



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
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Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programme Follow-Up Visit Report

**Master of Business Administration
College of Administrative and Financial Sciences
AMA International University - Bahrain
Kingdom of Bahrain**

First Follow-up Visit Date: 28-29 November 2016

Review Date: 7-9 April 2014

HC030-C2-F005

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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 provides an account of the follow-up process and findings of the follow-up panel (the Panel), whereby the Master of Business administration (MBA), at AMA International University - Bahrain (AMAIUB) in the Kingdom of Bahrain was revisited on 28-29 November 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 against the recommendations highlighted in the review report (in accordance with the four BQA Indicators) of AMAIUB's MBA since the programme was reviewed on 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 MBA programme at AMAIUB, and for higher education provision within the Kingdom of Bahrain, as a whole.

B. Background

The review of the MBA programme, at AMAIUB in the Kingdom of Bahrain was conducted by the DHR of the BQA on 7-9 April 2014.

The overall judgement of the review panel for the MBA programme, of AMAIUB was that of '**No 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 MBA programme for each Indicator was as follows:

Indicator 1: The learning programme; **'not satisfied'**

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

Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates; **'not 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 on 7-9 April 2014. For each recommendation given under the four Indicators, the Panel judged 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 Master of Business Administration

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme is one of the programmes approved by the Ministry of Education when AMAIUB was first licenced in 2002. However, the Higher Education Council (HEC) suspended the enrolment into the programme during the period from the academic year 2010-2011 until 2014-2015. In the second trimester of the academic year 2015-2016, the institution was allowed to re-enrol students into the programme. The programme aims at providing a learning experience that 'incorporates functional areas such as Human Resources Management, Entrepreneurship, Islamic Finance, and Project Management to become effective managers and leaders of business organizations in a globally competitive and complex business environment.' As stated in the progress report, there are two full-time members dedicated to the programme and four shared academic staff within the institution contributing to the delivery of some courses and since 2005, a total of 685 students have graduated from the programme.

1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the MBA 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: *Revise the PEOs to be more specific and practical, and to reflect both knowledge and skills in practicing management professionally.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The College of Administrative and Financial Sciences at AMAIUB carried out a comprehensive review of the MBA programme, which included a formal benchmarking exercise. As a result of this review, a revised MBA programme with new Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs) and a revised programme specification were put in place. The new PEOs indicate that graduates are expected to: 'Practice effectively as management professionals by demonstrating competency in Accounting, Finance, Marketing and Management, and applying critical thinking, analysis and problem-solving skills to develop, implement, and evaluate solutions in complex business problems requiring interdisciplinary and global perspectives' and 'Promote high ethical standards and professionalism by evaluating the moral, social, and environmental implications of managerial decisions and understanding the relationship between business organizations and other societal institutions'.

The Panel acknowledges that the new PEOs are aligned to the AMAIUB's mission statement. Furthermore, it is evident from the revised PEOs that there is an emphasis and focus on teaching of management practice, skills and competency, as well as, ethical professional practice. During interview sessions, the Panel noted that the MBA team has been actively involved in the revision of the PEOs and some team members have taken part in revising the programme specification. It was also noted that the MBA team is keen to emphasise that the revised programme focuses on teaching the theory and practice of management, and on the promotion of high ethical professional standards. The Panel acknowledges that the revised PEOs are consistent with those of comparable international MBA programmes PEOs, and is satisfied with the college's progress in addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 1.2: *Revise the curriculum to ensure that it meets the international academic standards of an MBA Programme.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

To address this recommendation, the College has carried out a comprehensive programme review comprising of formal and informal benchmarking exercises against local, regional and international universities, in addition to a series of consultations on the programme specification with key stakeholders, which included faculty members, external examiners, and the Programme Industry Advisory Panel (PIAP). There are also references to scoping labour market in this programme revision exercise. Evidence provided indicates that the revision was completed in September 2015, resulting in a revised MBA programme. The revised programme has 42 credits of which 30 credits are allocated to the first year and 12 credits to the second-year courses. Within this framework, 21 credits in the first year are allocated to a range of management core courses, which includes operation, strategic, and financial management; and nine credits to three electives from a range of topics, which includes Islamic banking, project management, human resource management and entrepreneurial management. Furthermore, in the second year, students are asked to enrol in two cognate courses of three credits each, chosen from, business law, total quality management, organisation change and development, corporate governance and ethics, management information system, and managerial economics. In addition, the Panel was informed during interviews with faculty members that year-2 students enrol in a capstone course in the form of a business management thesis of six credits of 'a publishable standard'.

The Panel studied the revised programme specification and the programme syllabi and notes two key issues arising from the structure and content of the revised programme and the associated PEOs. Firstly, the curriculum lacks a core course that directly relates to the second PEO on the ethical issues and principles in business and management. Secondly, the requirement that MBA thesis should be of a 'publishable standard', is not consistent with the national /international standard that is normally expected of an MBA thesis. During the follow-up visit, the Panel discussed these issues with the MBA team. The Panel was informed that ethical issues in business and management are currently taught as part of the various management courses in the curriculum. Furthermore, the Panel noted that there is a cognate course which directly covers some of the relevant material. The Panel, however, learnt that within the current structure, it would be possible for a student to avoid this cognate course in practice, by opting to do other cognate courses instead, which may cause students to graduates without fully covering all the ethical issues.

