الهـيـئـة الـوطـنـيـة
للمـؤهـلات وضمان 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 International Studies

College of Administrative and Financial Sciences

AMA International University - Bahrain

Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 7 - 9 April 2014

HC028-C1-R028

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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

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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

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1. 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.

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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 **Indicator 1** 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 International Studies (BSIS) based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) 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 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

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review, AMA-IUB conducted its college self-evaluation of all its programmes and submitted the SERs 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 BSIS. 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 BSIS.

1.3 Overview of the College of Administrative and Financial Sciences

The College of Administrative and Financial Sciences (CAFS) at AMA International University-Bahrain (AMAIUB) is one of the first colleges established when the university started operating in 2002. The College aims to produce business leaders by providing students with the necessary knowledge and skills through its commitment to outcome-based education, research and community engagement so they can respond to the growing needs of 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-

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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 International Studies

The Bachelor of Science in International Studies (BSIS) aims to provide in-depth knowledge and skills required to understand the dynamics of world economy and politics. The BSIS programme is offered by the Department of Business International Studies. In 2009, the Ministry of Education approved the programme under the College of Administrative and Financial Sciences (CAFS); however, the programme has been under a moratorium since the AY 2011-2012. At the time of the site visit, there were 796 students enrolled in the programme, four administrative staff, 12 full-time and 10 part-time faculty members dedicated to the delivery of the programme, and 17 full-time and two part-time faculty members handling courses common to the BSBI and BSIS programmes. Since 2010 up to the time of the visit, there are six BSIS graduates.

1.5 Summary of Review Judgements

Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor of Science in International Studies

Indicator	Judgement
1: The Learning Programme	Does Not Satisfy
2: Efficiency of the Programme	Does Not Satisfy
3: Academic Standards of the Graduates	Does Not Satisfy
4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance	Does Not Satisfy
Overall Judgement	**No Confidence**

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2.   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 BSIS programme with reference to the institution's vision and mission statements. The programme has two Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs); these are 'to practice successfully international related business activities in local, regional and global markets' (PEO1); and 'to promote professionalism and high ethical standards in international discipline' (PEO2). The PEOs are complemented by a set of 12 Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs). The SER contains mappings that demonstrate how the PILOs contribute to the Institution's mission and to the attainment of the Programme Educational Objectives. The Panel appreciates that the BSIS programme has an academic planning framework that links the programme aims to the Institution's mission. However, the Panel finds that the programme aims and learning outcomes concentrate on International Business with insufficient reference to skills and knowledge required for International Studies. The Panel recommends that the Department review and revise the programme aims to ensure alignment with international benchmarks and norms for International Studies programmes.

2.2   The BSIS curriculum is comprehensive and organized on the basis of 180 credits divided into 60 courses of three credits each to be normally studied over 10 trimesters. The curriculum is delivered on a trimester basis, each consisting of 18 credits, divided into six courses of three credits each. The Panel notes that whilst the curriculum covers a wide range of business and management topics relevant to the Kingdom of Bahrain, it lacks focus on International Studies' issues, theories, and practices. The Panel finds that the BSIS curriculum is essentially a general business study curriculum with a number of general and introductory courses in international relations. In the view of the Panel there is a disjuncture between the curriculum content and the title of the Award of the programme. Furthermore, senior management interviewed by the Panel confirmed that there is a large discrepancy between the courses contained in the curriculum and the Award given. The Panel noted that faculty members also view the BSIS curriculum to be essentially a general business type curriculum and indeed this is the reason for it to be informally benchmarked against several general business studies curriculums. The Panel discussed this issue with a sample of current BSIS students and a small sample of recent graduates of this programme. The Panel notes that both groups confirmed that the curriculum is not that of a BSIS degree. The Panel considers the disjuncture between the BSIS curriculum content and the title of its Award to be a highly serious issue and recommends that the Department urgently revise the curriculum so that it becomes a BSIS curriculum.

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2.3   Academic progression within the framework of the curriculum is achieved via a system of course prerequisites which are strictly maintained . The Panel explored this issue with faculty members who explained the key role of course prerequisites in students' academic progression on a year-on-year basis. Furthermore, the Panel learned that, in addition to the course pre-requisites, academic progression is achieved via the selection of textbooks used within the programme. The Panel views these mechanisms to be relevant and appropriate to ensure students' academic progression and encourages the Department to retain this practice when the curriculum is revised. Students' workloads are arranged around a time table of 12-18 hours of contact time per week. The Panel considers these weekly workloads to be appropriate for working and non-working full time students. These workloads were confirmed by a sample of current students of the BSIS who, by in large, are comfortable with their weekly workloads and flexibility of the programme for working students. The arrangements concerning students' workloads and their mode of attendance were also discussed with faculty members and were confirmed by them.

