



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
Education & Training Quality Authority
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Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programme Follow-Up Visit Report

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

First Follow-up Visit Date: 28 September 2016

Review Date: 7-9 April 2014

HC029-C2-F004

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The Programme Follow-up Visit Overview

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

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

This Report provided an account of the follow-up process and the findings of the follow-up panel (the Panel), whereby the Bachelor of Science in Business Informatics (BSBI), at AMA International University - Bahrain (AMAIUB) operating in the Kingdom of Bahrain was revisited on 28 September 2016 to assess its progress, in line with the published Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework and the BQA regulations.

A. Aims of the Follow-up Visit

- (i) Assess the progress made by the AMAIUB's BSBI programme against the recommendations highlighted in the review report (in accordance with the four BQA's Programme Review Indicators) since the programme was reviewed in 7-9 April 2014.
- (ii) Provide further information and support for the continuous improvement of academic standards and quality enhancement of higher education provision, specifically within the BSBI programme at AMAIUB, and for higher education provision within the Kingdom of Bahrain, as a whole.

B. Background

The review of the BSBI programme, at AMAIUB was conducted by the DHR of the BQA during the period 7-9 April 2014.

The overall judgement of the review panel for the BSBI programme, of AMAIUB was that of '**Limited confidence**'. Consequently, the follow-up process incorporated the review of the evidence presented by AMAIUB to the DHR, the improvement plan, the progress report and its supporting materials, and the documents submitted during the follow-up visit and those extracted from the interview sessions.

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

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

Indicator 2: Efficiency of the programme; **'not satisfied'**

Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates; **'satisfied'**

Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance **'not satisfied'**

The follow-up visit was conducted by a panel consisting of two members. This follow-up visit focused on assessing how the institution addressed the recommendations of the report of the review conducted in April 2014. For each recommendation given under the four Indicators, the Panel judges whether the recommendation is 'fully addressed', 'partially addressed', or 'not addressed' using the rubric in Appendix 1. An overall judgement of 'good progress', 'adequate progress' or 'inadequate progress' is given based on the rubric provided in Appendix 2.

C. Overview of the Bachelor of Science in Business Informatics

The BSBI programme aims to provide in-depth knowledge and skills required to manage information systems in organizations. It was one of the programmes approved by the Ministry of Education when AMAIUB started operating in 2002. However, the programme was under a moratorium from academic year 2010-2011 to academic year 2011-2012 and was allowed to accept students for the diploma as per Higher Education Council (HEC) authorization during the academic year 2012-2013. In the First Trimester of the academic year 2013-2014, the BSBI programme was reopened. The BSBI programme currently has approximately 1,500 students. As stated in the progress report, the programme has four administrative staff, 24 full-time and nine part-time faculty members dedicated to the delivery of the programme, and two full-time faculty members who handle common courses in the College. Since 2004, there have been 3448 BSBI graduates.

1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BSBI programme of AMAIUB, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of April 2014, under Indicator 1: The learning programme; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 1.1: Increase the number of business informatics courses to better balance the curriculum

Judgement: Partially Addressed

The College of Administrative and Financial Sciences has a Programme Development, Review and Enhancement policy that is revised and made effective since November 2014. In the last review cycle for the Bachelor of Science in Business Informatics (BSBI), the College developed a new curriculum that was implemented in September 2016. The new curriculum is structured to comply with Association for Computing Machinery-Information System 2010 (ACM-IS 2010) Curriculum Guidelines for Undergraduate Degree Programmes in Information Systems, and the European Council for Business Education (ECBE) criteria. During the follow-up visit, the Panel was informed that the College made these alignments to ensure there is a balance between business and Information Systems (IS) courses, as the ratio was 69% business courses and 31% IS courses. After reviewing the programme, the College introduced core courses in Business Informatics, for example, Information Systems; Data and Information Management; Enterprise Architecture; IS Project Management; Systems Analysis and Design; and IS Strategy, Management, and Acquisition. These changes adjusted the ratio to 55% business courses and 45% IS courses, and aligned the curriculum to the ACM-IS 2010 standards. Moreover, the College introduced new business informatics' elective courses such as Mobile Application Development and Open Source Software. In the interviews, the Panel learnt that the members of the Program Industry Advisory Panel (PIAP) contributed to these changes during their regular meeting, and endorsed the university's directions to increase business informatics' courses. Furthermore, evidence provided indicates that the external examiners revised the new curriculum and appreciated the college's actions to revise the current curriculum and increase the numbers of business informatics' courses. Nevertheless, the new curriculum has just been introduced and it is still early to evaluate its full implementation. The Panel recommends that the College measure the impact of the new curriculum on the programme improvements.