The Panel is of the opinion that there is a need for an up-to-date and a free-standing core course on ethical challenges and professional practice in business and management within the revised curriculum, in order to ensure a direct route to the second PEO and its assessment. Regarding the second issue, it was pointed out to the Panel that this requirement is in place in order to ensure a high quality for the MBA thesis and to distinguish AMAIUB 's MBA from other regional MBA programmes. The Panel is, however, of the view that this requirement is not consistent with the national/international standard normally expected of an MBA thesis and it should be removed. The Panel is of the opinion that the focus of an MBA thesis should be on finding practical solutions to the strategic and operational challenges facing professional managers in public and private sectors, instead of focusing mainly on satisfying the requirements of an academic publication. In assessing the college's progress against this recommendation, the Panel is of the view that further adjustments and modifications to the revised curriculum are needed to fully address this recommendation.

Recommendation 1.3: *Enhance the balance of theory/knowledge and skills/practice in teaching.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The Panel notes that the College has updated the MBA teaching and learning policy to improve the balance between theory and practice within the framework of the revised curriculum *via* introduction of a guest speaker programme and a company visitation, covering only the MBA core courses. In addition, an inspection of a sample of MBA course specifications revealed that, there is a regular use of practical case studies in teaching and learning activities within the framework of the revised curriculum. During interviews, the MBA team confirmed that they strive to ensure a good balance between theory and practice in teaching and learning activities. The Panel also noted that the revised teaching and learning policy has been a useful mechanism in helping them to achieve this objective in the core courses. The Panel interviewed a small number of the current MBA students who confirmed that they are required to use practical case studies in classroom discussions. The Panel found these discussions to be useful and noted that there have been some improvements in the balance between theory and practice *via* the implementation of the revised teaching and learning policy in some courses. However, the Panel is of the view that these new arrangements should be extended to cover all MBA courses including electives and cognates as part of the revised curriculum framework. Furthermore, the Panel is of the opinion that an MBA thesis should be required to fully maintain a good balance between theory and practice, as one of the key requirements of an MBA programme. The Panel acknowledges the progress achieved by the College and recommends that

the College further enhance the practical components of the programme as discussed above.

Recommendation 1.4: *Ensure the integration of current research findings into teaching and provide greater exposure to best practice in the various types of businesses in Bahrain and the region.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report states that the College has put in place a number of initiatives to ensure a greater exposure of students to good practices and current research in business and management. One of the key initiatives amongst these is introducing a guest-speaker programme. In addition, there is a tendency to allocate MBA courses to research-active and published faculty members. During interview sessions, the Panel learnt that research-active faculty members are encouraged to make use of their own publications in teaching and learning activities. Furthermore, the Panel noted that the MBA team is aware of the key role of the exposure to current research and best practice in enhancing students' learning experience. The Panel found these initiatives to be useful mechanisms for addressing this recommendation, particularly, if they can be enhanced over time. However, an inspection of a sample of course specifications and a small number of students assessed work by the Panel revealed that, despite these initiatives, the current research findings in business and management has only a small part in current teaching and learning activities within the MBA programme. The Panel is of the opinion that there is a need for a more direct mechanism that is formally imbedded within the revised MBA curriculum, to ensure an effective integration of current research findings into the teaching and learning activities of the MBA programme. Hence, the Panel acknowledges the college's efforts in this regard and recommends that it further enhance learners' exposure to best practices in the various types of businesses in Bahrain and the region, as well as current research findings.

Recommendation 1.5: *Review the programme's ILOs to define them more accurately and ensure that they meet the local, regional and international requirements.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The MBA's Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) have been reformulated following consultations with faculty members and a number of benchmarking exercises against other MBA programmes offered by local, regional and international higher education institutions. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the revised PILOs are based on Bloom's Taxonomy and are grouped into four categories namely; A: knowledge & understanding, B: Subject-specific skills, C: Critical thinking skills and D: General and transferable skills as indicated by the evidence provided. The Panel noted that the revised PILOs are suitable for the type

