furthermore, UoB uses the Blackboard virtual learning environment for storing and delivering course materials and managing student assessment. Microsoft Teams has also been utilised for online teaching during the global pandemic. The Panel confirmed during the interviews that the use of the e-learning systems and related resources is monitored automatically based on system-generated data.

- UoB has appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure the security of student's records and the accuracy of academic results, which are available on the university's website and deployed by the IT Centre. As confirmed during the interviews, the system is regularly backed-up and audits are undertaken to assure the integrity of the data. The Panel was provided with samples of the certificates awarded to MHRM graduates along with transcripts showing their results, which were found to be accurate and contain relevant information. The Panel also learned from students that they received their certificates and transcripts in a timely manner after graduating.

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.

Judgment: *Partially Addressed*

- UoB students are provided with adequate support in terms of library, laboratories, e-learning and e-resources, guidance and care. During the interviews, the Panel learned that the Library is involved in student inductions and organises a number of information literacy and other workshops on digital resources. Similarly, the IT and e-Learning Centres offer training on IT resources and facilities. The Panel notes that MHRM students were generally aware of the support offered to them. Female students are suitably accommodated as indicated during the interviews. Students with special needs are also supported through the Deanship of Student Affairs but currently, there are no students with special needs on the MHRM programme.

- Although UoB has a Career Counselling Office, the SER does not address how MHRM students are provided with career guidance and support. The Panel requested more information about the career services that MHRM students had access to and was informed that this was 'not applicable' since the majority of MHRM students are already employed. Students and graduates confirmed in interviews that they are not given any

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guidance with careers, although they agreed that having an MHRM degree had enhanced their career prospects. According to the results of the university's Graduate Destination Survey, there is a need for enhancing career support. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should provide appropriate and effective career support services to MHRM students to help them accomplish their professional goals and aspirations.

- The Deanship of Students' Affairs Guidance and Counselling Department organise an Induction Day for all new UoB students at the start of every academic year. An additional induction event for MHRM students is held within CoB by the MHRM Programme Coordinator and introduces them to the programme and relevant policies and regulations. The Academic Advising Regulations detail the support that needs to be provided to students by their assigned academic advisors. The Panel was informed during interviews that MHRM students make limited use of academic advising resources, preferring to contact their thesis supervisor or instructors directly, or the MHRM Programme Coordinator.

- The Panel learned from interviews that at-risk students are identified by their CGPA through the SIS, although a report of these students is not generated for the MHRM programme. The Panel requested information about the number of at-risk students on the programme over the last three years and was provided with data by semester. The highest number of at-risk students was in Fall of 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 (7 students in both semesters). With only 38 students enrolled in the programme, this represents almost 20% of the total students. The limited use of academic advising and regular follow-up of students on the MHRM programme, as detailed above, may have contributed to this. Therefore, the Panel recommends that CoB should deploy the existing academic advising procedures more effectively in order to reduce the number of at-risk students on the programme.

- The adequacy and student satisfaction with student support services is assessed using institutional survey instruments such as the Student Experience Survey and the Exit Survey, however, these surveys do not collect programme-specific data, and some have not been administered in postgraduate programmes (see Indicator 4.4). Nevertheless, staff interviewed during the Site Visit were able to provide examples of general improvements that had been made to support services in response to student feedback, including assisting students with accessing library resources remotely during the pandemic and providing IT support during online teaching.

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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.

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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.

Judgment: *Addressed*

- The MHRM programme uses different types of assessment methods to evaluate student learning and ensure that academic standards are met. However, there is strong emphasis on research-based assessments with at least two in each course, in addition to the research thesis. The Panel learned from students and graduates, during the Site Visit, that more practical assessments would be preferable and examples of how this might be done are noted in recent SAC minutes. This was also emphasised during the interviews with external stakeholders, who mentioned that MHRM graduates were resilient and hard-working, however, needed better critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills.