Recommendation 1.2: *Review the assessment policies to enhance synergy between formative and summative functions, and to ensure better matching of what is assessed to the CILOs.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy and the Moderation Policy were revised and subsequently the College introduced a mechanism to align assessment with the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) through the involvement of 'specialization coordinators' and three approval levels. During the follow-up visit, the Panel learnt that there are two 'specialization coordinators' in the Department each of them is responsible for ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to assess the achievement of the CILOs. The course coordinator prepares the assessment plan for the course where each assessment tool/task is mapped to a certain CILO(s) and performance criteria are defined along with the weight for each assessment task. The assessment plan is then revised and endorsed by the Head of Department (HoD). The Panel noted that all faculty members, including newcomers, are aware of this mechanism as reported during the interview sessions. Moreover, the Panel noticed that course files follow a consistent implementation of this mechanism. Furthermore, the College revised the Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy to ensure effective formative assessment is in place to improve students' performance. An in-house training was conducted on effective assessment construction and feedback practices, in addition to strategies for implementing formative assessment. In the interviews, the Panel learnt that all faculty members attended this training and found it useful and effective to improve the synergy between summative and formative assessment. The faculty also explained that feedback to students became more focused and specific for each individual question instead of general feedback for the overall performance. During the visit, the Panel scrutinized the course files of BSBI programme, reports from the College's Committee for Continuous Improvements (CQI) and internal quality audits and found evidence of improved formative assessments, and feedback provided to students to enhance their performance. In the meeting, students acknowledged the improvements on the feedback given to them, and the formative assessments that help them improve their performance. Students indicated that feedback provided on their work, including the capstone project, helped in improving their performance, which was also confirmed by the external examiner. The Panel appreciates these efforts and finds this recommendation fully addressed.

2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BSBI programme of AMAIUB, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of April 2014, under Indicator 2: Efficiency of the programme; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 2.1: *Revise the admission policy so that the science cut-off score requirement for BSBI programme reflects the number of computer courses, and to ensure that the admitted students are appropriate for the BSBI programme.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

AMAIUB has a revised admission policy that stipulates that applicants must have a recognised high school certificate with an overall score of 60% or above, and 80% in science, mathematics and English courses in order to be admitted directly to the BSBI programme. Applicants who scored 60-79% in high school English courses can set the Online Oxford English Test. If they score 55 or above, they can proceed without having to take a remedial course, while those scoring 54 or less are requested to take remedial courses. Applicants scoring 60-79% in high school mathematics can enrol in the programme after passing the mathematics remedial course. As for science, the provided evidence states that those scoring below 60% in high school science will not be admitted into the programme. However, it does not indicate what would happen to those scoring between 60% and 79%. Moreover, the Panel was informed during the follow up visit that AMAUIB has informally benchmarked its admission requirements with six local universities to ensure alignments with similar programmes from other universities. The Panel studied the profile of the admitted students for the academic years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 and noted that the new admission policy has not been implemented yet. All applicants were admitted based on the old admission criteria. As the revised admission policy and its science cut off requirements is not yet implemented, there is no evidence that these changes have produced improvements. The Panel recommends that the College should expedite the implementation of the revised admission policy and measure its effectiveness to ensure admitted students are appropriate for the BSBI programme.

Recommendation 2.2: *Closely monitor the implementation of the 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.*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

The revised admission policy defined admission criteria for undergraduates and graduates programmes. Therefore, the acceptance - in the BSBI programmes depends on a set of criteria that applicants must meet in order to join the programme. The applicant must score a minimum of 60% in secondary school or its equivalent, and pass all the required placement tests and interviews required. Similar criteria also apply to transferred students, yet transferred students must show evidence of good moral standing from the institute where they come from. Moreover, applicants with special needs must fulfil similar criteria with a consideration of 5% marks in the cut-off percentage. During the follow-up visit, the Panel learnt that AMAIUB developed a mechanism to monitor the admission results through a quarterly reporting to the College in order to ensure that all accepted students adhere to the admission criteria. There are two verification processes in place to ensure admission criteria are met, one is conducted by the College while the other is performed by the Registration Office. In meetings conducted during the follow-up visit, the AMAIUB's senior management emphasized that the implementation of the revised admission policy and the monitoring approach is being considered and supported at a strategic level. However, the revised policy has not yet been implemented; hence, there is no evidence that the revised admission criteria and the developed reporting and verification mechanisms have improved the monitoring process to ensure admitted students are appropriate for the BSBI programme. This needs to be addressed immediately.

