

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



# **Directorate of Higher Education Reviews**

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

**Bachelor of Science in Business Informatics  
College of Administrative and Financial Sciences  
AMA International University - Bahrain  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 7 - 9 April 2014**

HC029-C1-R029

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## Acronyms

ACM	Association for Computing Machinery
AIS	Association for Information Systems
AMAIUB	AMA International University-Bahrain
APPH	Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook
BSBI	Bachelor of Science in Business Informatics
BSIS	Bachelor of Science in International Business
CAFS	College of Administrative and Financial Sciences
CILO	Course intended learning outcomes
CIS	Campus Information System
CQI	College committee for Continuous Quality Improvement
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
ECBE	European Council for Business Education
FDP	Faculty Development Plan
IFDP	Individual Faculty Development Plans
HEC	Higher Education Council of the Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain
HRMS	Human Resource Management System
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
MBA	Master in Business Administration
MIS	Management Information Systems

PAST	Performance Appraisal System for Teachers
PEO	Programme Educational Objectives
PIAP	Programme Industry Advisory Panel
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcomes
QAA-UK	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in the United Kingdom
QQA	National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training
QAAO	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office
QMS	Quality Management System
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SES	Self-Evaluation Survey
TLA	Teaching, learning and assessment
TOS	Table of Specifications

# The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process

## 1.1 The Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework

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

Programmes-within-College Reviews have three main objectives:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Panel’) states in the Review Report whether the programme satisfies each Indicator. If the programme satisfies all four Indicators, the concluding statement will say that there is ‘confidence’ in the programme. If two or three Indicators are satisfied, including Indicator 1, the programme will receive a ‘limited confidence’ judgement. If one or no Indicator is satisfied, or Indicator 1 is not satisfied, the judgement will be ‘no confidence’, as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Criteria for Judgements**

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

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

A Programmes-within-College review of the College of Administrative and Financial Sciences was conducted by the DHR of the QQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place on 7-9 April 2014 for the academic programmes offered by the College, these are: Bachelor of Science in Business Informatics (BSBI); Bachelor of Science in International Studies (BSIS); and Master in Business Administration (MBA).

This report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Bachelor of Science in Business Informatics (BSBI) based on the Self-Evaluation Report and appendices submitted by the AMA International University - Bahrain (AMA-IUB), the supplementary documentation made available during the site visit, as well as interviews and observations made during the review site visit.

AMA-IUB was notified by the DHR/QQA in October 2013 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College reviews of its College of Administrative and Financial Sciences with the site visit taking place on 7-9 April 2014. In preparation for the review, AMA-IUB conducted its college self-evaluation of all its programmes and submitted the SER with appendices on the agreed date in January 2014.

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

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

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

It is expected that the AMA-IUB will use the findings presented in this report to strengthen its BSBI. The DHR recognizes that quality assurance is the responsibility of the higher education institution itself. Hence it is the right of AMA-IUB to decide how it will address the recommendations contained in the Review Report. Nevertheless, three months after the publication of this Report, AMA-IUB is required to submit to the DHR an improvement plan in response to the recommendations.

The DHR would like to extend its thanks to AMA-IUB for the co-operative manner in which it has participated in the Programmes-within-College review process. It also wishes to express its appreciation for the open discussions held in the course of the review and the professional conduct of the faculty in the BSBI.

### **1.3 Overview of the College of Administrative and Financial Sciences**

The College of Administrative and Financial Sciences (CAFS) at AMA International University-Bahrain is one of the first colleges established when the university started operating in 2002. The College aims to produce business leaders by providing students the necessary knowledge and skills through its commitment to outcome-based instruction, research and community engagement in order to respond to the growing needs of the global business and industry. It consists of three departments namely: Department of Business Informatics, Department of Business International Studies, and Department of Graduate Studies. The College offers two undergraduate degree programmes; Bachelor of Science in Business Informatics (BSBI), and Bachelor of Science in International Studies (BSIS); and one graduate degree programme, Master of Business Administration. At the time of the site visit, the College had 2183 enrolled students, five administrative staff, 44 full-time and 23 part-time faculty members, who participate in the delivery of the programmes and 58 non-teaching personnel, who provide support to the College.

### **1.4 Overview of the Bachelor of Science in Business Informatics**

The Bachelor of Science in Business Informatics (BSBI) aims to provide in-depth knowledge and skills required to manage information systems in organizations. It is

one of the programmes approved by the Ministry of Education when AMAIUB started operating in 2002. However, the programme was under a moratorium from AY 2010-2011 to AY 2011-2012 and was allowed to accept students for the diploma as per HEC authorization during the AY 2012-2013. In the First Trimester of AY 2013-2014, the BSBI programme was reopened and those students that were admitted for the diploma programme were given the opportunity to continue in BSBI degree. At the time of the site visit, the BSBI programme had 1372 students in the Department of Business Informatics. To cater to the needs of these students, the programme has four administrative staff, 15 full-time and 11 part-time faculty members dedicated to the delivery of the programme, and 17 full-time and two part-time faculty members who handle common courses in the College. Since 2004 up to the time of the visit, there has been 3193 BSBI graduates.

## 1.5 Summary of Review Judgements

**Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor of Science in Business Informatics**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
1: The Learning Programme	Satisfies
2: Efficiency of the Programme	Does Not Satisfy
3: Academic Standards of the Graduates	Satisfies
4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance	Does Not Satisfy
<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Limited Confidence</b>



## 1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

- 2.1 There is an academic plan in place which explains the aims of the programme with close reference to the institution's mission, strategic aims and vision to as well as to the needs of the region and of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The programme has identified a set of Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs) and Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs). Evidence was available to support the mapping of the PEOs to the University's mission statement, as well as the mapping of the PEOs and PILOs. The Panel appreciates that an academic planning framework is in place, and links the BSBI programme aims to the Institution's mission.
- 2.2 The BSBI curriculum is organized on the basis of 180 credits made up of a series of courses, of three or six credits each, delivered across 10 trimesters. Courses included in the curriculum cover a wide range of business, management and computing topics relevant to business and to the Kingdom of Bahrain. Progression within the framework of the curriculum is achieved and maintained by a system of course pre-requisites which are maintained to support the academic flow of the programme. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel learned that in addition to the course pre-requisites, text books used within the programme are carefully selected to ensure their relevance to the academic progression of students. The Panel notes that faculty members have had regular meetings on the selection of text books and their relevance to academic progression of students. Minutes of these meetings were made available to the Panel during the site visit. The Panel views these mechanisms to be appropriate to students' academic progression on a year-on-year basis. Students' workloads are arranged around a timetable of 12 to 18 hours of contact time per week. Workloads were confirmed by a sample of current students of the BSBI programme who, by in large, are satisfied with their weekly workloads and the flexibility of the programme especially for students who are employed. The Panel finds the weekly workloads appropriate for working and non-working full time students.
- 2.3 The Panel notes that most of the courses contained in the BSBI curriculum are principally designed to transfer knowledge with practical sessions but, the curriculum also includes two work-based courses which provide an opportunity for students to practice their learned knowledge and acquired skills. The Panel explored the balance between theory and practice with faculty members who explained how they combine theoretical ideas with relevant case studies to help maintain an appropriate balance between theory and practice in their individual courses. The key mechanisms by which students learn knowledge based ideas and develop their