2.4   The Panel explored the balance between theory and practice with faculty members who were able to explain how they combine theoretical ideas with relevant case studies to maintain an appropriate balance between theory and practice in their individual courses. A list of key theoretical models and associated case studies was requested by the Panel and provided to them on site. This list shows a range of relevant business and management theoretical models and their applications via case studies. The Panel interviewed a sample of current BSIS students and also a few of the graduates of the programme and learned that both groups view the balance between theory and practice, and knowledge and practical skills to be clear in the BSIS curriculum and, by in large, consider these divisions to be useful and relevant to their studies. The Panel considers the balance between theory and practice to be appropriate; however, as the curriculum is not appropriate for the degree Award, the Panel recommends that Department ensure that the balance between theory and practice is retained when the programme is revised.

2.5   The Panel notes that course specifications are well prepared and documented containing detailed and relevant information on each course's aims, Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), teaching and assessment methods of each category of ILOs, key topics to be covered in each course, and key text book and additional supporting texts and academic journals. The Panel discussed the preparation of course specifications with faculty members and learned that the teaching team have been responsible for writing their own course specifications and that 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. Students interviewed by the Panel indicated that they are given course

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specifications and course guides consistent with the documents in the SER and they are aware of course aims, ILOs and key text books. The Panel appreciates that course specifications are well prepared and contain key and relevant information, and encourages the Department to retain this practice when the curriculum is revised.

2.6   The BSIS programme's ILOs (PILOs) are based on 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. In its interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the PILOs have been developed in light of international standards as well as feedback from the programme's advisory panel. The SER states that the PILOs have been benchmarked against ECBE standards. However, the benchmarking report provided indicate that 'Based on the ECBE standards, there is no clear statement about PEO or PILO. It only speaks of how an institution will be evaluated based on ECBE standards'. Moreover, the Panel finds that these PILOs do not closely reflect the Award given. The Panel recommends that the Department review and revise the PILOs to ensure that they are consistent with PILOs of similar regional and international programmes in International Studies. The Panel also recommends that the Department revise the linkages between the PILOs and programme aims during the review of the curriculum.

2.7   Each course specification contains a list of course intended learning outcomes (CILOS) which are classified into four categories of A: knowledge and skills, B: subject specific, C: thinking skills and D: general transferable skills. The Panel learned from interviews with faculty members that CILOs are determined with close reference to the PILOs and in alignment with international reference and best practice in CILO formulation. The Panel acknowledges that the CILOS are clearly defined and are mapped to the PILOs and PEOs to ensure the attainment of the programme educational objectives. However; as the PILOs do not reflect the award given, the Panel recommends that the Department revise the mapping of CILOs to the PILOs when the curriculum is revised.

2.8   The BSIS programme has a work-based learning course with three credits within the curriculum. The Panel appreciates that this course provides a direct mechanism for students to achieve an appropriate level of competence in category D, general transferable skills, component of CILOs within the programme. This course is assessed jointly by training supervisor on site who allocates 70% of a work-based project, and by the course coordinator who allocates the remaining 30% of the mark. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel confirmed that this course provides an effective mechanism for students to learn and achieve category D of CILOS within the framework of the programme. The Panel views this course to be an important component of the curriculum; however upon reviewing samples of Practicum Accomplishment Reports, the Panel noted that these are better suited for a general

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business degree programme. The Panel recommends that the Department enhance the Practicum course to ensure that it directly addresses the needs of the BSIS students within a relevant curriculum.

2.9 A reasonable range of teaching methods is used in the programme including lectures, discussion, group activity, and presentations and. Each course specification shows how each type of CILOs is to be taught. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel were able to discuss various teaching methods with close reference to CILOs and PILOS. The Panel also interviewed a sample of current BSIS students and recent graduates who confirmed that they have experienced various teaching methods listed in the SER and found these to be relevant to their learning experiences. The Panel views these teaching methods to be appropriate for a bachelor degree programme.