Recommendation 2.3: *Develop a rigorous mechanism to ensure that academic appointees, both full-time and part-time, hold degrees from bona fide institutions.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

AMAIUB has revised the recruitment procedures in 2015 to ensure that only recruits from *bona fide* academic institutions are hired. An overview of the new recruitment framework was provided to the Panel. During interview sessions, the Panel learnt that the Human Resource (HR) Department undertakes due diligence to scrutinize the applicants' submitted qualifications to validate their authenticity. The HR Department also contacts local regulators and institutions that have granted the awards to verify the information included in the applicants' CVs. In addition, the Panel was informed that the University complies with HEC's regulations with regard to the recruitment of new faculty members. From examining the provided credentials of the existing faculty and from follow-up visit interviews, the Panel acknowledges that the newly recruited

faculty members have appropriate qualifications for the delivery of the BSBI programme.

Recommendation 2.4: *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*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

AMAIUB recruited experienced academic staff who are experts in their respective fields and active in research. The Panel studied the profile for the newly appointed senior faculty and found accepted range of diversity and background experience in the BSBI specializations and research interests. The number of professors and associate professors has increased from zero and three to one and 14 respectively. The Panel found that the increase in number is aligned to the College Development Plan. Moreover, the Panel acknowledges the arrangements in place to enhance the research culture in the College through organized seminars by the newly hired research-active faculty and senior faculty on their specialization. In meeting with faculty, the Panel learnt that there is an active mentoring programme where senior faculty assist junior faculty to build their capabilities in research activities and publications. The Panel finds these practices useful and encourages the College to extend such practices across the institution. There is also evidence of recent work published locally and internationally in the field of Business Informatics. Interviewed students reported their satisfaction with the current capstone courses that provided research guidance and directions to students. This is because most of the newly recruited senior faculty are assigned to handle these courses and enrich their content with recent relevant researches and practices in Business Informatics. The Panel also studied the provided samples of the BSBI project reports in the library and found appropriate depth and breadth in the content and relevance of research topics. The Panel appreciates these efforts and acknowledges the progress in addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 2.5: *Implement appropriate mechanisms to address the low promotion and retention rate of academic staff.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

A new Faculty Ranking and Promotion Policy was developed in November 2015, and benchmarked to those of well-established institutions, to address the low promotion of academic staff. In addition, a Ranking and Promotion Committee was established as one of the College standing committees. In its interviews with committee members, the Panel was informed that the promotion requirements and procedures were revised in the new policy to include a point system that determines faculty's eligibility for promotion to a higher rank. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel expressed their

satisfaction with the new promotion system as it enables the award of points in three main areas; teaching, research and consultations, and community services. The Panel notes that two faculty members have been recently promoted as per the new promotion framework. However, the Panel is still concerned with the low retention rate of faculty members in the BSBI programme. Data provided indicate that the retention rate during the academic years 2012-2015 ranged between 58.97% and 77.78%. The Panel is concerned that there is no stability amongst faculty members, which might hinder the institution's efforts to improve research and academic standards. During interviews, the Panel learnt that the senior management is working towards addressing this issue through offering a number of incentives. The Panel urges the College to analyse the causes of the low faculty retention rates and implement effective mechanisms to significantly improve this rate in the BSBI programme.

Recommendation 2.6: *Significantly improve the physical accommodation for faculty members in order to enhance the efficiency of the BSBI programme delivery.*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

According to the progress report, the College took cognizance of the review report's recommendation and renovated the faculty's physical accommodation to enhance the efficiency of the BSBI programme delivery. During the follow-up visit, the Panel toured the faculty's offices and noted that no major changes have been introduced since the last site visit - to improve these offices in terms of size, privacy and ventilation. The Panel acknowledges that only senior faculty members (Associate Professors) have been allocated more spacious and better equipped offices. The Panel is of the view that most of the faculty offices are not appropriate and do not provide a conducive environment for scholarly and research activities or the privacy needed when advising students. The Panel hence recommends that the College should significantly improve the staff offices.