and level of the programme and consistent with the international standards normally expected of an MBA programme. During interviews, the MBA team members confirmed that they have been actively involved in reformulating PILOs and they are fully aware of the teaching and learning requirements of the revised PILOs. The Panel studied the revised PILOs stated in the programme specification and notes that these are clearly written, measurable and suitable for the type and level of the programme. The Panel is satisfied with the progress achieved in addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 1.6: *Reformulate the mapping from Programme level outcomes to course level outcomes, to be more accurate, and to reduce the number of CILOs to make a mapping to the PILOs more manageable.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The progress report states that the revised MBA curriculum comprises courses that are carefully selected to provide 'pathways for the achievement of the programme intended learning outcomes.' This is indicated by mapping the courses with the PILOs. Moreover, the programme courses have clearly stated Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) that are grouped in the same four domains as the PILOs. During interviews, the Panel learnt that the MBA team has carried out the mapping of the CILOs to PILOs. The Panel inspected a sample of MBA course specifications and noted that a careful mapping of CILOs to PILOs is carried out for each of the courses in this sample. The Panel also noted that the number of CILOs has been reduced from 12 to eight in this mapping exercise. The Panel was informed that the reduction in the number of CILOs in each course is for these to be more selective in identifying the PILOs they are mapped to. The Panel notes that this mapping exercise has been carried out carefully and in accordance with the standards normally required of an MBA programme. Hence, the Panel is satisfied with the college's progress.

Recommendation 1.7: *Review the alignment of documented teaching methods to CILOs to ensure that they adequately support the attainment of the course ILOs.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

AMAIUB has updated the MBA's teaching and learning policy to improve the alignment of teaching methods to the revised CILOs and to enhance the balance between theory and practice within the framework of the revised curriculum. The Panel also noted that the key result of this revision and alignment exercise has been the introduction of a guest speaker programme and a company visitation, for the MBA programme. In addition, an inspection of the provided sample of MBA course specifications revealed that there is a clear alignment of teaching methods to the CILOs within this sample of course specifications. The Panel discussed the alignment of teaching and learning methods with the MBA team interviewed during the follow-up

visit and confirmed that faculty members have been actively involved in this exercise. Furthermore, the Panel noted that the revised teaching and learning policy is received well by the interviewed students. They met one of the external examiners through teleconference arrangement and studied the programme and course external examiners' reports, which indicated the external examiners' satisfaction with the teaching methods and their alignment with CILOs in the courses they examined. Hence, the Panel is satisfied with the way this recommendation is addressed.

Recommendation 1.8: *Conduct a thorough review of the assessment policies and procedures to take into account the needs and standards of the MBA Programme.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

In response to this recommendation, the College introduced a new approach to teaching and learning and assessment policy, specifically designed for the MBA programme. The new policy document provides a detailed step-by-step guidance for the conduct of summative examinations and a clear explanation on the role of the 'specialisation coordinators', course instructors, and external examiners in the assessment process. The Panel also noted that the MBA programme has initiated an experiential learning and assessment approach related to the new guest speakers and the company visitations programmes, where students are required to write a critical response/ reflective paper after attending a guest lecture or visiting a company. This paper is then formatively assessed and relevant feedback is provided by the instructor. The Panel inspected the provided sample of students assessed work and confirmed that this approach is in practice. During interviews with a small sample of current MBA students, they expressed their enjoyment of the experiential approach to teaching and learning and assessment. The Panel also carried out a number of interviews with the MBA team and discussed the new teaching and learning, and assessment policy. It was evident from the discussions that teaching staff are aware of the new approaches to assessment of MBA students and have implemented the new assessment policy. The Panel also found that the external examiners' reports on current assessment policy and procedures, by and large, to be positive and in support of these procedures. In assessing the college's progress against this recommendation, the Panel is satisfied that the College has fully addressed this recommendation.

Recommendation 1.9: *Review the assessment policies to enhance synergy between formative and summative functions, and improve the mechanisms for providing the students with prompt feedback on their progress.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The progress report states that the MBA assessment policies have been reviewed to improve the alignment of assessment with CILOs and enhance the synergy between

the formative and summative assessment tools, which was confirmed through evidence provided. Regarding the second objective, the College conducted an in-service training on effective test construction and on synergy between formative and summative assessments. The Panel also noted that the college is currently offering this training course to the faculty. During interview sessions, the MBA team members confirmed that they have been actively involved in setting formative assessments for the MBA students, in the form of reflective reports on guest-speaker lectures, as well as, on various case studies to improve students' engagement with the courses and enhance their performance in the summative assessments. The Panel also interviewed a sample of current MBA students, who confirmed the use of formative assessments and relevant feedback in teaching and learning activities on a regular basis. Hence, the Panel is satisfied that the College has put in place relevant mechanisms to ensure synergy between formative and summative assessments.

2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the MBA 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 based on adequate academic standards, for the purpose of quality and competitiveness locally, regionally, and internationally.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The progress report states that AMAIUB has carried out a comparative benchmarking exercise against local, regional, and international universities, and revised the MBA admission policy utilising the outcomes of the benchmarking activities. The revised MBA admission stipulates that applicants to the MBA programme must have a bachelor degree with a minimum Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 2.75, a minimum score of 80 in Oxford Online Placement test and at least two years' work experience, in addition to passing an interview conducted by a committee. The Panel noted that the revised admission requirements are more rigorous compared with those used earlier. During interviews, the admission team confirmed the new admission requirements and pointed out to the Panel that they are currently in practice. The Panel also discussed the revised admission policy with the MBA senior management team, and noted that they are aware of the changes in admission policy and its key requirements. In assessing the college's progress against this recommendation, the Panel is of the opinion that the university has put in place relevant admission requirements to address it.