2.10 There is a clear policy on teaching, learning and assessment . During interviews, the Panel learned that the assessment methods for each course are included in the course specifications and are explained by the lecturers during the first week of classes. Upon examining samples of students' assessed work, the Panel noted that there is a preference by the faculty members for using multiple choice type questions in assessment of each course and that there is an absence of a clear focus on effectively assessing students' critical thinking skills via rigorous analysis. The Panel also noted that formative assessments are not effectively and regularly used in improving summative assessment results of each course, and there appears to be little synergy between the two types of assessments at a course level. However, a sample of current BSIS students pointed out to the Panel that their lecturers use formative assessments by providing them with some feedbacks on their assessments, but this practice appears to be carried out in an unorganised and irregular fashion and in isolation from summative assessments. In the view of the Panel, current formative and summative assessment policies and methods lack synergy and a clear focus on all key intended learning outcomes. 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.

2.11 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 programme aims to the institution's mission.
- Course specifications are well prepared and contain key and relevant information.

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- The curriculum includes a work-based course that contributes to the achievement of the course intended learning outcomes.

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

- review and revise the programme aims to ensure alignment with international benchmarks and norms for International Studies programmes
- urgently review and revise the curriculum, its content and focus, to address the disjuncture between the curriculum content and the title of the Award of the programme
- embed the balance between theory and practice in the new curriculum
- review and revise the PILOs to ensure that they are consistent with PILOs of similar regional and international programmes in International Studies
- revise the linkage between the programme aims and the programme intended learning outcomes in the new curriculum
- revise the mapping between course intended learning outcomes and programme intended outcomes when the curriculum is revised
- enhance the Practicum course to ensure that it directly addresses the needs of the BSIS students within a relevant curriculum
- review the assessment policies, including formative and summative functions, to ensure synergy and focus on all key intended learning outcomes.

2.13   Judgement

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **does not satisfy** the Indicator on **The Learning Programme**

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3. 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. 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. The SER states that application to the BSIS 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 AMA 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%. During interviews, students informed the Panel that they are aware of the admission policy and the required criteria.

3.2 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. Evidence provided to the Panel indicate that most students on the BSIS programme are classified as full-time although they work during the mornings and attend classes in the afternoon between 3-9 pm. During interviews, the Panel was informed that working students attend classes on the basis of a 12 hours contact time per week, whereas the non-working full time students normally attend classes in the mornings on the basis of an 18 hours contact time per week. Upon reviewing provided evidence on BSIS students' profile, the Panel was concerned that 24.7% of students enrolled in 2012-2013 are classified as 'inactive' indicating their unsuitability for this programme. The Panel recommends that the Institution revise its admission policy and related procedures to ensure that the admitted students are appropriate for the BSIS 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 BSIS Programme, and is assisted by Specialization and Course

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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. 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 Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook (APPH). Overall, the Panel appreciates that there are clear lines of accountability with regard to the management of the BSIS programme.

3.4   The profile and diversity of academic staff in terms of educational background, specialisation and research interests as indicated in the SER is reasonably appropriate to support the programme. During interviews with senior management, the Panel was informed that the College has some competitive advantages that can be used to attract qualified high-rank faculty staff, however, the Panel finds that this claim is not reflected in reality, given the current staffing structure. 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. Moreover, the Panel noted that several faculty members are involved in teaching courses outside their area of specialization and expertise. The Panel recommends that the Department develop a rigorous mechanism to ensure that academic appointees hold degrees from *bona fide* institutions. The Panel also recommends that the Department ensure that staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in the discipline which they teach. The Panel also notes that the research output of the faculty is rather limited as evidenced from interviews and provided documentation on current research and publications by academic staff. The Panel is of the view that the lack of a significant number of highly qualified Full and Associate Professors limits the Department's ability in providing the students with a richer learning experience, as well as providing suitable mentors for junior faculty members. This view is supported by the external examiner's recommendation to hire more faculty members from different ranks in the programme. 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 International Studies.

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

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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 faculty curriculum vitas provided. 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 Promotion Policy in place, the number of promotion cases in the College 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   The SER states that there is a functioning and suitable Management Information System (MIS) that permits AMAIUB to undertake informed decision making. It consists of subsystems such as student admittance, registration, grading, finance, human resource records, class attendance and library resource usage. 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 BSIS 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

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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 there are appropriate procedures 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 BSIS 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 BSIS 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 utilisation 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

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catalogue. 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 an 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 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 BSIS 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. However, there was no evidence on evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention mechanisms or the satisfaction of the at-risk students with the support provided. The Panel 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

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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 BSIS 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 and related procedures to ensure that the admitted students are appropriate for the BSIS programme
- develop a rigorous mechanism to ensure that academic appointees, both full-time and part-time, hold degrees from bona fide institutions
- ensure that staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in the discipline which they teach
- recruit experienced research-active and practitioner staff to enhance the student's exposure to current and relevant research and practice in International Studies
- implement appropriate mechanisms to address the low promotion and retention rate of academic staff
- significantly improve the physical accommodation for academic staff

- 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.**

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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 BSIS 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 polices on the assessment and evaluation of the PILOs and PEOs. However, as the stated graduate attributes are not consistent with the Award given, (see section 2.1 and 2.6) the Panel recommends that the Department re-define the graduate attributes and implement appropriate mechanisms to ensure that they are reliably assessed.