practical skills within the framework of the BSBI programme were confirmed to the Panel by the faculty members. The Panel interviewed a sample of current BSBI students and graduates of the programme and learned that both groups view the balance between theory and practice; and the knowledge and practical skills to be clear and relevant to their studies. The Panel appreciates that the balance between theory and practice in the BSBI curriculum is appropriate.

- 2.4 The Panel explored the preparation and suitability of the syllabus with faculty members and learned that teaching teams have been responsible for writing their own course specifications and that the faculty members periodically carry out informal benchmarking on their respective courses to review the course content in order to keep up with current trends in their subject area. The Panel was also informed that regular meetings occur between the programme academic team and members of the Programme Industry Advisory Panel (PIAP) to discuss issues which the academic team can adopt and implement into the programme to support the requirements of commerce and industry in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Panel notes that, in terms of business courses, the BSBI programme complies with the requirements of the European Council for Business Education (ECBE) and was re-accredited for three years from June 2013. The clustering of the courses is based upon the consideration of the requirements of the ECBE, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in the United Kingdom (QAA-UK), the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) and the Association for Information Systems (AIS). With regard to computing courses, external examiners interviewed by the Panel indicated the need to increase the number of business informatics courses to better balance the curriculum. The Panel concurs and recommends that the Department increase the number of informatics courses in the programme's next review cycle. The Panel interviewed a sample of current BSBI students and found that they are provided with course specifications and course guides consistent with documents as mentioned in the SER and that students were fully aware of the aims attributed to each course, the Intended Learning Outcomes and the key text books. The Panel appreciates that the course specifications are well prepared that the syllabus has appropriate reference to current professional practice.
- 2.5 The PILOs were designed based upon the programme structure, the needs and requirements of the local markets and international benchmarking references. Evidence of the mapping of PILOs to the programme's educational objectives was provided. The Panel finds the PILOs for the BSBI programme to be consistent with and clearly linked to the programme's aims and objectives. In its meetings with faculty members and students, the Panel noted that the both groups are aware of the PILOs and of their linkages to the BSBI programme's aims and objectives.

- 2.6 The course intended learning outcomes (CILOs) and the programme ILOs for the BSBI programme are based upon Bloom's taxonomy and are divided into the conventional four categories of A: knowledge and skills; B: subject specific; C: thinking skills and D: general transferable skills. Each course specification contains a list of CILOs which are clearly defined, appropriate and mapped to the PILOs. Evidence was made available to the Panel to demonstrate the mapping between the course and the PEOs and between the course and the PILOs. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel learned that the CILOs are determined with close reference to the PILOs and are mapped to the PILOs by each instructor and course coordinator. The Panel also interviewed a sample of current BSBI students and noted that they were aware of key CILOs. The Panel appreciates that appropriate CILOs are clearly defined and are mapped to the programme ILOs.
- 2.7 The BSBI programme comprises a work-based course that requires the student to undertake up to a maximum of 360 hours of training in the companies in an actual work environment. The course ILOs are mapped to the PILOs to ensure the skills and knowledge acquired in the work-based learning contributes to the achievement of the PILOs. The Panel find these mappings to be appropriate. During interviews, BSBI students informed the Panel that the practical experience they developed during work-based courses was useful to assist them to think from a differing perspective about what they needed to do to achieve the CILOs. The Panel appreciates that this course provides a direct mechanism for students to achieve competence in category D i.e. the general transferable skills component of the course's CILOs within the programme.
- 2.8 A wide range of teaching methods is used in the delivery of the programme and these include lectures, discussions, group activity, student presentations, home works and on-site exercises. The Panel notes that within each course specification, there is an indication to the teaching method for each type of CILO. During interviews, faculty members informed the Panel that they employ various teaching methods to support the achievement of CILOs and the PILOS. The Panel also interviewed a sample of current BSBI students and recent graduates who confirmed that they have experienced various teaching methods as suggested by the faculty members and that they have found these to be relevant and supportive to their learning experience. The Panel appreciates that these teaching methods are appropriate and relevant to the attainment and achievement of the BSBI programme's aims and ILOs.
- 2.9 AMA-IUB's policy for teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) is clearly defined in the Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook (APPH). The Student Handbook also contains sufficient information relating to the University's TLA policy including the grading system and procedures for grade appeal. Given the sample of course

files, and interviews with faculty members, the Panel noted that the assessment methods used to assess each category of the respective CILOs is clearly defined in the respective course specifications. However, upon examining samples of students assessments, the Panel was concerned with the preference by faculty members, to use multiple choice type questions, and the absence of a clear focus on the effective assessment of the critical thinking skills *via* rigorous analysis in the assessments. According to the SER, the BSBI programme makes use of formative and summative assessment procedures to assess the student achievements. During interviews, the Panel was informed that, following periodic assessment, student grades generally are discussed with the students and feedback is supplied to the students during consultation hours based upon their individual performances. However, the Panel learned that formative assessments are not effectively and regularly used in improving summative assessment results of each course. The Panel noted that there is little synergy between the two types of assessments at a course level. A sample of current BSBI students informed the Panel that their lecturers used formative assessment methods by providing them with some feedback on their assessments, but this practice is carried out in an unstructured manner and to some extent, in isolation from summative assessments. The need to improve the quality feedback is also highlighted in the IQA Report on Moderation which indicates that the feedback given to students does not provide adequate guidance to the students and is not linked to summative assessment. The Panel recommends that Department review the assessment policies to enhance synergy between formative and summative functions, and to ensure the matching of what is assessed to the CILOs.