Recommendation 2.2: *Implement effective mechanisms to ensure that the admitted students are appropriate for the MBA Programme.*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

In response to this recommendation, the Panel noted that the College has put in place a committee to interview all potential MBA applicants and ensure that the admitted applicants are appropriate for the MBA programme and meet its needs. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that all applicants starting from the third trimester of the academic year 2015-2016 have been interviewed to ensure that they fit the requirements of the revised MBA programme admission. The Panel is of the view that this is a good practice and should be applied rigorously as one of the key requirements of the MBA's programme admission. However, the Panel recommends

that, in addition to this requirement, the College should also ensure, in all cases that admitted students have at least two years of relevant work experience, as required by the revised admission policy. Moreover, to address this recommendation properly, the Panel recommends that the College should analyse students' performance against admission requirements to assess the effectiveness of its admission requirements and mechanisms.

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 revised the recruitment procedures in 2015 through the development of a new recruitment framework, to ensure that only recruits from *bona fide* academic institutions are hired. In further exploring this framework, the Panel learned that the Human Resource (HR) Department undertakes due diligence to scrutinize the submitted academic applicants' documents 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 to ensure that only recruits from *bona fide* academic institutions are hired. In addition, the Panel was informed that the institution complies with the HEC regulations with regards to the recruitment of new faculty members. From examining the provided credentials of existing faculty and from follow-up visit interviews, the Panel acknowledges that the new recruitment framework provides the mechanisms needed to ensure that academic appointees hold degrees from bona fide institutions.

Recommendation 2.4: *Ensure that staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in the discipline which they teach.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report states that the College has 'aligned the courses to faculty qualifications and specialization' since the last review in April 2014. The Panel examined the MBA Course Faculty Matrix, MBA faculty profile, timetable and workload of teaching staff, and the sample of MBA team's CVs made available during the follow-up visit. The Panel noted that, overall, the MBA teaching staff are appropriately qualified and their teaching duties match their academic expertise and experience. During interviews, the MBA team confirmed that attempts have been made by the College to ensure that their weekly teaching duties match their academic expertise and experience. The Panel, however, noted that there are only two full-time members amongst the MBA team who are fully dedicated to this programme. This might cause instability in the alignment of course assignment. Whilst the Panel acknowledges the college's efforts in ensuring that teaching staff are assigned with

courses that match their academic expertise and experiences, there is a need for more permanent staff who are dedicated to the MBA programme on a full-time basis, to ensure continuity and stability within the teaching staff.

Recommendation 2.5: *Recruit more qualified and higher rank faculty to contribute significantly to the MBA Programme.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

According to the progress report, there are two full-time faculty members dedicated to the programme and four shared faculty members within the institution contributing to the delivery of some courses. The progress report also states that at the time of the submission of the report there were four Associate Professors contributing to the delivery of the programme, which is aligned with the College Development Plan and its strategic objectives in this area. The Panel is concerned, however, that this increase in the number of Associate Professors has, by and large, taken place since January 2016, which is very recent. The Panel also noted that, despite the increase in the number of Associate Professors within the College, only two full-time faculty members are dedicated to this programme. Moreover, data provided indicates 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. The Panel recommends that the College should increase the number of full-time research-active faculty members at Associate/Professor level dedicated to the MBA programme, and ensure their retention, as this is a key requirement for the improvement and enhancement of all activities concerning curriculum design and teaching and learning of the MBA programme.

Recommendation 2.6: *Improve the policies and procedures of recruiting, appraising, promoting and retaining the faculty members with effective implementation in practice to guarantee quality in managing and teaching the Programme.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

A new policy titled 'Faculty Ranking and Promotion' 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's standing committees. In its interviews with the 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. During the follow-up visit, the Panel was informed that two faculty members have been recently promoted as per the new promotion policy. Moreover, AMAIUB revised the recruitment procedures in 2015 and developed a new recruitment framework to ensure that only recruits from *bona fide* academic institutions are hired. This is detailed under Recommendation 2.3. The Panel studied the evidence provided and noted the recruitment of new faculty members. However, the Panel is still concerned with the low retention rate of faculty members in the MBA programme. Data provided indicates 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. During interviews, the Panel learned that the senior management is working towards addressing this issue through offering a number of incentives. The Panel recommends that the College should analyse the causes of the low faculty retention rates and implement effective mechanisms to significantly improve this rate in the MBA programme.

Recommendation 2.7: *Enhance the library provision of textbooks, journals, e-journal and e-books for the subject matters taught in the MBA Programme.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The AMAIUB's library provides access to both physical and electronic collections. The Panel inspected the learning resources of the library on site and noted that the library holdings of printed journals and online resources are relevant and appropriate for an MBA programme. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the library holding of books is normally updated on an annual basis, and as a result, the library has subscribed to new journals specifically for the MBA programme, which include the Journal of Middle Eastern Finance and Management amongst others. Interviewed staff and students confirmed that online resources are available to them both on- and off-campus and indicated their satisfaction with the learning resources provided through the library. Touring the library, the Panel found dedicated study spaces available for students' use where they can search for references and work on their assignments. The Panel acknowledges the arrangements in place to maintain recent and relevant resources for the MBA programme students.