4.2 Benchmarking is done informally by the programme's head who chooses appropriate institutions for benchmarking to ensure comparability and consistency of key features of the BSIS programme including its curriculum and learning outcomes, with those of similar national, regional and international universities. The institutions selected for informal benchmarking exercise are Royal University for Women, Kingdom of Bahrain; Rochester Institute of technology, Dubai; and the London School of Business and Finance, the UK. Upon examining the BSIS benchmark report, the Panel noted that the BSIS curriculum and its educational outcomes have been informally benchmarked against general or international business type programmes offered by the aforementioned institutions, despite the fact that, the AMAUB programme is, given the title of its Award, an International Studies programme. The Panel discussed these issues with senior management team who confirmed that the that the BSIS programme has been benchmarked against general and international business type programmes, despite the title of its Award. The Panel learned that the benchmarking exercise is indeed conducted informally to ensure comparability of key features of the programme with those of national, regional and international institutions. Furthermore, the Panel learned that steps are being taken to introduce formal benchmarking procedures in order to ensure an effective benchmarking framework. The Panel considers formal benchmarking to be a key factor in improving the BSIS programme's academic standards and recommends that the Department conduct formal benchmarking with appropriate and relevant national, regional and international programmes in International Studies, in order to enhance the academic standard of the programme.

4.3 The programme has clear assessment policies and procedures which are consistently applied and regularly reviewed. In each trimester there is one major summative assessment as well as other assessments methods including quizzes, presentation, homework and project. In its interviews with faculty members and students, the

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Panel noted that they are aware of the assessment policies and the range of assessment methods used in the BSIS programme. The Panel also learned that the implementation of assessment policies is monitored and reviewed as required. In spite of documented assessment policies and monitoring procedures, the Panel finds gaps in implementation of these policies and procedures in practice as evidenced from the review of a sample of BSIS students' assessed work on site. For example (see sections 2.10 and 4.7), the Panel found limited evidence of effectively assessing a student's critical thinking, or an effective synergy between formative and summative assessment methods. These gaps are also detailed in 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   There are assessment mechanisms in place, at a course level, to ensure alignment of assessment with course learning outcomes. The Panel reviewed a sample of course specifications and noted that each course specification includes information on how each category of its ILOs including category A (Knowledge and understanding), B (Subject Specific Skills), C (thinking skills) and D (general transferable skills), are to be assessed via a range of assessment methods including examinations, quizzes, student presentations, and projects. In addition, a table of specification (TOS) is used as an additional mechanism to ensure alignment of each major course examination with course outcomes. The Panel finds these mechanisms to be appropriate. During interviews, faculty members informed the Panel that they employ methods of assessment which are consistent with those described in the SER and they make use of the mechanisms outlined in the SER to ensure alignment of assessment with course outcomes. Upon examining a sample of students' work on site, the Panel noted that faculty members, by and large, tend to use multiple choice questions and quizzes to assess category A (knowledge and understanding), and use essay type questions and projects to assess category C (thinking skills) component of CILOs. The Panel is concerned that category C component of CILOS is not currently being adequately and effectively assessed within the programme. Students interviewed by the Panel also pointed out that the main focus of assessment methods is on assessing knowledge and understanding, via mainly multiple choice type questions, rather than critical thinking and analysis. The Panel recommends that the Department ensures the adherence of all faculty members to the CILO Assessment Plan so that category C of the CILOs, critical thinking component of CILOS, is effectively assessed in practice.

4.5   There are internal moderation mechanisms to ensure adequacy and accuracy of the assessment criteria and grading system at a course level. A policy on moderation of assessment is in place and its implementation was confirmed during the site visit. The current system involves moderators who are appointed by the head of department to carry out internal moderation duties, by sampling, at a course level.

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During interviews, the Panel noted that faculty members are aware of the internal moderation mechanisms and are routinely carrying out internal moderation duties. The Panel found evidence of internal moderation in a sample of students' work provided on site and appreciates that internal moderation procedures are appropriate and are carried out fairly and consistently.