Recommendation 2.7: *Improve the library provision of relevant journals and textbooks to support the Business Informatics part of the programme.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The AMAIUB's library provides access to both physical and electronic collections. The library collection includes all required textbooks with adequate copies (3 copies) available for students. During the follow-up visit, the Panel observed that there is also a variety of reference books and relevant journals available for the BSBI students and faculty to borrow, and there are electronic books and research databases. These are available to students and faculty members both on- and off-campus. During the touring of the library, the Panel found dedicated study spaces available for student

use where they can search knowledge databases, electronic journals and online databases. Moreover, the library keeps a copy of all BSBI projects' reports available for the use of other students. In meeting with senior staff in the library, the Panel learnt that the Library Resources Committee collects the requirements of all colleges every year. These requirements are consolidated and used to update the physical and electronic collections. There is also an academic resolution by the Academic Committee of AMAUIB to encourage faculty to order relevant journals for their programmes and enrich the library's collections for students and faculty. Interviewed faculty indicated their satisfaction with the resources available to them for teaching and research and expressed their appreciation of the arrangements in place to maintain accessibility to journals and books relevant to the BSBI programme. In meeting with students, the Panel learnt that resources available to students are adequate and relevant to their studies and in particular to the capstone projects course. In addition, interviewed students informed the Panel that they are using the library resources so frequently to do their essays and assignments as well, yet they requested larger open spaces for study with more privacy. The Panel found evidence of tracking resources utilization in the library, and found a high utilization for the electronic resources by the BSBI students. The Panel acknowledges the arrangements in place to maintain recent and relevant resources for BSBI students and faculty and is satisfied with the progress made in addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 2.8: 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.

Judgement: Fully Addressed

AMAIUB revised the Student at Risk Policy and re-named it as the Students' Academic Support Services Policy. The updated policy includes a revision of the roles and responsibilities of the Academic Affairs and Academic Support Services Units as well as the inclusion of procedures for at-risk and special need students. The implementation of the new policy was explored in follow-up visit interviews, during which the Panel learnt that academic advisors submit periodic reports on students at risk of academic failure, including recommendations to improve their performance. Students interviewed by the Panel also indicated that at-risk students are provided with the opportunity to attend tutorial classes, as well as being referred to the Guidance Office for guidance and counselling. The Panel notes that the College has recently initiated the monitoring of the effectiveness of support services provided to at-risk students. The monitoring involves the collection and analysis of data to demonstrate the correlation between at-risk students grades after participation in intervention measures. The outcomes are utilized by the College to determine the factors that contributed to the intervention programme's success and failure. Copies

of at-risk students and performance monitoring reports for the first and second trimester of 2015-2016 were provided to the Panel. The Panel acknowledges that the College has improved the implementation and monitoring of at-risk student's intervention mechanisms to ensure that effective academic support is provided to this group of students.

3. Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates

This section evaluates the extent to which the BSBI programme of AMAIUB, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of April 2016, under Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 3.1: Conduct formal and regular benchmarking to evaluate the BSBI programme's academic standards against similar local, regional, and international programmes

Judgement: Partially Addressed

There is a developed benchmarking policy that defines the purpose and procedures for both informal and formal benchmarking. The College has conducted a formal benchmarking with the Management of Information Systems (MIS) programme at American University of Sharjah (AUS), the report for which is dated 10-11 October 2015. During the follow-up visit, the Panel learnt that the MIS at AUS was selected because the programme is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), recognized by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) and included in the Times Higher Education (THE) ranking, and like AMA, AUS is a young institution. The scope of the formal benchmarking exercise covered a comparison of the curriculum, teaching and learning aspects, assessments approach, graduation requirements and facilities. During meetings with the senior management, the Panel learnt that some of the recommendations from the formal benchmark were implemented such as revising the curriculum to include or replace some relevant courses like the Financial Accounting and IS Strategy and the Acquisition and Management courses. Moreover, other recommendations such as the increase of elective courses has also been considered to enrich the quality of elective courses. However, the College has not yet conducted other formal local or international benchmarking activities. Based on the submitted progress report, the College is arranging an agreement with an institution in the USA. The College has also provided a list of other potential universities for local and international benchmarking. During the follow-up visit, the Panel learnt that the College aims to benchmark with international and local universities before the next periodic review of the programme, as reported by faculty and senior management. The Panel recommends that the College should expedite the process.