2.10 In coming to its conclusion regarding The Learning Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- There is an academic planning framework in place, that links the BSBI programme aims to the Institution's mission.
- The balance between theory and practice in the BSBI curriculum is appropriate.
- Course specifications are well prepared and the syllabus has appropriate reference to current professional practice.
- Appropriate course intended learning outcomes are clearly defined and are mapped to the programme intended learning outcomes.
- The curriculum includes a work-based course that contributes to the achievement of the course intended learning outcomes.
- An appropriate range of the teaching and learning methods have been put in place in order to enhance the students' learning experience.

2.11 In terms of improvement the Panel **recommends** that the Department should:

- increase the number of business informatics courses to better balance the curriculum
- review the assessment policies to enhance synergy between formative and summative functions, and to ensure better matching of what is assessed to the CILOs.

## 2.12 Judgement

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

## 2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

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

- 3.1 The University has a clear admission policy which is periodically reviewed and revised in light of feedback from the external examiner and the outcomes of internal and external programme reviews. The last revision of the policy was implemented in October, 2013 and included: a cut off score in science for Business programmes; inclusion of the distribution of weighting for the Dean's interview; enhancement of the requirements for remedial courses; and rephrasing of some procedures. Application to the BSBI programme is based upon four criteria i.e. an admissions test, past academic records, relevant information as stated in the University application form and the result of the Dean's interview. These criteria were further explored during site visit interviews with faculty members who confirmed that the admission test for Business Studies is based upon satisfying the cut-off score for Mathematics (mark of 50), Science (mark of 30), English (mark of 60) and Logical Reasoning (mark of 50). The admission policy document indicates the possibility of remedial classes for all four criteria should an applicant fail any of the components of the test. The Panel was also informed that the Dean's interview, is based upon three criteria i.e. Communication Skills, Personality and Motivation, and General Knowledge in the Programme's related field, with each of the criteria weighted at 10%. In its interviews with students, it was clarified to the Panel that applicants receive information relating to the Dean's interview questions. The Panel finds the admissions policy to be overall appropriate for the BSBI programme. However, in light of the fact that there are a number of computing courses in this programme (as well as the Panel's recommendation to increase the number of informatics courses (See section 1.4)), the Panel is of the view that the cut-off score for science needs to be increased. The Panel recommends that AMA-IUB revise the admission policy so that the science cut-off score requirement for the BSBI programme reflects the number of computer courses in the programme.
- 3.2 Most students on the BSBI programme are classified as full time although many work during the morning and attend classes in the afternoon between 3-9 p.m. Other students normally attend classes during the morning. The Panel views the provision of full time education for working students within the above framework to be appropriate and consistent with the needs of working students in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The SER states that the adequacy of the profile of the admitted students is ensured by meeting the admission criteria and passing the remedial courses for those applicants who do not meet the required cut-off score of the admission test. Upon examining provided evidence on the profile of five students as retrieved from July 2013, the Panel noted that while there was a reference to scores for Mathematics,

English, Logical Reasoning and the Dean's Interview, there was no reference to, nor evidence found, for Science as indicated in the SER and admission requirements. The Panel discussed this issue with staff responsible for admission and registration to the programme but could not find a definitive answer to the how these students were admitted to the programme without reference to science and hence, to whether or not they were suitable candidates. The Panel acknowledges the mapping of admission requirements to PEOs and the evaluation of PEOs indicating that BSBI students are able to achieve a satisfactory rating. However, the Panel is concerned that a relatively high percentage of students are classified as inactive (29.5% for batch SY07; 27.8% for batch SY08; 19.4% for batch SY09) suggesting that these students are unable to cope with the demands of the programme. The Panel recommends that the Institution closely monitor the implementation of its recently revised admission policy to ensure that the admission criteria as stated in the admission policy are adhered to in practice, and that the new admitted students are appropriate for the BSBI programme.

- 3.3 The lines of management and accountability are clearly defined in the College's organizational chart and follow a limited 'Line and Staff' hierarchy system. The Programme is managed by the Head of Department who is responsible for the delivery of the BSBI programme, and is assisted by Specialization and Course Coordinators. During interviews with senior management, the Panel learned that the Dean oversees the College's main operations to ensure that operational plans of the College, as implemented by the Associate Deans, are in alignment with the Institution's Strategic Plan. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel demonstrated adequate understanding of the programme's management processes. Evidence of regular meetings was provided to give examples of the deliberations of issues related to the programme management by the Academic Council; the College Council; the Programme Industry Advisory Panel (PIAP); as well as Faculty Meetings. The Panel encourages the Department to clarify the frequency and provision when these meetings are expected to be timetabled, and to include this information in the APPH. Overall, from site visit interviews and provided evidence, the Panel appreciates that there are clear lines of accountability with regard to the management of the BSBI programme.
- 3.4 The profile, diversity and experience of academic staff in terms of educational background, specialisation and research interests as indicated in the SER is limited in range of expertise but appropriate to support the programme. The Panel notes that the majority of the faculty members are Assistant Professors, many of which were hired by the College only recently, one to six months ago. Upon reviewing the Faculty Portfolios provided on site, the Panel had reservations about the institutions which some faculty members obtained their degrees from. The Panel recommends that the Department develop a rigorous mechanism to ensure that academic

appointees, both full-time and part-time, hold degrees from *bona fide* institutions. The Panel is of the view that the programme lacks experienced staff that would enhance the student's exposure to current and relevant research and practice. During interviews, the Panel learned that the academic staff are required to submit an annual research output to support their specialization; however, the Panel notes that the research output is rather limited as evidenced from interviews and provided documentation on current research and publications by academic staff. The Panel recommends that the Department recruit experienced research-active academic staff, particularly Associate and Full Professors in order to enhance the students' exposure to current and relevant research and practice in Business Informatics.

