Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programmes-within-College Review Report

Master in Human Resources Management

College of Administrative Sciences

Applied Science University

Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 26-28 May 2014

HC042-C2-R042

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Acronyms

AACSB	The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
ASU	Applied Science University
BA	Bachelor in Accounting
BAF	Bachelor in Accounting and Finance
BBA	Bachelor in Business Administration
BMIS	Bachelor in Management of Information Systems
BPS	Bachelor in Political Science
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEC	Higher Education Council
HoD	Head of Department
ILOs	Intended Learning Outcomes
MAF	Master in Accounting and Finance
MBA	Master in Business Administration
MHRM	Master in Human Resources Management
MIS	Management Information Systems
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
QA	Quality Assurance
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee
QAA-UK	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education – United Kingdom

QQA	National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SIS	Student Information System

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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.

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

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Indicators, the concluding statement will say that there is 'confidence' in the programme.

If two or three Indicators are satisfied, including Indicator One, the programme will receive a 'limited confidence' judgement. If one or no Indicator is satisfied, or Indicator One 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 Applied Science University

A Programmes-within-College review of the College of Administrative Sciences (CAS) was conducted by DHR of the QQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place on May 26 -28, 2014 for eight academic programmes offered by CAS. These programmes are: Bachelor in Accounting and Finance (BAF), Bachelor in Accounting (BA), Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA), Bachelor in Political Science (BPS), Bachelor in Management of Information Systems (BMIS), Master in Accounting and Finance (MAF), Master in Business Administration and Master in Human Resources Management (MHRM) programmes.

This report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Master Degree in Human Resources Management (MHRM) based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and appendices submitted by Applied Science University (ASU), the supplementary documentation made available during the site visit, as well as interviews and observations made during the review site visit.

ASU was notified by the DHR/QQA on 24th. October 2013 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College review of the programmes offered by its College of Administrative Sciences. On 3 March 2014, it was agreed that the exact date of the site visit would be 26-28 May 2014. In preparation for the review, ASU conducted its College self-evaluation reports of all its programmes and submitted the SERs with appendices on the agreed date on 27th. February 2014.

DHR constituted a Panel consisting of experts in the academic field Business Administrations, Accounting and Finance, Political Science, Management

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Information Systems, and in higher education who have experience of external programme quality reviews. The Panel comprised ten 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 ASU will use the findings presented in this report to strengthen its Master in Human Resources Management (MHRM). DHR recognizes that quality assurance is the responsibility of the higher education institution itself. Hence, it is the right of ASU to decide how it will address the recommendations contained in the Review Report. Nevertheless, three months after the publication of this Report, ASU is required to submit to the DHR an improvement plan in response to the recommendations.

The DHR would like to extend its thanks to ASU 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 MHRM programme.

1.3   Overview of the College of Administrative Sciences

The College of Administrative Sciences is one of three colleges within the Applied Science University (ASU). The Programme Handbook 2013-2015 of the College states that the College was established in 2005 with a mission to meet the needs of Bahrain community and the region for specialised and qualified cadres in administrative sciences, business administration, accounting, finance, MIS and political science.

The College currently comprises four departments, namely: Business Administration, Accounting and Finance, Management Information Systems, and Political Science. The College offers five undergraduate programmes (Bachelor in Business Administration, Bachelor in Accounting, Bachelor in Accounting and Finance, Bachelor in Management Information Systems, Bachelor in Political Science) and three postgraduate programmes (Master in Business Administration, Master in Human Resources Management, Master in Accounting) across the four departments.

The College employs 34 teaching staff members of which 30 are full-time faculty members. The SER indicates that the total number of students registered in the College during the academic year 2012-2013 was 1,137.

1.4   Overview of the Master in Human Resources Management (MHRM)

The Master of Human Resource Management (MHRM) programme is managed by the Department of Business Administration, and was offered first in the summer of the 2008-2009 academic year with 35 students enrolled. The programme has been reviewed in 2012-2013 and resulted in introducing many changes that were implemented in 2013-2014 academic year. The total number of admitted students has grown to 75 in 2012-2013 and 14 students graduated during the same academic year. The MHRM programme is delivered in Arabic. There are nine full-time faculty members contributing to the delivery of the programme.