Recommendation 3.2: *Implement an appropriate mechanism to ensure the consistent implementation of assessment policies and procedures*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The University revised a set of assessment policies to ensure the validity of assessment tools and that all assessments are consistently implemented. The revised moderation policy defines the roles and responsibilities of all involved individuals, the scope and purpose of internal and external moderation, and the procedures for pre-moderation, post-moderation, external moderation, and double marking. The policy ensures that all assessment tools are moderated according to criteria defined in the policy for selecting the sample of students assessed work. The policy has also defined a mechanism to moderate projects and research assignments. The Panel acknowledges the role of the college's CQI in validating the implementation of the moderation processes conducted by the moderators. Moreover, there is an internal quality audit that aims to provide clear and transparent reporting on the consistency of the application of procedures and policies by all the university's constituents. The internal quality audit is a quality assurance mechanism of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office (QAAO) on course portfolios that is conducted by the QAAO in the 1st trimester of the academic year 2015-2016 on 14 courses offered during the 3rd trimester of the academic year 2014-2015. The team of internal quality audit is composed of CQI team and QAAO. The internal quality audit report submitted to the College shows improvements on the implementation and compliance to assessment policies and guidelines. During the follow-up visit, the Panel learnt that faculty members attended some workshops aimed at improving their skills and enriching their knowledge with regards to moderation process, providing feedback to students, and formative and summative assessments. The Panel acknowledges the arrangements in place to ensure that the assessment policy and procedures are consistently implemented and recognises the progress in addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 3.3: *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*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

The University developed a definition for inactive students and shared it with faculty and students. An inactive student is defined to be 'a student who had a leave of absence of two years or longer, and is therefore subject to dismissal. An exception is made for students who completed 108 credit hours and have one year to complete their study. Currently, there are (178) inactive students under the BSBI programme. More than (48%) of these students had leave of absence because of work related issues

while others left for some personal or financial issues. In interviews conducted during the follow-up visit, the senior management emphasized that the definition was informally benchmarked with regional institutes and it is aligned with HEC's regulations. Nevertheless, in meetings with senior management, the Panel was informed that this definition has been approved but not yet adopted and implemented by the Admission Office. The Panel found no valid justification to postpone the implementation of the 'inactive students' definition within the current policy, and recommends that the College should expedite the process.

4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance

This section evaluates the extent to which the BSBI programme of AMAIUB, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of April 2014, under Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 4.1: *Revise the Academic Policies and Procedures handbook to provide detailed explanations of procedures to assist in uniform decision making*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The progress report states that the Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook was revised before the start of the academic year 2015-2016. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the revision of the Handbook was in alignment with the institutional procedures for the review and approval of the university's policies. From the review of the provided evidence, the Panel notes that clear and specific information was added to the revised policies to assist in informed decision-making. For example, the 'Study Duration Policy' includes the maximum number of years needed to complete undergraduate studies. Moreover, the policies and procedures on eligibility for graduation clearly indicate the required minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) for graduation. The Panel acknowledges that the requested revisions in the Academic Policies Handbook were made to enable a consistent and effective implementation of institutional policies.

Recommendation 4.2: *Ensure adherence to criteria set by the institution in implementing policies and procedures to ensure effectiveness*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

To ensure adherence to criteria set by AMAIUB, the College enhanced the current policies and procedures awareness mechanisms, as detailed under Recommendation 4.3. From different interviews conducted during the follow-up visit, the Panel noted that improvements in the mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the quality assurance system have also contributed to developing criteria to assess the effectiveness of these policies. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel provided several examples of how the enhanced dissemination and monitoring of policies have led to the implementation of institutional policies and procedures. This was confirmed by the provided evidence on adherence of the conduct of number of policies that are relevant to the development and delivery of the programme such as the

implementation of the pre-moderation of examination scripts. The Panel acknowledges that the College has implemented appropriate mechanisms to ensure adherence to criteria set in institution's policies and procedures. However, the Panel notes that a number of newly developed and/or revised policies and procedures are yet to be fully implemented as indicated in different parts of this Report.