- 3.5 There are policies and procedures in place for the recruitment, induction, appraisal, promotion, and retention of faculty members, and these are included in the Faculty Handbook. The Panel explored the implementation of these policies during its interviews with academic and administrative staff. It was apparent to the Panel that the recruitment and induction procedures are implemented as described in the SER and relevant policies. However, the Panel noted that the criteria for the recruitment of faculty members as described in the Faculty Handbook were not always adhered to during the recruitment process, as was evident during interviews and inspection of the provided faculty curriculum vitas. The SER states that a Performance Appraisal System for Teachers (PAST) process takes place for staff at the end of every trimester, and is undertaken by students, peers and superiors. The outcomes of this appraisal are discussed by the Dean becomes with the concerned faculty member. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel confirmed the implementation of this system. The Panel notes that whilst there is a Promotion Policy in place, the number of faculty members promoted since 2009 is low. The Panel is also concerned that the retention rate of the full-time faculty was lower in the SY 2012-2013, compared to previous years. The Panel recommends that the Department implement appropriate measures to address the low promotion and retention rate of academic staff.
- 3.6 AMA-IUB utilizes a computer based Management Information System (MIS) consisting of two major components i.e. a Campus Information System (CIS) and a Human Resource Management System (HRMS) and other minor components such as e-library. It consists of subsystems such as student admittance, registration, grading, finance, human resource records, class attendance, library resource usage etc. The Panel views the Management Information System to be appropriate for the support of the BSBI programme and permits senior management to undertake informed decision making. During the site visit tours, the Panel learned that the MIS is accessed by the various levels in the management hierarchy with identifiable privacy provision to prevent unauthorised access into the various subsystems. The Panel was also informed that the MIS is backed up twice per day and that the information is



saved at three different locations, one on site and two at off-site locations. Students interviewed by the Panel indicated that they are able to access minimal but sufficient information concerning their course registration and timetable. The Panel appreciates the appropriate availability, functionality, and suitability of the MIS in place that serve the learning management in the BSBI programme.

- 3.7 There are appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure the systematic filing and safekeeping of student records. During site visit tours, the Panel learned that in addition to the backing up of the MIS, the admission, registration and student details (grading, finance, etc.) are also duplicated in hard copy and retained in a secure depository for archived records. The Panel was also informed that, to maintain accuracy, when an electronic record is updated, a hardcopy is generated, printed and then added to the hardcopy archive records. In its interviews with IT staff, the Panel learned that an audit trail is in place to ensure accuracy, consistency and to check for attempts at unauthorised access. Corrections to the grades must follow an erratum procedure approved by the Dean, the Registrar and the Internal Auditor. Evidence was provided indicating that the process of data back-up are frequently generated to ensure consistency of security and that physical checks of the security process are frequently undertaken. The Panel notes that a policy concerning a disaster recovery plan is also available and evidence was provided to support the necessary revisions needed to upgrade the plan if/when there are any changes to consider (such as upgrades in information technology). Faculty members interviewed by the Panel were aware of the procedures for ensuring the security of learners' records. The Panel appreciates that these procedures are effective and appropriate to support the security of student information and accuracy of results in the programme.
- 3.8 AMAIUB has suitable buildings and physical resources including classrooms, computer laboratories, a library, a digital library, internet access, scientific research laboratory, hall equipped with audio/video system, prayer rooms, auditorium, students' lounges as well as facilities for the physically-challenged. During the site visit, the Panel toured the college facilities and found them adequate to carry out the teaching and learning activities for the BSBI programme. However, the Panel is disappointed with the physical accommodation for members of the academic staff, as the majority of offices allocated to the faculty members are not suitable in terms of size, privacy and ventilation. The Panel recommends that the Department significantly improve the physical accommodation for faculty members in order to enhance the efficiency of the BSBI programme delivery.
- 3.9 The usage of laboratories and library resources is regularly monitored by the College. The Panel learned during site visit interviews that AMAIUB deploys an electronic tracking system to identify and evaluate room usage. In addition, the library staff are able to monitor and evaluate the usage of the library resources

including the e-resources and the loan/return of the physical resources. The Panel was also informed that further IT developments were currently under way to identify individual student usage in the library. In its interviews with IT staff, the Panel learned that the IT department also tracks the use of the electronic resources and produces usage reports for help with decision making. The Panel acknowledges that periodical statistical reports are produced on the usage of the e-learning system and computer laboratories, and that these reports are disseminated to the management to assist with resource-based decision-making. The Panel finds the tracking system to determine the utilization of the resources as being appropriate to support the programme.

- 3.10 There are adequate technical and physical resources in place to support the students throughout their studies. During the site visit touring of facilities, the Panel noted that there are 13 IT laboratories in the building which double up as open access computer laboratories when classes are not timetabled in them. An appropriate range of general and specialist software is available to support the requirements of the courses in the programme. In addition, the library contains desktops and Apple iPads to support access into the electronic books and journals and into the library catalogue. However, the Panel recommends that the Department improve the library provision of relevant journals and text books to support the Business Informatics part of the programme. Students interviewed by the Panel indicated that there is an adequate number of IT technicians to assist them in using IT resources. Specific guidelines to manoeuvre around the library's resources are available to both members of staff and students. The Panel also noted that a virtual learning system is in place ('Moodle') for students to access information relating to their courses and to other supporting information. During interviews, the Panel learned that academic staff are allocated time in their timetable to guide and to meet with students for both academic issues and pastoral care. Counselling sessions are also provided by the Guidance Office. Additionally, there are students who act as student advisors who are able to support the students if/when they are unable to find relevant members of staff. Interviews with students did not raise concerns relating to support of their studies. The Panel appreciates that appropriate mechanisms are in place to support students' learning.
- 3.11 AMA-IUB operates an orientation programme for new students culminating with a tour of the university campus. During site visit interviews, the Panel learned that newly admitted students, whether freshmen or transferees, follow an orientation process that advises them on the operation of the University, including relevant information concerning the academic staff, the services and facilities of the University, the roles and responsibilities of the administrators, as well as university policies and procedures. A curriculum plan, advising students of the set-up of the courses on the BSBI programme across a ten trimester basis is also distributed as part

of the orientation programme. The Panel also noted that all new students are provided with a Student Handbook which provides them with information on the institution's facilities and services, relevant policies as well as students' rights and responsibilities. The Panel finds the orientation arrangements to be appropriate for the needs of the students.