- During the Extension Visit, the Panel learned that a benchmarking exercise (see Indicator 4.4), a review of the practical activities embedded in the current assessment plan, and a full audit of the MHRM course syllabi took place. The revised syllabi and mapping scorecards were submitted, along with samples of course portfolios and samples of students' work. The Panel was also provided with a revised assessment plan which requires that students complete an applied research project as well as engagement activities in every course. The Panel is of the view that the changes made to the assessments are appropriate.

- The alignment of assessments with learning outcomes is achieved by mapping assessments with CILOs, which are then mapped to PILOs and UILOs. Overall, the mapping is adequate, notwithstanding the issues raised in Indicator 1.2 related to the CILOs and PILOs. Graduates' achievements of PILOs are reported through Course Assessment Forms and the Assurance of Learning (AoL) process at the programme level. Course Assessment Forms detail student performance on every CILO, based on their results in the assessments mapped to that CILO. The AoL process, which is part of the CoB's Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation

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requirement, identifies specific courses to be used for assessing the achievement of PILOs and maps the assessments in those courses to the PILOs so that the percentage of students who achieve the PILOs can be determined.

- There are mechanisms in place for monitoring the implementation and improvement of the assessment process, which include regular reviews of the course portfolios submitted by the faculty members at the end of each academic semester. Assessment processes are also monitored through Course Evaluation Surveys and Course Assessment Forms. Student performance data and survey feedback collected and reported on in these mechanisms provide insights into the effectiveness of the assessments. The Panel was provided with examples of minor changes made to assessments in interviews, the most significant being the implementation of marking rubrics and the use of case studies.

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).

Judgment: *Addressed*

- The Study and Examinations Regulations and the Anti-Plagiarism Policy lay the foundations for academic integrity for both students and staff. The policy and related procedures are widely disseminated through the Student Handbook available on the UoB website and in the student induction. The Panel found a sound awareness of this information amongst the interviewed students and alumni.

- At UoB, students are required to submit assignments *via* SafeAssign which is integrated into Blackboard. During the Blackboard demonstration, the Panel noted that many assessments on the MHRM programme did not make use of SafeAssign. It was explained that students were able to directly access SafeAssign, without using Blackboard. However, interviews with students revealed that the use of plagiarism detection tools on the MHRM programme was limited. Some students had only used it in the thesis and at times the instructor submitted the assignments on behalf of students. While all students were aware of the importance of academic integrity and understood how to avoid it, they did not know about the penalties for plagiarism. The Panel requested data about the number of academic misconduct cases over the last three years. The response received was that there were no cases.

- During the Extension Visit, the Panel learned that an Academic Integrity Statement was included in all of the course syllabi. The statement is general in nature and requires students to be 'honest and ethical at all times'. It also states that 'Any breach of academic

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integrity will be dealt with according to the University Regulations for Professional Conduct Violations' but does not mention the Anti-Plagiarism Policy or the penalties for plagiarism. A training workshop for all faculty members on preventing and detecting plagiarism was held in November 2022, while students embarking on their research thesis were given a workshop on research skills that included critical writing skills. As evidence of implementation, samples of Originality Reports from Safe Assign were provided. The Panel was also informed during the Extension Visit that minor instances of plagiarism are dealt with by individual faculty reducing marks, while major cases are reported through the formal channels.

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.

Judgment: *Partially Addressed*

- UoB has had an Assessment Moderation Policy since 2015, but it has only been implemented on the MHRM programme starting from 2021-2022. Internal moderators are appointed by the Head of the Department based on a rolling plan. Samples of filled in forms were provided which showed limited critical evaluation. No recommendations for improvement were noted in the Assessment and Moderation Committee's Reports. The Panel explored this during the Site Visit and found that there was an awareness amongst faculty and staff involved in quality assurance (QA) that the internal moderation process was not producing the intended results. To address this, the Panel was told that the moderation forms had recently been revised. However, an examination of the forms submitted with the SER and after the revision showed that they were almost entirely identical. In the Panel's view, the problem lies with the way in which the forms are filled in, rather than the form structure and criteria. Faculty also indicated during interviews that they would like to be educated better about the moderation process.