Recommendation 4.3: *Enhance existing mechanism for the dissemination of the institution's policies to all stakeholders*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

According to the progress report, the institution has developed a comprehensive approach for enhancing the existing mechanisms for the dissemination of institutional policies to all stakeholders, in line with the university's Public Information and Dissemination policy. During different interview sessions, the Panel learnt that an overview of policies and procedures is included in the induction programmes of all stakeholders, as well as in the annual Quality Assurance (QA) awareness campaign for faculty members, administrative staff and students. The Panel was also informed that updates on policies is communicated *via* e-mail, AMAIUB website, faculty and students' notice boards as well as in departmental council's meetings. Moreover, all relevant policies and procedures are included in institutional publications such as Faculty and Student Handbooks. The monitoring of the effectiveness of the policy disseminating mechanisms is conducted by the Continuous Quality Improvement Committee and is reported in the internal quality audit reports. Provided evidence indicates that stakeholders are satisfied in terms of dissemination of relevant policies and procedures of the university, as gleaned from the academic years 2014-2015 annual satisfaction survey. This was confirmed during interviews with faculty members and students. The Panel notes that institutional policies are effectively communicated *via* various channels to all stakeholders.

Recommendation 4.4: *Implement appropriate mechanisms for the development of sustainable leadership in the programme*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report states that leadership development is a major focus in the institution's strategic planning. During interviews, the Panel learnt that a number of initiatives have been implemented to enhance faculty members' contribution to the leadership of the BSBI programme. The Panel was informed that a mentoring plan and policy are being currently developed to empower junior faculty members and prepare them for future responsibilities. This is achieved through providing peer mentoring and reporting on these activities. Evidence on this was provided to the Panel. In addition, faculty members interviewed by the Panel indicated that they participate in

various committees to enable them to contribute to decision-making beyond the operational levels. In exploring the issue of succession planning with senior management, the Panel learnt that AMAIUB aims to enhance the current succession planning mechanisms. Upon reviewing the provided AMAIUB succession plan, the Panel is of the view that the College needs to develop a more comprehensive mechanism to ensure the development of future leaders.

Recommendation 4.5: *Improve current mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the quality assurance system to ensure its effectiveness*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

A well-documented Quality Management System (QMS) is in place and applied to all programmes across the institution. AMAIUB has developed and is implementing a number of mechanisms to enhance the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the QMS. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the QAAO has recently reviewed all rubrics used in evaluating assessments so that they better reflect the quality of the assessed students' work. Moreover, the programme team uses the Likert scale in evaluating Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) through direct assessment that was revised to include new descriptions of each scale number. Evidence of implementation of these changes was provided to the Panel. The implementation of the current QA procedures, is monitored by the CQI at the college level and the QAAO at institutional level. In its interviews with committee members, the Panel confirmed that the CQI oversees and reports on all continuous quality improvement processes, and that its recommendations are included in the college's improvement plan. The implementation of the submitted improvement plan is verified *via* a follow-up audit. The Panel acknowledges that the College has introduced improvements in the implementation and monitoring of the current quality assurance system to enhance its effectiveness.

Recommendation 4.6: *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.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

AMAIUB has implemented a number of initiatives to enhance the dissemination of quality assurance information among all staff and students. A Quality Assurance Awareness Week is conducted annually, during which all newly recruited staff and students are oriented regarding their respective roles and responsibilities in the institutional quality assurance processes. During interviews, the Panel was informed that academic and administrative staff are encouraged to attend the quality assurance workshops conducted by the QAAO. The Panel also notes that the job descriptions of support staff were revised to emphasize their role in quality assurance. As indicated earlier, the College conducts regular training on the dissemination of new policies and procedures, including those pertaining to QA issues, to ensure that all faculty members are informed about these policies and procedures. From its interviews with faculty members, administrative staff and students, the Panel acknowledges that these stakeholders are adequately aware of the quality assurance procedures and their role in the quality cycle.

Recommendation 4.7: *Ensure the addition of a timeline to the Self-Evaluation Survey to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of the corrective action planned*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the Planning and Development Office spearheaded the review and revision of various templates to ensure that all improvement plans and evaluation reports include clear and specific timelines for the various actions. In its interviews with the faculty, the Panel was informed that the revised templates enable the effective implementation of planned initiatives in alignment with the indicated timelines and performance indicators. The Panel also learnt that the action plans are closely monitored by the Planning Office, which in turn, reports any deviations to the Head of Academics or Head of Administration. The Panel notes, from provided evidence, that a specific timeline is indicated for each evaluation/improvement activity. Moreover, several examples of adherence to timelines were provided to the Panel during interviews. The Panel acknowledges that the addition of timelines facilitates the implementation and monitoring of corrective actions arising from the annual internal programme evaluation.