- 3.12 AMAIUB has appropriate policies and procedures in place for tracking the progress of students and for identifying those students at risk. In its interview with academic staff, the Panel learned that each faculty members is required to identify those students who have achieved a mark below 50% in any of the courses and to schedule remedial tutorial classes. Students are allocated to academic advisors whose duties include monitoring the student's progression and a record of administered support is retained in a student advising log. Activity reports on the tutorial classes are used to assist with the decision making process for progression of each 'at risk' student and the Academic Probation Procedure is implemented to ensure that the maximum credits undertaken by students at risk is 15 credits for the following trimester. The Panel was also informed in its interviews with administrative staff that the university's management information system permits the Registrar to identify those students at risk and an at-risk report is generated at the end of the trimester. However, there was no evidence on evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention mechanisms or the satisfaction of the at-risk students with the and support provided. The Panel also notes that the Exit Survey Report indicates the need to strengthen the Tutorial Policy of the College to address the needs of students who are academically at risk. The Panel recommends that the Department regularly monitor the implementation of students at risk policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention mechanisms to ensure that effective academic support is provided to this group of students.
- 3.13 In addition to their formal learning environment, AMAIUB provides support to students to expand their experiences and knowledge through annual informal activities. During interviews with students, the Panel learned that opportunities are available for students to engage in informal activates such as in-house seminars, training, conferences, career days, car shows, charity fund raising events, Open Day festivals as well as through a variety of competitions. These activities are co-ordinated by the Office of Student Affairs, the University Student Council and the College Council. However, the Panel notes that the venues for student informal learning activities are limited particularly that the facilities used for informal activities, such as the university auditorium, are also used for formal teaching purposes. The Panel encourages the Department to expand its current facilities for informal learning in order to enhance the students' learning experience.

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

- There are clear lines of accountability with regard to the management of the BSBI programme.
- An effective Management Information System is in place and supports the learning management in the programme.
- Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure the security of students' records.
- Appropriate mechanisms are in place to support students' learning.

3.15 In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the Department should:

- revise the admission policy so that the science cut-off score requirement for the BSBI programme reflect the number of computer courses, and to ensure that the admitted students are appropriate for the BSBI programme
- closely monitor the implementation of its recently revised admission policy to ensure that the admission criteria as stated in the admission policy are adhered to in practice, and that the new admitted students are appropriate for the BSBI programme.
- develop a rigorous mechanism to ensure that academic appointees, both full-time and part-time, hold degrees from *bona fide* institutions
- recruit experienced research-active academic staff, particularly Associate and Full Professors in order to enhance the students' exposure to current and relevant research and practice in Business Informatics
- implement appropriate mechanisms to address the low promotion and retention rate of academic staff
- significantly improve the physical accommodation for academic staff
- improve the library provision of relevant journals and text books to support the Business Informatics part of the programme.
- monitor the implementation of students at risk policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention mechanisms to ensure that effective academic support is provided to this group of students

### 3.16 **Judgement**

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **does not satisfy** the Indicator on **Efficiency of the Programme**.

## 4. Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

- 4.1 Graduate attributes for the BSBI programme are stated as Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs) and Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs). The achievement of these attributes is evaluated by a set of direct and indirect assessment tools, as outlined in the Institution's academic policies on the assessment and evaluation of the PILOs and PEOs. Direct assessment of PILOs is achieved by the compilation of CILOS evaluation reports. In addition, the Department conducts Exit Surveys for the evaluation of the PILOs, as well as Alumni and Employers Surveys for the evaluation of the PEOs. The Panel appreciates that PEOs and PILOs are clearly stated, mapped and assessed.
- 4.2 AMA-IUB has a set of policies and procedures for benchmarking in place. According to these policies, benchmarking is done by the Head of Department who chooses the appropriate institutions for benchmarking to ensure comparability and consistency of the key features of the BSBI programme. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the programme's curriculum and learning outcomes are informally benchmarked with those of similar programmes in national, regional and international universities as well as and international external references. The information is then compiled and presented to the College Council for approval. After consideration and subsequent approval, the findings of the report are disseminated as appropriate. Informal benchmarking reports with universities and international external references were provided to the Panel. The external examiner report indicates a satisfaction with the level of informal benchmarking undertaken. However, the Panel views formal benchmarking to be a key factor for maintaining the programme's academic standard and recommends that the Department conduct formal and regular benchmarking to evaluate the BSBI programme's academic standards against similar local, regional, and international programmes.
- 4.3 AMA-IUB has a suite of policies and procedures for the assessment and monitoring of teaching and learning. The Panel viewed these policies and procedures and found them to be appropriate. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel learned that assessment policies are communicated to the students *via* faculty members, the Student Handbook, and *via* 'Moodle'. The Panel also learned that these policies are communicated to the Faculty members *via* Faculty meetings. Faculty members and students interviewed by the Panel were aware of assessment policies and the range of assessment methods used in the BSBI programme. The monitoring of the policies and procedures occurs at College and Institution levels. The College committee for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) provides a report based upon

their deliberations of the quality, grading and validity of the assessments. Findings from the CQI report feed into the College improvement plan. In addition, the Institution's Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office (QAAO) conducts an internal quality audit on the implementation of policies and procedures. Evidence of the annual QAAO audit findings on the internal moderation of preliminary assessments for the third trimester during 2012-2013 was provided to the Panel. The Panel acknowledges the steps undertaken by the College towards the monitoring of the implementation of assessment policies and procedures. However, the Panel noted that there are some gaps in the implementation of these policies, as evident from the review of provided evidence on students assessment and from the IQA Report on Moderation. The Panel recommends that the College implement appropriate mechanism to ensure the consistent implementation of assessment policies and procedures.

- 4.4 The CILO Assessment Plan provides a clear assessment mechanism at course level to ensure the alignment of assessment with course learning outcomes. The Panel reviewed a sample of course specifications and found that each course specification included information on how each category of the ILOs including category A (Knowledge and understanding), B (Subject Specific Skills), C (thinking skills) and D (general transferable skills), were to be assessed *via* a range of assessment methods including examinations, quizzes, student presentations, and projects. The Panel noted that examinations for each course are based upon a Table of Specifications (TOS) that includes mapping between the assessment topics, the related questions, the assessed ILOs and to Bloom's Taxonomy. During interviews, the Panel learned that faculty members made use of the mechanisms outlined above to ensure the alignment of the assessment with the CILOs. Upon examining samples of assessed students' work, the Panel noted that category A (knowledge and understanding) was mainly assessed by multiple choice questions and quizzes whereas essay type questions and projects are used to assess the category C (thinking skills) component of the CILOs. The Panel finds the mechanism employed by the Department for the alignment of assessment with the CILOs to be appropriate.
- 4.5 A Moderation of Assessment Policy is implemented by the Department to ensure the adequacy and accuracy of the assessment criteria and grading system at a course level. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that internal moderators and double markers are assigned for all the courses offered in the programme. The role of the internal moderator is to report on whether the assessment criteria have been consistently applied and whether the mark awarded is appropriate. Moderation Assessment Reports are prepared by the moderators and submitted to the Programme/Department Head. The effectiveness of the internal programme moderation mechanisms is overseen by the College's CQI committee whose duties include verifying the implementation of internal moderation and

providing a report to the College. The Panel notes that faculty members are aware of the internal moderation mechanisms and are routinely carrying out internal moderation duties. The Panel reviewed evidence of internal moderation in a sample of students' work provided on site and noted that internal moderation procedures are carried out fairly and consistently. The Panel appreciates that there are appropriate mechanism in place for the internal programme moderation.