- During the Extension Visit, the Panel was provided with evidence on a training session about effective internal moderation that was held in November 2022. Further evidence of implementation was provided in the form of samples of filled in internal moderation forms and more examples of changes made based on moderator's feedback were described to the Panel in the Extension Visit. The Panel is satisfied that the progress made in this area will result in more effective moderation processes leading to continuous improvement of the courses.

- During the Site Visit, the Panel was informed that UoB's External Moderation Policy was not implemented at the programme level. During the Extension Visit, evidence was provided on the external moderation of only one course MGT630. The Panel explored this

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in the interviews and was informed that this was due to the timeframe and that a rolling plan was in place for the other courses. The Panel was also informed that local and regional higher education institutions were contacted to act as external moderators.

- The Panel notes that unlike internal moderation, which is assessment-based, the external moderator evaluates the entire course from a macro perspective using two separate forms developed for this purpose. The Panel was informed during the Extension Visit that these forms were being consolidated to avoid duplication. The Panel also noted that the external moderation is undertaken after the students' grades had been declared. While this is aligned with external course review purposes, it does not allow for any changes to be made to students' grades if the external moderators detect marking practices that are not rigorous. The Panel recommends that the College should continue implementing external moderation on the MHRM courses and regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the programme's external moderation to ensure consistent assessments and fairness of grading.

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.

Judgment: *Not Applicable*

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.

Judgment: *Addressed*

- The 'Thesis' (MGT695) course, which students undertake after they have completed all the other courses, is the capstone component of the MHRM programme. The thesis has four CILOs, which collectively contribute to the achievement of all PILOs. The supervision arrangements for the thesis are detailed in the Course Specification and the Thesis Writing Handbook. Every MHRM student is allocated a supervisor based on clearly defined procedures. Most faculty members supervise between three and six students every semester. The need for more professional development to develop the supervision capacity on the programme has been discussed previously (see Indicator 2.2). This will

further clarify the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and facilitate the timely completion of the capstone project.

- The Postgraduate Student Follow-up Report is used to monitor and review the progress of students. While useful to track and record a student's status, the form consists mainly of check boxes and does not include any commentary. During the Extension Visit, the Panel was provided with a Student Assessment of Thesis Supervision form that has been developed to measure students' satisfaction with the thesis and their supervisor. The Panel sought evidence of its implementation and was provided with forms filled in by students and supervisors that demonstrated students' progress on the capstone project was being adequately monitored. Furthermore, students have been provided with a comprehensive workshop on research skills aimed at facilitating their progress on the capstone project.

- The SER describes the robust arrangements for assessing the thesis, which include an examination panel consisting of the supervisor, an internal examiner and an external examiner to examine the written thesis. Processes are in place to assure the credentials of the external examiner and establish the Thesis Discussion Committee. All students are required to conduct a defense (*viva voce*) after their thesis has been validated. The rigour of the assessment process is confirmed by the research papers that have been published by students upon completing their thesis. Marking rubrics and criteria were provided to the Panel with the sample assessments.

- The thesis component of the MHRM has not yet been evaluated for effectiveness based on stakeholder feedback and student performance. A formal evaluation process is required to ensure that the thesis is contributing appropriately to the achievement of the learning outcomes, especially since students are taking long periods to complete it. This evaluation can be integrated into the annual and the periodic reviews of the programme. The Panel, therefore, recommends that appropriate mechanisms are deployed to formally evaluate the effectiveness of the thesis and related arrangements, and to make improvements to the process.

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.

Judgment: *Partially Addressed*

- The Panel viewed some samples of student work available in the Course Portfolios and found them to be appropriate in terms of the complexity level and the level of study. Furthermore, during the Extension Visit, the Panel noticed that progress has been made

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in the processes and instruments that are applied to evaluate students' achievements. Diverse assessments are currently used on the programme to assess the CILOs and PILOs (see Indicator 3.1).