4.6   There are external examiners at both programme and course levels. The programme external examiner ensures that programme outcomes, its management and delivery are comparable with those of national, regional and international standards, while course external examiners ensure assessments, at a course level, are consistent and fair. Course external examiners also examine and comment on the appropriateness of assessment, course content and learning outcomes. The Panel reviewed the BSIS course external examiners' profile and report made available to them on site and was given opportunity to meet two of the course external examiners of the BSIS programme. The report of the programme external examiner, however, was not made available to the Panel. During interviews with course external examiners, the Panel noted that they have been recently appointed and their knowledge of procedures and policies concerning external examiners of the BSIS programme is limited. Furthermore, one of the external examiners pointed out that he has only previously received course examination questions and associated model answers, but not the corresponding sample of internally assessed and moderated students' work. The Panel considers this oversight to be an important issue and recommends that the Department provides all external examiners with a representative sample of students' assessed work, at each relevant examination period in order for the examiners to assess the standard of students' work and consistency and fairness of internal assessment procedures.

4.7   The Panel was provided with a sample of assessed students' summative work, including projects, and noted that summative assessment of courses is mainly conducted via a system of multiple choice questions and a few essay type questions. Upon examining the sections on multiple choice questions and the sections on essay type questions, at levels 3 and 4 of the programme, the Panel found that, in almost all cases, assessment of critical thinking, has only produced a few lines of information with very little rigor and analysis by the students. The Panel views the lack of critical thinking and analysis in students' work to be of concern and in need of attention by the Department. Moreover, the Panel finds that whilst the standard of students' responses to multiple choice questions is comparable to that of other similar local and regional institutions; the students' responses to essay type questions of summative examinations appear to be, by and large, below the required standard at local, regional and international levels. The Panel recommends that the Department review and revise its approach to the setting of assessments to ensure that the assessments in practice are of the appropriate level to meet international standards.

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4.8   The BSIS programme started in 2010 and up until the date of the Panel's visit in April 2014, has produced only six graduates. The Panel asked and was provided with a brief cohort analysis of six graduates of the programme on site. According to this document, the GPA of this cohort of graduates is between 1.23 and 1.79, which indicates to a better than average performance by this very small cohort of graduates. The Panel reviewed some of the assessed work of this small group of graduates and finds that overall their performance is consistent with the aims and objectives of the current curriculum and its ILOs. However, as the PILOs do not reflect the Award give, the Panel recommends that the Department revise the PILO evaluation tools to ensure their alignment with the PILOs in the revised curriculum. The Panel interviewed two of the six graduates and finds them to be articulate and their performance to be comparable with that of other graduates of similar local and regional programmes. However, these observations are based on the work of only a very small sample of graduates of the BSIS programme.

4.9   The BSIS programme started in 2010 with a total number of admitted students of 1168, by 2012-13 academic year, only 879 of these students remain active in the programme with 289 remaining students, 24.7%, classified as inactive students. The yearly retention rate and progression rates are reported as 75% and 80%, respectively. These rates are comparable with those of similar institutions locally and regionally; however, the Panel views the graduation rate of the programme, only six graduates up until the Panel's visit in April 2014, to be relatively low even at this stage of the programme. The Panel notes that a relatively high percentage of admitted students are currently classified as inactive 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 recommends that the Department revise the associated policies and procedures, accordingly, to help address this issue and improve the efficiency of the BSIS programme and its academic standards.

4.10   There is a three credit work-based course offered in the final year of the curriculum that allows students to select a company from 36 companies involved in the work-based scheme for placement to learn practical skills. AMAIUB has a work-based policy and procedures in place, as well as a Practicum Handbook which detail the procedures for the implementation and assessment of work-based learning. The Panel reviewed a number of work-based projects on site and interviewed the course coordinator and faculty members. From these interviews, the Panel noted that this course is appropriately managed and is well run. The Panel also discussed the work-

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based learning course with a sample of current BSIS students and two graduates of the BSIS programme. The Panel noted that students and graduates find this course to be useful for learning practical skills and on the job training. The Panel appreciates that the work-based course is effectively managed and assessed.