- 4.6 External examiners are appointed at both course and programme level and the policies, procedures and processes for external examination are in place. According to these policies, the duties of the course external examiner include verifying the appropriateness of the course content, materials, CILOs as well as assessment methods. During interviews, the Panel learned that the external examiners produces an evaluation report, with findings and recommendations, that feeds into College's improvement plan. The Panel reviewed the evidence relating to the external examiner's input into the Capstone Project and into the work based learning activities. The Panel also discussed the BSBI curriculum, its content, academic standard and students' academic standard with the BSBI programme external examiner. The Panel notes that, in view of the programme external examiner, students' academic standard is in line with that of other local and regional universities.
- 4.7 The Panel examined a sample of students' assessed work provided on site and noted that it is consistent with the aims and objectives of the programme. Summative assessment of courses tends to be conducted mainly *via* a system of multiple choice questions and a few essay type questions. The Panel noted that in the case of essay questions, the assessment of the category C component of the CILOs, had only produced a few lines of information with insufficient analysis by students. The Panel encourages the Department to revise its approach to the setting of essay assessments to ensure that the assessment of Category C is at the appropriate level (see recommendation in section 2.11). From provided evidence and interviews, the Panel concluded that the students' performance overall is comparable, with the exception of responses to the essay type questions, with that of other students of similar local and regional programmes.
- 4.8 The programme conducts mapping of the courses at the various levels to ensure the PEOs, PILOs and CILOs are aligned. In addition, rubrics are implemented to verify that student performance reflecting the course outcome achievement is coherent with the awarded grade. A summary statistical report of the distribution of awarded marks was provided as was a CILO evaluation of course performance. During interviews, the Panel was informed that an exit survey, an alumni survey and an employer survey are also used for the consideration to the measurement of the level of achievement. Statistics for the sample PEO evaluation report and for the exit

survey were available as evidence. An 'Alumni Survey Report' and an 'Employers Survey Report' provided evidence of the student achievements of the PEOs (87% and 86% respectively). The Panel appreciates that the graduates' academic achievements are consistent with the programme aims and ILOs.

- 4.9 Cohort data depicting three cohorts of BSBI programme students was made available to the Panel. The Panel notes that the progression rates from year one to year two for all three cohorts are between 82% and 84%; from year two to year three: 91% to 92% and from year three to year four: 79% to 95%. The Panel views these progression rates as being acceptable and comparable to other local and regional higher education institutions. Provided cohort data also indicate that the retention rates for all three cohorts are: year one to year two: 82% to 84%; year two to year three: 75% to 77% and year three to year four: 61% to 73%. The Panel is concerned that a relatively high percentage of students are currently classified as inactive (29.5% for batch SY07; 27.8% for batch SY08; 19.4% for batch SY09) and that a precise definition of an inactive student does not exist or is not known to the programme's senior management team and faculty members. The Panel views the distinction between active and inactive students to be an important factor for the programme's smooth operation and its efficiency and recommends that the Department determine a precise definition of an inactive student, based on maximum number of years of registration, and ensure its dissemination to all students and faculty members. Furthermore, the Panel encourages the Department to adopt this definition as it closely monitors the recently implemented admission policy to help address this issue and improve the efficiency of the BSBI programme and its academic standards (see section 3.2).
- 4.10 Policies and procedures for the management and assessment of work-based learning are in place and the Panel find them to be appropriate. In its interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that students are guided by the College and the Placement Link Office to choose an appropriate work-based learning environment, and that a lecturer is assigned to support the students in the work place with visits to monitor and evaluate their performances. The Panel also learned that the assessment of work-based learning includes the assessment of the student's work performance as well as the student's competencies, including academic skills and business skills. The training supervisor awards up to 70% of the final mark and on receipt of the student practicum report, the instructor awards up to 30% of the final mark. The Panel was provided with evidence to support the competency evaluation; the performance evaluation and the accomplishment report of/for the students in placement. Additionally, evidence was provided on the use of anti-plagiarism software to check the authenticity of the student's accomplishment report. The Panel reviewed a number of work-based projects on site and interviewed a course coordinator. The Panel also interviewed students and graduates who indicated that



they find work-based learning to be useful for acquiring practical skills and on- job training. From interviews and provided evidence, the Panel appreciates that work-based learning is effectively managed and assessed.

- 4.11 The University Student Research Guidelines are implemented in thesis-writing courses, such as the Capstone project. During interviews, the Panel discussed thesis supervision arrangements with faculty members who confirmed that they were guided by the University guidelines that requires a thesis supervisor to be assigned to a student or group of students in order to monitor progress and provide guidance. Samples of Progress Monitoring Reports documenting the student/advisor meetings were provided to the Panel, as was evidence of the use of anti-plagiarism software to test the authenticity of the submitted work. The Panel was also informed that students are required to defend their verified work in front of a panel selected by the supervisor and approved by the Dean. The Panel notes that faculty members are aware of the role and responsibilities of a thesis supervisor as stated in the documentation. Furthermore, students interviewed by the Panel were aware of their responsibilities and expressed their satisfaction with the thesis supervisory arrangements. The Panel appreciates the availability, monitoring, and implementation of the policy and procedure to supervise projects to be appropriate.
- 4.12 The SER indicates the BSBI programme has a functioning Programme Industry Advisory Panel (PIAP) with a membership that includes discipline experts, employers and alumni. Policies for PIAP indicate that the fundamental role of PIAP members is to provide advice to the programme team on any key issues relating to the programme. Upon reviewing the provided PIAP members profile, the Panel noted that membership consisted of only three members but with appropriate professional and industrial backgrounds. During the site visit, the Panel met members of the PIAP and discussed their role and contributions to the programme. The Panel learned that the PIAP members normally met twice per year to discuss the BSBI programme, and that they have been actively providing advice on number of key issues including suggestions to increase the number of credits of the work-based course and the need to enhance and improve the faculty members' research output to support BSBI curriculum. Evidence of the PIAP meetings minutes and resolutions was provided as was a sample of the programme review report depicting the implementations of the PIAP recommendations. The Panel appreciates that the members of the PIAP to be professional and appropriate for their role and to be keen to provide advice to improve the programme.
- 4.13 AMA-IUB uses a set of surveys to evaluate graduate and employer satisfaction with the graduates' profile; these include Exit Survey, Employers Survey and Alumni Survey. The results for the Exit and Employers Surveys were provided to the Panel. The evidence provided indicate that employers are satisfied with the quality of work