- During the Site Visit, the Panel was provided with year-on-year progression data for the period from 2017 to 2022. The Panel noted that students take, on average, seven to eight semesters to complete the programme, which is excessive for full-time study at the Master level. Due to the long completion times, the ratio of admitted students to successful graduates on the programme has been low. Between 2017-2018 and 2021-2022, 53 students were registered on the MHRM and only 12 (or 23%) had graduated. Although student retention is adequately monitored, students are taking a long time to finish the thesis component, which is inconsistent with similar programmes internationally. A typical MHRM programme requires one to two years of full-time study, whereas at UoB, the majority of students need double that time. This has a negative impact on graduate achievements.

- During the Extension Visit, evidence was provided on designing a form to be filled out by the thesis supervisor twice every semester in order to gauge how a student is progressing. A corresponding form for students to fill out to self-evaluate their progress has also been developed. An exit degree, a Postgraduate Diploma in HRM, has also been proposed for those students who do not complete the MHRM on time. While these initiatives and strategies are welcomed, the Panel recommends that UoB should investigate the reasons for the inordinately long period of time MHRM students take to complete the programme and implement appropriate strategies to mitigate this.

During the Site visit, the Panel noted that the Graduate Destination Survey is used to monitor graduate destinations of CoB graduates. The latest survey from 2021 shows that 60% of MHRM graduates were employed. The Panel also noted that the Employer Survey is not administered for the MHRM programme and is done at the College level only. There is also limited contact with employers of MHRM students and graduates, except for a small number who are members of the PAC. Moreover, the interviews with external stakeholders indicated to the Panel that better mechanisms need to be deployed to collect feedback from employers and graduates to improve the MBA programme. In response to the Panel's recommendations that were sent to CoB after the Site Visit, the College conducted a postgraduate alumni survey an employer survey in March 2023 to collect feedback from these stakeholders about the MHRM programme. The data from the surveys was filtered by programme in order to obtain more pertinent programme-level feedback (see Indicator 4.4).

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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.

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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.

Judgment: *Addressed*

- UoB has a suite of appropriate institutional policies and regulations for the needs of the programme that have been developed by the QAAC. The polices include the dates of revisions which indicate that they are regularly revised. As provided during interviews, most of the policies are available on the UoB website and they are communicated to stakeholders in relevant handbooks and through e-mail. The Panel noticed from interviews that staff members involved in the MHRM programme have a sound understanding of the QA system and their role within the system. Staff also participate in workshops related to quality matters.

- At the college level, the Quality Assurance Office, together with the departmental Quality Assurance Committees, is responsible for all QA matters related to the MHRM programme. The procedures to be followed are specified in the Quality Manual and relevant policies and regulations. The Panel was provided with minutes of the departmental QA Committee meetings for the last two years, as well as copies of relevant reports, such as Course Evaluation Reports, AoL Reports , Survey Reports; Self Evaluation Reports and Audit Reports.

- The Panel was informed during the Site Visit that the deployment of the QA management system is monitored by the College QA Director using the QA operational plan which contains a detailed listing of all activities related to quality in the College, along with targets and status updates. The Panel was also informed that the system is evaluated on an ongoing basis, including by the QAAC. However, the Panel noted during the Site Visit that the QA system and related policies and procedures are not consistently implemented (see Indicator 3.2, Indicator 3.3, Indicator 4.3 and Indicator 4.4). The Panel also noted that Course Portfolios, in particular, need more attention to ensure they are complete. The Panel heard of planned improvements, during the Site Visit, including updating the internal pre- and post-moderation forms, implementation of external moderation,

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comprehensive programme benchmarking and revisions to surveys to ensure programme level data is collected. During the Extension Visit, the Panel noted that most of these plans have been executed. The Panel recommends that the College should continuously ensure that the existing institutional policies and processes are consistently and rigorously implemented.

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.

Judgment: *Addressed*

- The CoB organisation chart shows a typical structure found in a College with the Head of the Department of Management and Marketing, where the MHRM is situated, reporting to the College Dean. The MHRM Programme Coordinator oversees the programme and reports to the Head of Department, while individual Course Coordinators report to the Programme Coordinator. The reporting lines are clear and ensure effective communication and decision-making processes that are supported by a number of departmental and College-level committees. All of the committees have clear terms of reference and there are job descriptions for all of the management roles.