4.11   The programme implements university-wide Research Guidelines and procedures regarding the supervision of thesis, which also includes procedures concerning the role and responsibilities of a thesis supervisor. According to these guidelines, a supervisor is assigned to a student or to a group of students to guide a thesis progress, to provide relevant academic advice, and to monitor students' progress to ensure completion of the thesis on time. An anti-plagiarism software tool is implemented to test the authenticity of the submitted work and this feeds into an academic decision on the detection of plagiarism. Evidence of the use of the anti-plagiarism software tool was provided to the Panel. The Panel discussed thesis supervision arrangements with the faculty members who confirmed that they are guided by the university guidelines. The Panel noted that faculty members are aware of the role and responsibilities of a thesis supervisor as stated in the SER. Furthermore, the Panel learned that students have been given the option of either an individual thesis or a group thesis, the latter normally consisted of four students working as a team on a thesis topic. The Panel explored the effectiveness of supervision of theses with two graduates of the BSIS programme who have completed their theses, one under individual and the other under a group supervisory arrangement. The Panel noted that both graduates were satisfied with the supervisory arrangements regarding their theses work. However, this observation is based on the experience of only two graduates who were present in the meeting.

4.12   The BSIS programme has a Programme Industry Advisory Panel (PIAP) composed of three members with appropriate professional and industrial backgrounds who meet twice per year to provide advice on all key issues relating to the programme. In its interviews with PIAP members, the Panel learned that they have been actively providing advice on a number of key issues including the suggestion to increase the number of credits of the work-based course from three to six and the need to enhance and improve the faculty members' research output to support BSIS revised curriculum. However, the Panel was also informed that the institution does not provide the PIAP members with detailed information related to the programme's students such as the of progression and retention of student ratios and statistics. The Panel recommends that the Department present the PIAP with vital statistics to assist them in making informed decisions leading to the improvement of the programme.

4.13   AMAIUB has developed an alumni and an employer survey to assess the graduates' and employers' satisfaction with the standards of the graduate profile. The Panel

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notes that as AMAIUB follows a policy of seeking the input from employers regarding its graduates three years after graduation, the Panel was unable to obtain any feedback from employers about the calibre of the graduates of the programme. The Panel was provided with a sample PILO survey by Training Supervisors which show general satisfaction with the BSIS students. However, the Panel notes that there is a need for further evidence based on a large sample survey of graduates and employers in order to arrive at an informed opinion on this issues.

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

- Internal moderation policies and procedures are appropriate and are consistently implemented to ensure internal reliability of students' assessment results.
- The work-based course is effectively managed and assessed.

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

- re-define the graduate attributes and implement appropriate mechanisms to ensure that they are reliably assessed
- conduct formal benchmarking procedures with appropriate and relevant national, regional and international programmes in International Studies
- implement appropriate mechanism to ensure the consistent implementation of assessment policies and procedures
- ensures the adherence of all faculty members to the CILO Assessment Plan in practice so that category C of the CILOs, critical thinking component of CILOS, is effectively assessed in practice
- provide external examiners with a representative sample of students' assessed work in order for them to assess the consistency and fairness of the internal assessment procedures
- review and revise its approach to the setting of assessments to ensure that the assessments in practice are of the appropriate level to meet international standards
- revise the PILO evaluation tools to ensure their alignment with the PILOs in the revised curriculum
- determine and adopt a precise definition of an inactive student, and revise the associated policies and procedures in order to enhance the efficiency and academic standards of the BSIS programme
- present the PIAP with vital statistics to assist them in making informed decisions leading to the improvement of the BSIS programme.

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4.16   **Judgement**

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **does not satisfy** the Indicator on **Academic Standards of the Graduates.**

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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. In addition, the Panel has concerns regarding the implementation of the selection criteria for the external examining Panel for some courses. 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 BSIS programme; they are not fully briefed on the AMAUB's strategic plan and its implications for the BSIS 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

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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 BSIS 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 (CQI). 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 the report 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 the 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 from interviews that there is little awareness of quality assurance 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

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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 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 appreciates that these procedures are 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 & 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 an individual course level, course coordinators prepare review reports on their respective courses and submit them to the Head of Department who, in turn, presents 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. The Panel acknowledges that there are appropriate arrangements for the internal and external review of the programme. However, upon reviewing the provided Curriculum Review Report and External Examiners Reports, the Panel noted that the

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outcomes of external reviews are mainly reflected in changes made to the curriculum. Accordingly, 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 BSIS 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 appreciates that 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 IFDP 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

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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 the Department to conduct more targeted market studies in order to gauge the latest trends in the field of International Studies and ensure the 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 BSIS 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 no confidence in the Bachelor of Science in International Studies of the College of Administrative and Financial Sciences offered by AMA International University - Bahrain.

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