and productivity of the graduates. There is also positive feedback by graduates on their learning experience in the BSBI programme. The Panel appreciate that employers and alumni are satisfied with the programme's graduate profile.

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

- The programme's PEOs and PILOs are clearly stated, mapped and assessed
- Appropriate mechanisms are in place for the internal programme moderation to ensure internal reliability and validity of students' assessment results.
- Work-based learning is effectively managed and assessed.
- The graduates' academic achievements meet the programme aims and ILOs.
- Appropriate policies and procedures for the supervision dissertations are implemented and monitored.
- The members of the programme's advisory panel are professional and actively involved in the improvement of the programme.
- Employers and alumni are satisfied with the profile of the programme's graduates.

4.15 In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the Department should:

- conduct formal and regular benchmarking to evaluate the BSBI programme's academic standards against similar local, regional, and international programmes
- implement appropriate mechanism to ensure the consistent implementation of assessment policies and procedures
- determine a precise definition of an inactive student and adopt it in the monitoring of the recently implemented admission policy in order to enhance the efficiency and academic standards of the BSBI programme.

#### 4.16 **Judgement**

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

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

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

- 5.1 The institution has prepared documentation of the policies and procedures such as Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook, Faculty Manual, Student Handbook, Library Guide, Standing Committee Guidelines, Practicum Handbook, Guidelines for Notional Hours, Data Backup and Restoration, Survey Manual and AMAIUB Operations Manual. The Panel appreciates the detailed procedures in these documents such as the moderation of assessment and work-based learning. However, the Panel notes that some of the policies do not provide clear and specific information such as minimum CGPA for graduation as well as the maximum number of years needed to complete their undergraduate studies. The Faculty Handbook lacked explicit information regarding the faculty development initiatives, and relevant-research form. The Panel recommends that the Department revise the Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook to provide detailed explanations of procedures to assist in uniform decision making. The Panel noted from different interviews and from evidence that the Institution's policies were not always adhered to by staff members. For example, informal benchmarking was conducted against universities that do not fulfil the criteria specified in the Handbook. Moreover, the criteria for the recruitment of faculty was not always adhered to, as evident from provided curriculum vitas. The Panel recommends that the Department ensure adherence to criteria set by the institution in implementing policies and procedures to maximize their effectiveness. The Panel noted during interviews that some support staff members were unclear on some of these policies or had no access to such documents. Furthermore, it was revealed that students were not familiar with most of the procedures in the institution and were depending on word of mouth for dissemination of updates on matters related to their studies. The Panel recommends that the Department enhance the existing mechanisms for the dissemination of the Institution's policies to all stakeholders and ensure their consistent implementation.
- 5.2 There are clearly defined lines of authority and reporting mechanism within the College as well as defined roles and responsibilities at each level. According to the SER, the College is guided by its College Development Plan which is anchored on the Institution's strategic plan. During interviews, the Panel noted that whilst faculty members are aware of the mission of the AMAUB, and aims of the BSBI programme; they are not fully briefed on the AMAUB's strategic plan and its implications for the BSBI programme. Moreover, notwithstanding that the majority of the teaching faculty are at the level of Assistant Professors, it was evident to the Panel that they

are not effectively mentored and that they are operating on the implementation level only. Whilst the Panel appreciates the clear lines of authority within the programme and College, the Panel is of the view that the faculty's contribution to the leadership of the BSBI programme and the College is in need of enhancement. The Panel recommends that the Department implement appropriate mechanisms for the development of sustainable leadership in the programme.

- 5.3 AMAIUB has a well-documented Quality Management System (QMS) in place which is applied to all programmes through a programme review cycle. The Panel was provided with documentation on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the QMS by the College Quality Improvement Committee. Whilst the Panel appreciates the proper documentation of the quality assurance system and its management processes, upon reviewing onsite evidence such as course files, the Panel noted that the implementation and the monitoring of the effectiveness of these quality assurance procedures was not always reflected in the overall activities of the institution. For example, with regard to student assessment, the Panel noted that the implementation of a sound assessment was not adhered to by all faculty involved. In addition, the Panel has concerns related to some of the procedures implemented in quality assurance activities. For example, the Sample CQI Report on entitled IQA Report on Midterm Exam provided to the Panel utilizes a three-point scale that could be misleading, particularly when describing the criteria of 'Good' as 'Correct elements have been applied some of the time'. The Panel is of the view that this criteria should be labeled as 'Inconsistent' as reflected in its description. Similarly, the Panel finds that the Likert scale utilized in the evaluation of direct assessment of PILOS is in need of enhancement. Reading these reports therefore gives a false impression as it masks what could be numerous inconsistencies or problems in quality. The Panel recommends that the College improve the current mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the quality assurance system to ensure its effectiveness.
- 5.4 The Institution conducts periodic quality assurance workshops for faculty and many members of the teaching body are encouraged to take part in these faculty development endeavours. It was evident to the Panel during interviews that academic staff are aware of the quality assurance procedures and their role in the quality cycle. By contrast, the Panel noted that there is little awareness of quality assurance issues among administrative staff. For example, operational level staff exhibited lack of knowledge of human resources-related policies followed by the institution for promotion and professional development purposes. In addition, after examination of some job descriptions provided as evidence, there was a clear absence of emphasis on quality assurance in them. The Panel recommends that the Department improve the mechanisms for information dissemination among all

students and staff, including administrative and part-time, regarding quality assurance and their role in the process.