Recommendation 2.8: *Significantly improve the physical accommodation for academic staff.*

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 MBA 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 urges the College to significantly improve the offices of the staff.

Recommendation 2.9: *Regularly monitor the implementation of students at risk policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention mechanisms to ensure that effective academic support is provided to this group of students.*

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 needs students. During interview sessions, the implementation of the new policy was explored and the Panel learnt that academic advisors submit periodic reports on students at risk of academic failure, including recommendations on how to improve their performance. 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. Evidence of analysis reports that indicate some progress and provide recommendations on the way forward were provided to the Panel. The Panel acknowledges that the College has improved the implementation and monitoring of at-risk students' 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 MBA 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: Review the graduate attributes to ensure that they are specific, applicable, express what the students would have accomplished at the time of their graduation.

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The College defines the attributes of the MBA programme graduates in terms of two clearly defined PEOs that were selected following a number of benchmarking exercises, labour markets scoping reports, and consultations with the programme's key stakeholders. The chosen PEOs were then mapped to the PILOs and CILOs. Interviewed faculty members were aware of the PEOs and the linkages between the PEOs, PILOs and CILOs. The Panel notes that whilst the graduate attributes at the time of graduation are imbedded in the PILOs, the PEOs state what is expected from the graduates one-to-three years after graduation. Nonetheless, the Panel noted that the PEO based 'attributes' are not sufficiently specific, and are not consistent with the standard practice in this area, where MBA graduate attributes are specifically identified and expressed. Hence, the Panel notes the efforts exerted to address the recommendation and recommends that the College should review the MBA graduate attributes to clearly identify and specifically express what programme graduates are expected to achieve.

Recommendation 3.2: Conduct formal and regular benchmarking exercises to evaluate the programme's academic standards against similar local, regional and international Programmes.

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report states that both formal and informal benchmarking were considered when reviewing the programme. From evidence provided, the Panel notes that the formal benchmarking exercise carried out covers a range of key aspects of the MBA programme against the American University of Sharjah's MBA programme. The Panel also noted that the benchmarking reports show similarities in many areas of the two MBA programmes. The Panel is however, concerned that this formal benchmarking exercise appears to have been carried out merely to show the

similarities of the two MBA programmes, rather than, as a quality enhancement exercise to improve the academic standards of the revised MBA programme. During interviews, the Panel learnt that the MBA team members are aware of the key results of this formal benchmarking exercise and its main objectives. However, the Panel is of the opinion that formal benchmarking exercises should be regularly carried out and used to raise academic standards in all key aspects of the revised programme, including the academic standards of the students' work and achievement, in order to establish a clear identity for AMAIUB's MBA programme and distinguish it from other MBA programmes. Hence, the Panel acknowledges that some progress have been made in this area. However, more formal and regular benchmarking exercises against carefully chosen MBA programmes offered internationally, regionally and locally are needed to enhance academic standards and to fully address this recommendation.

Recommendation 3.3: Implement effective mechanisms to ensure the consistent implementation of the programme's assessment policies and procedures.

Judgement: Fully Addressed

The progress report states that to address this recommendation, the institution has revised the assessment policy and procedures and put in place an internal moderation mechanism that involves a pre- and post-assessment moderation of the examination questions and manuscripts. In addition, there is an external moderation for reviewing the examination questions and checking the fairness of marking and consistency of internal moderation implementations. During interview sessions, the MBA team confirmed the implementation of the revised internal and external moderations mechanisms in recent assessments. The Panel checked the provided small sample of graded examination scripts on site and found that they have been internally moderated consistently and in accordance with the revised procedures. Moreover, from evidence provided and interview sessions, the Panel confirmed that external moderators are aware of the revised moderation policies and have been actively engaged in external moderation of the examination questions and scripts and that the revised assessment mechanisms are appropriate and have so far been effective in assessing the targeted CILOs. Hence, the Panel acknowledges that appropriate internal and external moderation procedures are put in place to ensure consistent implementation of the assessment policies and procedures.

Recommendation 3.4: *Improve the current mechanisms for the alignment of assessment with course learning outcomes and ensure that they are implemented in practice.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

In addressing this recommendation, the College has reviewed and revised its approach of setting assessments to ensure that assessment tools are properly aligned with the CILOs. Course specifications include a course assessment plan and a table indicating the assessment tools used to evaluate the achievement of each CILO. Assessment tools are reviewed internally by the 'specialisation coordinators' to ensure that sufficient attention and coverage are given in each examination to the assessment of the specified CILOs. In addition, there is a three-level safeguard put in place, which involves verification of each assessment by the Head of Department, Associate Dean and Dean, to ensure alignment of the assessment to the specified CILOs. During interview sessions, the Panel discussed the revised assessment policy with the MBA team members, among whom were 'specialisation coordinators' and was informed that faculty members are actively involved in setting and internally moderating the summative assessments. The Panel also noted that faculty members are aware of the importance of effectively assessing category C (Critical thinking) of the CILOs in examinations. The Panel reviewed the small sample of students assessed work, which was provided during the follow-up visit and learned that, overall, there is a slight improvement in students' responses to the critical thinking components of CILOs. However, the Panel also noted that students' answers corresponding to this category of CILOs are, by and large, in need of more depth and analysis. The Panel notes that the duration of the summative examination is short, which does not allow for in depth critical thinking questions. This was confirmed by interviewed students. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should revise the duration of the summative examinations to ensure a more effective assessment of CILOs.