1.5   Summary of Review Judgements

Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Master of Human Resource Management

Indicator	Judgement
1: The Learning Programme	Satisfies
2: Efficiency of the Programme	Satisfies
3: Academic Standards of the Graduates	Satisfies
4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance	Satisfies
Overall Judgement	**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   The Master in Human Resources Management (MHRM) has an academic planning framework that clearly states the programme aims and learning outcomes. The institution's vision and mission statements are well-cascaded and linked to the College of Administrative Sciences mission and aims; which are, in turn, cascaded to the MHRM programme level and are reflected in the programme aims and learning outcomes. During interviews with the senior management, the Panel learned that the programme aims have been updated in 2013 in light of the internal and external programme reviews. The Panel appreciates that the programme aims are clearly stated and contribute to the achievement of the institution's mission and vision.

2.2   The curriculum is based on the American system of credit hours that requires students to complete a total of 36 credit hours for the award of the degree over two years; with a minimum study period of one year and a maximum of four years. The curriculum consists of 24 credit hours of compulsory courses, six credit hours of elective courses, and six credit hours of dissertation. The curriculum demonstrates progression from basic to advanced courses. Students interviewed by the Panel expressed satisfaction with the workload allocation and confirmed that they are allowed to register three courses only during the first two semesters and two courses during the summer. Students whose Bachelor degrees are not in Business Administration are required to take Management (BA501), Quantitative Methods (BA541) and Human Resource Essentials (BA531) as remedial courses to prepare them for the programme in general and for the HRM study and the dissertation in particular. The Panel found that there is a balance between knowledge and skills, and theory and practice in the curriculum design. The Panel appreciates that the curriculum is well-organized and reflects a clear academic progression.

2.3   The course syllabi are well-documented in terms of the depth and breadth of contents, the relevance of topics to the HRM discipline, and contemporary teaching and learning methods and assessment methods. During the interviews, the Panel learned from the programme team that the course contents and intended learning outcomes were all reviewed and updated recently. The curricular content is designed to equip graduates with theoretical and practical skills in Leadership and Organizational Behaviour, Human Resource Planning and Staffing, Strategic Human Resource Management, Employment Relations, Incentives and Compensation, International HR and Bahraini Labour Law. A range of elective courses also provides opportunities for in-depth study in some specialized areas of human resources management, and also entrepreneurship. The Panel noticed that some of the aims in the programme such as acquainting students with Finance, Information Systems and Ethics are not directly delivered through standalone courses. Nevertheless, during the interview with the designated academic staff they indicated that those aims/topics are integrated in different courses of the programme. After reviewing

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different course files, the Panel was satisfied that the above aims are covered in the programme. For example, Ethics topics are covered in courses such as Employment Relations and Practices (HR635) and Labour Law & Legislation (HR631); Finance topics are covered in Human Resources Planning & Staffing (HR633). However, the Panel recommends evaluating the possibility of adding Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) course when reviewing the programme in future. Furthermore, the Panel urges the department to consider moving Training & Developing Human Resources (HR639) course from being an elective to a compulsory course in order to fully address the Human Resource Development (HRD) domain.

2.4   The Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) are outlined in the programme specifications. The programme has 13 PILOs divided into four categories: knowledge and understanding (A1-A4), critical thinking skills (B1-B3), subject – specific skills (C1-C3), and general and transferrable skills (D1-D3). Interviews with the academic staff confirmed that the PILOs were revised during 2012 as part of the programme review by the Yarmouk University of Jordan. The Panel appreciates that the PILOs are aligned to the programme aims and objectives and that the standard of the programme is comparable to similar programmes internationally.