- 5.5 The AMAIUB Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook clearly states the procedure for the introduction of new programmes. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel learned that the procedure for programme development is initiated by the College Curriculum Review Committee in response to feedback received from stakeholders and environment scanning. The proposal is then forwarded to the Dean and the Academic Council, after which it is finally approved by the Curriculum Oversight Committee. Evidence of the implementation of these procedures by the College in the development of the Bachelor of Hospitality Management was provided to the Panel. The Panel finds these procedures fit for the purpose for which they were developed. However, the Panel notes that the environment scanning depends on Tamkeen reports and feedback received from the PIAP as the main sources of input for such decisions. The Panel encourages the College to refer to other diversified sources of data in order to support the development of programmes that are relevant to the local market needs.
- 5.6 The College follows an annual internal auditing cycle in the form of the preparation of a Self Evaluation Survey (SES) which pinpoints weaknesses and areas for improvement and further investigation. The implementation of the recommendations in the SES by the College is monitored by the QAAO. During interviews, the Panel learned that, on individual course level, course coordinators prepare review reports on their respective courses and submit them to the Head of Department who, in turn, present it after discussion with the course coordinator to the Curriculum Review Committee for proposal preparation. A sample report of the curriculum review committee was provided to the Panel. The Panel noted again that there was no specific date for the implementation of the proposed changes. The Panel recommends that the Department ensures the addition of a timeline to the SES to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of corrective action planned.
- 5.7 In addition to the annual internal review, the Department utilizes feedback from the standing committees such as Curriculum Review Committee, Assessment and Evaluation of PEO, and Assessment and Evaluation of PILOs. The Panel noted that the external feedback about the programme comes from the PIAP as well as the two external examiners of the programme and the courses related to their specialization. During interviews, the Panel learned that feedback from both internal and external stakeholders is consolidated in a Curriculum Review Report which is forwarded to the college dean for review and subsequent presentation to the Academic Council. Upon reviewing the provided Curriculum Review Report and External Examiners Reports, the Panel noted that the outcomes of external reviews are mainly reflected in changes made to the curriculum. The Panel is of the view that the outcomes of the

external review of the programme were not effectively utilized by the Department. The Panel recommends that the Department utilize the output of external reviews in the improvement of all aspects of the BSBI programme, including physical resources, faculty members, professional development and research output.

- 5.8 Procedures for the collection and analysis of stakeholders' feedback and recommendations are clearly stated in the Institution's Survey Manual. The Panel finds these procedure to be appropriate. The College has conducted a number of surveys to seek stakeholders' feedback; these include Alumni Survey, Employer Survey, as well as Student and Staff Satisfaction Surveys. During interviews the Panel learned that, in addition to surveys, feedback from practicum employers and PIAP members is collected and evaluated. Evidence was provided for the implementation of PIAP recommendations, such as the increase of the Practicum hours from 120 to 240 which was introduced in the new curriculum. The SER states that the survey analysis results are posted on the Institution's bulletin boards and discussed with stakeholders during meetings. However, during interviews with internal and external stakeholders, the Panel noted the lack of transparency in the dissemination of the results of the feedback received from the stakeholders. The Panel recommends that the Department enhance the current mechanisms for the dissemination of survey results to make the outcome of the surveys available to all constituents.
- 5.9 Strategies for staff professional development are outlined in the Faculty Development Plan (FDP) and are well known by faculty members as evident from site visit interviews. In addition, Individual Faculty Development Plans (IFDPs) are undertaken based upon the requests of faculty member and/or decisions or by management to ensure the alignment of development activities with the programme requirements. During interviews, the Panel was informed that IFDPs are submitted by faculty members to the Head of Department who, in turn, forwards a report on these requests to the college Dean. A college Faculty Development Plan is prepared by the Dean and is subsequently monitored and results are summarized in an Accomplishment Report. The Panel notes that the Faculty Development Plan does not explicitly indicate how this plan and its objectives are aligned with the AMAIUB Strategic Plan. Moreover, faculty members interviewed by the Panel had no knowledge of how their IFDP are linked to the achievement of the Institution's strategic goals. Upon reviewing the list of Faculty Development Activities, the Panel noted that the majority of the professional development activities were limited to the attendance of in-house and local quality assurance workshops. Furthermore, there was no evidence that professional development is provided for administrative staff members. The Panel recommends that the Department improve the existing mechanisms for the staff professional development to ensure that academic and administrative staff are provided with sufficient and appropriate opportunities in

line with their qualifications, discipline expertise and according to the needs of the University and the achievement of its strategic goals.

5.10 The Department relies on its advisory panel, and available published market studies for scoping the labour market. During interviews, the Panel learned that PIAP members provide the Department with recommendations on enhancing the curriculum and the relevancy of the programme. However, there was no evidence of specific primary data collected for the purpose of scoping the labour market and ensuring the programme is up to date. This was confirmed in site visit interviews with faculty members. The Panel recommends that the Department conduct targeted market studies in order to gauge the latest trends in the field of Business Informatics and ensure the BSBI programme meets market needs.

5.11 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- The quality assurance management system is well-documented.
- Procedures for the development of new programmes are fit for the purpose for which they were developed.
- Appropriate mechanisms are implemented for collecting stakeholders feedback.

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

- revise the Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook to provide detailed explanations of procedures to assist in uniform decision making
- ensure adherence to criteria set by the institution in implementing policies and procedures to insure effectiveness
- enhance existing mechanism for the dissemination of the institution's policies to all stakeholders
- implement appropriate mechanisms for the development of sustainable leadership in the programme
- improve the current mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the quality assurance system to ensure its effectiveness
- improve information dissemination mechanisms among all staff (both academic and administrative) including the part time faculty members as well as the students regarding quality assurance and their role in the process
- ensure the addition of a timeline to the Self Evaluation Survey to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of corrective action planned
- utilize the output of external reviews in the improvement of all aspects of the BSBI programme, including physical resources, faculty members, professional development and research output

- enhance the current mechanisms for the dissemination of survey results to make the outcome of the surveys available to all constituents
- improve the existing mechanisms for the staff professional development to ensure that all staff are provided with sufficient and appropriate opportunities in line with the Institution's strategic plan
- develop a mechanism for better local market scanning resulting in updated custom-made data for programme development and enhancement purposes.

### 5.13 Judgement

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **does not satisfy** the Indicator on **Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance**.



## 6. Conclusion

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

**There is limited confidence in the Bachelor of Science in Business Informatics of the College of Administrative and Financial Sciences offered by AMA International University - Bahrain.**