Recommendation 3.5: *Provide larger samples of portfolios of student work to external examiners so that they can more effectively compare the standards of this Programme to other Programmes.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The progress report states that a new external examiner has been recently appointed and, as a result, she has only moderated the final examination of the second trimester 2015-2016. During interview sessions, the Panel noted that the MBA team members are aware of the revised guidelines for the selection of a representative sample. Moreover, the reports of the other two external examiners provided to the Panel confirmed that representative samples of the students assessed work have been

provided by the faculty for external moderation, which was confirmed during interview sessions. In assessing the college's progress against this recommendation, the Panel is satisfied that the current practice ensures that the sample of students' work provided to external moderators is a representative sample that enables external examiners to effectively comment on the assessment and the level of the students' assessed work.

Recommendation 3.6: *Revise the college's approach to the setting of assessments to ensure that the assessments in practice are at the appropriate level to meet international standards for MBA Programmes.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

AMAIUB has reviewed and revised its approach to setting assessments to ensure that assessments' questions are at an appropriate international standard for an MBA degree. In doing so, the Panel noted that each summative assessment tool should be moderated internally and externally to ensure the appropriateness of assessment in terms of type of question, content, level, and the consistency of marking. Furthermore, an MBA examination committee has been formed to ensure more rigor and focus in the assessment arrangements. During interview sessions, the Panel learnt that the MBA team members have been actively involved in setting summative and formative assessments and some have also taken part in internal moderation of assessments as 'specialisation coordinators'. The Panel reviewed the external examiner reports provided and notes that the report comments on the appropriateness of examination questions to course content, level and CILOs, in addition to their comparability with international standards and fairness of grading. This latter observation was confirmed upon inspection of the small sample of students' work provided to the Panel during the follow-up visit. Hence, the Panel is satisfied with the college's progress against this recommendation.

Recommendation 3.7: *Expose students to a wide range of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research and encourage the use of mixed method research design to more effectively address research problems.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The Panel noted that students are exposed to qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research approaches to business and management in Research Methods course (CMBA721), which is a core course in the MBA programme. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that this course supports students' theses, which would normally require the application of one or more of these approaches in the Conduct of Business and Management Research course (MBAT800). Interviewed staff members confirmed that students are required to use various approaches to research

in business and management, requiring qualitative and quantitative methods, particularly, within the framework of the Research Methods course and in preparation of the MBA thesis. Hence, The Panel is satisfied with the progress achieved in addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 3.8: *Apply competence-based assessment in practice and stop the practice of setting performance standards for pass rates, to ensure the academic standards of the Programme.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report states that AMAIUB has revised the MBA thesis evaluation's rubric to ensure competency-based criteria for the evaluation and assessment of the thesis. The Panel also noted from the inspection of the provided sample of the course specifications that there is a greater emphasis on competency-based criteria in the assessment of CILOs. The Panel inspected the provided small sample of MBA students' assessed work and found that there is a slight improvement towards competency-based criteria of assessment. The Panel noted that this improvement is supported by a stronger synergy between formative and summative assessments. This was also confirmed through interviews conducted with the faculty, external examiner and through scrutinising the provided external examiner's report. The Panel acknowledges the college's progress against this recommendation and recommends that further work in this area is needed to fully address this recommendation, to enhance academic standards of the MBA programme.

Recommendation 3.9: *Develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures to effectively manage 'inactive students'.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

According to the revised policy on leave of absence, an MBA student becomes 'inactive' when they do not enrol for three consecutive trimesters or one year. Within this framework, the Panel noted an MBA student is expected to complete the programme within six years from the date of first registration in the programme. Out of 50 currently enrolled MBA students, six (12%) are not enrolled, and are classified as 'inactive' for various personal reasons, as stated in the progress report. During interview sessions, the Panel noted that the MBA faculty members are aware of the revised policy concerning inactive students. The Panel also noted that they are aware of potential inefficiencies in the running of the MBA programme, in the event of a significant rise in the number of inactive students. However, the Panel was not informed how this risk is formally identified and mitigated. The Panel notes that the College has made some progress towards clarifying the meaning of an 'inactive' student and formalising the procedures to be used for granting a leave of absence.

However, the Panel is of the view that there is a need for setting a mitigation plan that works on minimising the number of 'inactive' students below a maximum upper limit set by the College for each future MBA cohort, in order to avoid potential problems and inefficiencies in the programme, arising from a large number of inactive students.