Recommendation 4.8: *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*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

According to the progress report, the feedback from both internal and external stakeholders is analysed and discussed within respective college standing committees. During interview sessions, the Panel learnt that identified gaps and findings are consolidated into an improvement plan that, amongst other issues, addresses stakeholders' recommendations. The Panel was also provided with several examples of how the College utilizes the output of external reviews in the improvement of various aspects of the BSBI programme. These include improvements in curriculum design, library acquisitions, and laboratory equipment. However, the Panel is of the view that some aspects are in need of further enhancement; these include the improvement in faculty's offices (see Recommendation 2.6) and staff professional development (see Recommendation 4.10). The Panel urges the College to utilize effectively the outcome of external reviews for the improvement of all aspects of the BSBI programme.

Recommendation 4.9: *Enhance the current mechanisms for the dissemination of survey results to make the outcome of the surveys available to all constituents*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

Appropriate procedures for the collection and analysis of stakeholders' feedback and recommendations are clearly stated in the institution's Survey Manual. The progress report states that AMAIUB has enhanced the mechanisms for the dissemination of survey results. In its interviews with faculty members, the Panel learnt that the surveys analysis results are communicated to relevant stakeholders *via* various channels including the university website, bulletin boards and departmental meetings. Students interviewed by the Panel expressed their satisfaction with the recent enhancements in communicating students' survey results. The Panel notes that the official newsletter of AMAIUB (DATA LINE) includes the results of both student and alumni's satisfaction surveys. Moreover, PIAP members indicated that the results of employers surveys are shared with them during PIAP meetings, and that the outcomes are utilized to inform decision-making. The Panel acknowledges the enhancement of mechanisms for the dissemination of survey results to all constituents *via* appropriate channels.

Recommendation 4.10: *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*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

In its quest to enhance the effectiveness of the arrangements for identifying staff professional development needs for all staff, the College has conducted orientation sessions for faculty members on how the Faculty Development Plan is linked to AMAIUB's Strategic Plan. In addition, a training needs analysis (TNA) for the administrative staff was conducted by the HR Department. In its interviews with the staff, the Panel learnt that these initiatives are cascaded to individual development plan. A list of recent professional development activities is provided in the progress report and supporting evidence. The Panel acknowledges the college's recent efforts to improve the existing mechanisms for staff professional development, as evident from the Faculty Development Plan and the Staff Training Plan implemented for the academic year 2015-2016. However, the Panel notes from follow-up visit interviews as well as from provided evidence that the link between staff appraisal and professional development activities needs further improvement. Moreover, faculty members need to be provided with adequate opportunities to participate in international conferences, workshops and seminars. The Panel urges the College to closely monitor the implementation of its staff professional plans to ensure that all staff members are provided with sufficient and appropriate opportunities, and utilize the outcomes of the monitoring process to inform future improvements in this regard.

Recommendation 4.11: *Develop a mechanism for better local market scanning resulting in updated custom-made data for Programme development and enhancement purposes*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

As part of its strategic planning process, AMAIUB has developed an ongoing mechanism for better local market scanning in order to gauge the latest trends in the programmes offered by the institution. In this regard, AMAIUB commissioned a consultancy agency to conduct targeted market studies for all of the college's programmes. In its interview with senior management, the Panel learnt that the scoping study covers all aspects of required skills and recent developments, in light of data obtained from both private and public sectors. The Panel notes that the findings of the market scoping report were utilized to inform improvements in the BSBI programme. In addition, the Panel was informed that AMAIUB would continue to utilize PIAP feedback, as well as available published market studies for scoping the labour market. The Panel acknowledges that appropriate mechanisms are

implemented for labour market scoping, including the collection of primary data, to ensure that the BSBI programme is up to date and meets the market needs.

5. Conclusion

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

The Bachelor of Science in Business Informatics programme offered by AMA International University - Bahrain has made Adequate Progress and as a result, the programme will not be subjected to another follow-up visit.

Appendix 1: Judgement per recommendation.

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

Appendix 2: Overall Judgement.

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