- The Head of Department and the Programme Coordinator both have oversight of the programme. The academic standards and quality are assured through a range of QA processes, mechanisms and instruments that are deployed by the College QA Director and the departmental QA Committee. The Programme Coordinator provides general leadership for the programme, while the Head of Department ensures the availability of resources to ensure its effective delivery. The Panel acknowledges that the programme management arrangements are appropriate, with specific roles and responsibilities clearly outlined in the QA Manual.

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.

Judgment: *Partially Addressed*

- The Annual and Periodic Program Review Policy outlines the procedures to be followed for annual and periodic evaluations of the programmes offered at UoB. The policy was recently revised to exempt UoB programmes that have undergone an 'external

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programmatic review', such as an external review by the BQA or an accrediting body, such as the AACSB, from having to produce an Annual SER for the year in which such an external review was conducted. As with annual internal reviews, programmes with 'valid programmatic accreditation' are also exempted from having to undertake periodic reviews, which are conducted every five years. This exemption process has been formalised in the updated Annual and Periodic Program Review Policy. The Panel disagrees with this approach because the scope and nature of external programmatic reviews differs from internal annual and periodic reviews.

- In response to the Panel's recommendations that were sent to CoB after the Site Visit, the Panel was provided with an Annual SER for 2021-2022, which includes 17 planned improvement actions. In the interviews that were conducted during the Extension Visit, the Panel was assured that UoB is committed to implementing the annual reviews of the MHRM programme in line with the revised Annual and Periodic Programme Review Policy. The Panel was also provided with the 2022-2023 Annual SER, and an action plan for improvements.

- The Panel notes that there are appropriate arrangements in place at the institutional level for the periodic programme reviews. However, there have been no comprehensive periodic reviews of the MHRM programme. Periodic feedback has been sought through the PAC and the external stakeholder conference but not utilised as part of a review. During the Extension Visit, the Pannel was informed that the MHRM programme will be reviewed in due course and relevant external stakeholders, including practitioners, will be involved. While the Panel is satisfied with the arrangements for the periodic programme reviews at the institutional level, it recommends that the College should ensure that appropriate mechanisms for implementing periodic reviews and related improvement plans are regularly and consistently deployed.

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.

Judgment: *Addressed*

- The Programme Specification states that the MHRM programme was revised 'following an extensive benchmarking exercise of AACSB-accredited colleges in the UK, US, Australia, etc.'. The benchmarking was explored by the Panel in detail, and it was found that it was limited only to the courses on the programme and did not include the learning outcomes, delivery mode or other aspects. UoB recognises the limitations of its

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programme benchmarking process and has developed an updated benchmarking template which includes reference points such as the admission criteria and PILOs.

- During the Extension Visit, evidence was provided on conducting a benchmarking analysis of the MHRM programme, using the updated benchmarking template. The programme was benchmarked with three international programmes. A collated report was produced along with recommendations for new electives to be added. The Panel notes, however, that there is limited alignment between the mission and scope of the UoB programme and those of the three benchmarked universities, the programme is a Master of Human Resources and Labour Relations, and not an MSc; while one of the benchmarked programme is a Master of Management with a specialisation in HRM. Recommendations for changes to the MHRM curriculum were made based on the outcomes of the benchmarking. Although the choice of benchmarking reference points (programmes) is not fully aligned with the MHRM programme, overall, the Panel considers the progress made to be adequate.

- The Alumni Survey, the Faculty Survey and the Graduate Destination Survey that were provided during the Site Visit as evidence of formal mechanisms for collecting feedback from internal and external stakeholders, were not programme-specific and contain data for CoB as a whole. These surveys are conducted every two years according to the Quality Manual. The Panel requested copies of the Exit Survey, which is mentioned in the Quality Manual, but was informed that it is not administered for the MHRM programme and would be starting in Spring 2022. The Panel was provided with a draft version of the new Exit Survey and the survey reports, which contain a detailed analysis of the quantitative results and comments from alumni and faculty, with recommendations for improvements based on the feedback of these stakeholders. However, since the surveys are not programme-specific, their usefulness in informing decisions on the programme is of limited value.