Recommendation 3.10: *Require supervisors to give more guidance to students, including providing them with more detailed written feedback and encourage them to publish papers jointly with their students.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

AMAIUB has a revised Research Guidelines document, and Policy of Thesis Supervision, where the latter document stipulates detailed information on supervisor's selection, process of supervision, role and responsibility of the supervisor and the student, and supervision guidance and provision of written feedback. In addition, the document explains how supervisory meeting and MBA supervision is conducted and provides a sample copy of research progress monitoring report. The Panel found these guidelines to be appropriate and useful in the supervision of an MBA thesis in practice. During meetings with the MBA team, the Panel noted that they are aware of revised policies, their implications for the supervision of an MBA thesis, and the importance of regular supervisory meetings and provision of written feedback to students. Hence, the Panel is satisfied with the progress achieved in addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 3.11: *Review the Research Guidelines to improve the supervision mechanisms and ensure that the quality of the submitted theses and their assessment meet international standards.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The Panel studied the revised MBA Research Guidelines and the College Resolution on the Conduct of MBA Defence and noted that these revised documents contain detailed and relevant information on the supervision, oral presentation, and oral defence of an MBA thesis. During interview sessions, the Panel noted that the MBA team is aware of these revised arrangements. However, the Panel learnt that MBA external examiners are not currently involved, at the early stage of a thesis preparation, when a student seeks approval of topic for the thesis work. Furthermore, the Panel noted that, within the current framework, an MBA thesis topic only requires to be approved internally. The Panel is of the view that the approval of a topic for the MBA thesis should also be subjected to an external scrutiny to ensure that the quality of the proposal meets international standards. Hence, the Panel acknowledges the college's progress against this recommendation, and recommends that more work in this area

is needed to ensure enhancement in quality and assessment of the submitted MBA theses.

Recommendation 3.12: *Develop and implement effective mechanisms to actively track the destination and performance of graduate cohorts more regularly and in a manner, that allows a comparison to graduates of other Programmes.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

AMAIUB has put in place various mechanisms including alumni and employers' surveys that were revised in 2014, and are administrated periodically to stakeholders. The progress report states that the tracking of the MBA graduates and their mobility pattern is expected to be completed in 5-years period, after which a comprehensive report will be developed. There is also a mechanism in place for collecting and updating information on the current cohort of MBA students. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the College intends to use the results of these surveys to enhance MBA students' satisfaction with the programme, and also as inputs for updating MBA curriculum. The Panel acknowledges the college's efforts in addressing this recommendation and urges the College to proceed with its plan and ensure its completion within the stated five-years' timeframe.

4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance

This section evaluates the extent to which the MBA 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 confirmed that the revision of the Handbook was in alignment with the institutional procedures for the review and approval of 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 graduate 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 uniformity 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: *Fully Addressed*

To ensure adherence to criteria set by AMAIUB, the College enhanced the current policies and procedures awareness mechanisms, as detailed in Recommendation 4.3. From different interviews, the Panel noted that improvements in the mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of the quality assurance system have also contributed to ensuring adherence to institutional policies criteria. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel provided several examples of how the enhanced dissemination and monitoring of policies have led to the effective implementation of institutional policies and procedures. This was confirmed by provided evidence on adherence to the conduct of formal benchmarking, and the implementation of the internal and external moderation policy. The Panel acknowledges that the College has

implemented appropriate mechanisms to ensure adherence to criteria set in institution's policies and procedures.

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 'Public Information and Dissemination Policy'. During different interviews, 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* faculty e-mail, AMAIUB website, faculty notice boards as well as in departmental council 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 Committee for Quality Improvement (CQI) 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 year 2014-2015 annual satisfaction survey. This was confirmed during interviews with faculty members and students. The Panel appreciates that institutional policies are effectively communicated *via* various channels to all stakeholders.

Recommendation 4.4: *Appoint a highly qualified full-professor who can exercise academic leadership and who adopts a more critical stance towards the application of quality assurance procedures to the MBA Programme, to ensure that the standards of the MBA are raised and a quality Programme offered.*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

The progress report states that the MBA programme was re-opened to students' enrolment in the academic year 2015-2016 and as a result of this two full-time Associate Professors were employed. The Panel studied the CVs of the newly employed staff and noted their experience in the management and delivery of the MBA field. However, the two faculty members are the only full-time faculty members dedicated to this programme, as stated in the progress report. Moreover, these faculty members joined the institution recently in 2016, and are heavily loaded with teaching responsibilities that spread over more than one programme. This does not provide them with the time needed to offer academic leadership and adopt a more critical

stance towards the application of quality assurance procedures to the MBA programme. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should address the recommendation and appoint a highly qualified full-professor, and provide him/her with the time needed to exercise academic leadership, to ensure that the standards of the MBA are raised and a quality programme is being offered.

Recommendation 4.5: *Implement appropriate mechanisms for the development of sustainable leadership in the programme.*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

The progress report states that leadership development is a major focus in the institution's strategic planning processes. During interviews, the Panel learnt that a number of initiatives have been implemented to enhance faculty members' contribution to the leadership of the MBA 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. A copy of Peer Mentoring Report was provided to the Panel. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel also indicated that they participate in various committees, which enables them to contribute to decision-making beyond the operational levels. In exploring the issue of succession planning with senior management, the Panel learnt that the 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 plan to ensure the development of future leaders. Moreover, with the current concerns the Panel has with the leadership of the programme, this recommendation is yet to be addressed.

Recommendation 4.6: *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 is applied to all programmes across the institution. AMAIUB has developed and implemented a number of mechanisms to enhance the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the QMS. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office (QAAO) has recently reviewed all rubrics used in evaluating assessments so that they better reflect the quality of the assessed students work. Moreover, the Likert scale used in evaluating PILOs through direct assessment was revised to include new descriptions of each scale number. Evidence of implementation of these changes was provided to the Panel. The effective implementation of the current QA mechanisms, including policies and procedures, is monitored by the Committee for Quality Improvement (CQI) at 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 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 4.7: *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 4.8: *Ensure the addition of a timeline to the Self-Evaluation Survey to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of 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 faculty and committee members, the Panel was informed that the revised templates enabled the effective implementation of planned initiatives in alignment with indicated timelines and performance indicators. The Panel also learned 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 the 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 the addition of timelines to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of corrective actions arising from the annual internal programme evaluation.

Recommendation 4.9: *Ensure the appointment of appropriate external examiners for the review of the Programme.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

To address this recommendation, the College has replaced one of the programme examiners with a new one. As the appointment of the external examiner was only recent, she has only moderated one final examination of the second trimester 2015-2016. The other two external examiners have commented on the programme as a whole and concluded that the programme requirements are suitable for the MBA award. Nonetheless, the Panel is concerned that the programme has only few external examiners which limits the feedback received. The progress report states that the programme also benefits from feedback received from the PIAP and students. However, these do not fulfil the same function of external examiners. Hence, whilst the Panel acknowledges the college's efforts in addressing this recommendation, the Panel recommends that the College should increase the number of external examiners to receive a wider range of feedback.

Recommendation 4.10: *Improve the current mechanisms for the internal and external review of the Programme.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The current MBA curriculum was only implemented in the academic year 2015-2016. The progress report states that this programme has been developed based on external and internal stakeholders' feedback. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that as a result of consultation meetings conducted with employers and external stakeholders, the curriculum was enriched *via* extracurricular activities, such as seminars and company visitations. Moreover, the internal and external reviews were utilised to address some of the weaknesses in relation to the management of the programme, such as developing the policy on Leave of Absence. Nonetheless, the Panel was not provided with sufficient evidence on how these reviews have supported the improvement of other aspects of the programme, such as leadership, teaching and learning, and assessment. The Panel acknowledges the progress the College achieved in addressing this recommendation and recommends that the College should, as the programme delivery matures, further utilise its review findings to improve all aspects of the programme and its delivery.

Recommendation 4.11: *Re-design the stakeholders' surveys in terms of their question wording and the scales used, and to ensure that adequate samples of the target respondents are Surveyed.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

AMAIUB has revised its MBA survey manual that includes students' exit survey, employers survey and alumni survey to ensure that these include suitable questions and are effective in collecting the feedback needed to evaluate and improve the programme and its outcomes. During interview sessions, the Panel noted that the MBA team is aware of these surveys and what they intend to assess. The Panel studied the surveys and notes that these in general appear to be suitable for what they are intended for. Nonetheless, the progress report states that these surveys will not be administrated before January 2018. Hence, the Panel acknowledges the college's efforts and recommends that the College should assess the effectiveness of its survey tools, once these are fully deployed.

Recommendation 4.12: *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 learned 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 (DATALINE) includes the results of both student and alumni 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 4.13: *Improve the existing mechanisms for the staff professional development to ensure that all staff, including junior and administrative 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 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 faculty members, the Panel learnt that these initiatives are cascaded to individual faculty development plans. 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 development of 2015-2016 Faculty Development Plan and the Staff Training Plan. 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 is in need of further enhancement. Moreover, faculty members need to be provided with adequate opportunities to participate in international conferences, workshops and seminars. The Panel encourages the College to closely monitor the implementation of its staff professional plans to ensure that all staff are provided with sufficient and appropriate opportunities, as well as to inform future improvements in this regard.

Recommendation 4.14: *Conduct targeted market studies in order to gauge the latest trends and ensure that the MBA Programme meets market needs.*

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 programmes offered by the College. In its interview with senior management, the Panel learned that the scoping study covered 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 MBA programme. In addition, the Panel was informed that AMAIUB will 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 MBA 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/QQA Follow-up Visits of Academic Programme Reviews Procedure:

The Master of Business Administration programme offered by AMA International University - Bahrain has made Adequate Progress and as a result, the programme will not be subject 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.