- In response to the Panel's recommendations that were sent to CoB after the Site Visit, evidence was provided on administering the alumni survey and employer survey in Spring 2023. The results were filtered by programme and distributed to relevant staff members and the PAC in Fall 2023. Overall, the Panel is satisfied with the progress made.

- During interviews with faculty, the Panel learned that students and other stakeholders such as the PAC are informed about improvements made through e-mails and formal meetings. The SAC is also used as a more formal means of engaging with students and responding to their feedback and there is evidence of action plans being drawn up to address concerns raised by students in SAC meetings.

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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.

Judgment: *Addressed*

- The MHRM has a functioning PAC with clear terms of reference, which includes business experts, employers and alumni. The PAC meets regularly and provides feedback about the programme. The feedback is collated and summarised into recommendations for follow-up which are discussed at the QA Committee meetings. The Panel acknowledges that the PAC is an active forum used for informing programme decision-making and appreciates the engagement with external stakeholders through the PAC as a means of providing useful industry insights to enhance the MHRM programme.

- A market survey was conducted in 2017 to seek feedback from industry about the feasibility of the MHRM programme. During the Extension Visit, the Panel was provided with the results of the surveys that were conducted after the Site Visit (see Indicator 3.6). It was also confirmed, during the Extension Visit, that the use of these surveys in the programme is being monitored and there is an awareness of the shortcomings in this area which has resulted in improvements being made to the surveys. Moreover, the Panel was informed that there are also plans to modify the surveys and make them more comprehensive to enable a more regular scoping of the labour market and the national and societal needs, and to ensure that the programme is relevant and up-to-date.

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V. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own self-evaluation report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the virtual site visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/BQA *Academic Programme Reviews (Cycle 2) Handbook, 2020*:

There is "Confidence" in the Master in Human Resource Management of College of Business Administration offered by the University of Bahrain.

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

1. The use of a variety of teaching and learning methods on the MHRM programme to enhance the learning experience.

2. The engagement with external stakeholders through the PAC as a means of providing useful industry insights to enhance the MHRM programme.

In terms of improvement, the Panel recommends that the UoB and the College of Business Administration should:

1. Consider revising the programme educational objectives to ensure that they are phrased in appropriate form, achievable, and aligned with the revised programme curriculum.

2. Ensure that the programme intended learning outcomes are clearly expressed and aligned with the curriculum so that students can achieve them.

3. Review and update the mapping of the course intended learning outcomes to the programme intended learning outcomes to ensure that it is complete and accurate.

4. Define a pre-requisite requirement for the Strategic Human Resource Management course to ensure that students have the required knowledge and skills to study a strategy course.

5. Review prescribed textbooks for the MHRM courses and replace them with current editions and materials which are appropriate to the Bahraini and/or regional context.

6. Investigate the reasons for the large number of appeals by MHRM students in the 'Research Methods and Statistical Analysis' courses and address any underlying issues that are contributing to this anomaly.

7. Regularly benchmark and revise the admission requirements in light of student performance and feedback from relevant stakeholders.

8. Develop an effective mechanism for ensuring appropriate and balanced academic staff workloads are developed and implemented as a priority in order to maintain teaching quality and academic standards on the programme.

9. Enhance faculty capacity for supervising research theses and projects through the implementation of effective relevant professional development programmes.

10. Provide appropriate and effective career support services to MHRM students to help them accomplish their professional goals and aspirations.

11. Deploy the existing academic advising procedures more effectively in order to reduce the number of at-risk students on the programme.

12. Continue implementing external moderation on the MHRM courses and regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the programme's external moderation to ensure consistent assessments and fairness of grading.

13. Deploy appropriate mechanisms to formally evaluate the effectiveness of the thesis and related arrangements, and to make improvements to the process.

14. Investigate the reasons for the inordinately long period of time MHRM students take to complete the programme and implement appropriate strategies to mitigate this.

15. Continuously ensure that the existing institutional policies and processes are consistently and rigorously implemented.

16. Ensure that appropriate mechanisms for implementing periodic reviews and related improvement plans are regularly and consistently deployed.

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