2.5   During the site visit, the Panel examined a number of course specifications along with the MHRM Curriculum Skills Map to confirm that Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for individual courses have been mapped to the PILOs. Course files were also reviewed by the Panel to confirm that course ILOs are included in the course specifications, and that appropriate assessment instruments are used to confirm achievement of the course ILOs. Staff interviewed confirmed that they had attended several training sessions on how to write course ILOs and map them to PILOs. The Panel notes that the academic staff are well-informed about writing and mapping Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) to the PILOs to ensure the achievement of graduate attributes. The Panel notes that in general, the course intended learning outcomes are appropriately mapped to the programme intended learning outcomes. However, there are a few courses where the matching with the right learning outcomes needs to be reviewed such as BA601 and HR644. This needs to be addressed.

2.6   The delivery of the MHRM programme is guided by the institution's general Learning, Teaching and Assessment policy which outlines the teaching principles and methods that match the pedagogical level of postgraduate students. The policy encourages the usage of a wide variety of teaching and learning methods to achieve the learning outcomes. The Panel noted from the interviews that the policy is communicated well to the students and the faculty of the programme. Interviews with students and alumni confirmed the appropriate use of a wide range of teaching methods such as students' participation in class discussions, use of case studies, encouraging students to further reading and research, and supporting students towards becoming more of independent learners. All students enrolled in the

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MHRM are working on full-time jobs. This fact is utilised when students conduct case studies, team projects and presentations. Students interviewed by the Panel indicated that these tasks allowed them to link theory with practice and enhance their soft skills. The Panel encourages the Department to introduce more work-based tasks such as simulation, modelling and consultancy training. During interviews, students expressed their appreciation of the student-centred approach that is generally adapted across the programme. From site visit interviews and reviewing samples of course files, the Panel notes that the teaching and learning policy is consistently applied in all courses of the MHRM programme. The Panel appreciates that an appropriate teaching and learning policy is implemented in all courses to support the achievement of the programme aims and ILOs.

2.7   ASU has implemented a Moodle platform to support the learning process. The Moodle system is used for uploading courses materials, chatting and making announcements. There are periodic reports about the usage of the Moodle which show significant increase in the adaption of Moodle by faculty members. Nonetheless, the Panel notes that it is not fully utilised as a learning management system that can fully encourage independent learning. The Panel recommends that the department investigate ways to utilise the Moodle to its utmost.

2.8   A range of assessment methods are outlined in the assessment policy; these include examinations, coursework reports, oral presentations, assignments, group work, and individual reflective report writing. These different assessments cover the broad spectrum of the CILOs and PILOs. The Panel found these assessment methods to be appropriate to the nature and level of the courses and topics covered. During interviews, the Panel confirmed that the total grade for each course is distributed between examinations (30% for midterm and 40% for the final) and 30% for coursework as stipulated in the assessment policy. Nonetheless, the Panel notes that grade distribution is governed by the University policy and is uniform for all courses in the programme despite their level or the course content and the type of CILOs to be achieved. The Panel recommends that the College revise the current grade distribution policy and develop a more flexible policy based on the course level and nature and the learning outcomes that the course intends to achieve. After reviewing most of the programme course files and interviewing students, the Panel is satisfied that there are clear and transparent assessment criteria, marking scheme, and constructive feedback and that the assessment tools are well-aligned with the PILOs and CILOs. The Panel also notes that there is a policy for plagiarism and copyrights protections. In addition, there is an appeal procedure to ensure fairness of students' grades. The interview sessions with the academic staff also provided a clear description of the steps that are taken to ensure that the administration of examinations is accurate and secure. For example, marks that are recorded in the students system are independently checked and validated for accuracy. The Panel appreciates that well-established and transparent assessment and feedback policies are in place to assess the achievement of the course ILOs.

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

- The MHRM programme aims are clearly stated and contribute to the achievement of the institution's mission, vision and aims.
- The curriculum is well-organised and reflects a clear academic progression.
- Programme intended learning outcomes are aligned to the programme aims and objectives, and are comparable to similar programmes internationally.
- Appropriate teaching and learning policy is implemented in all courses to support the achievement of the programme aims and intended learning outcomes.
- There are well-established and transparent assessment and feedback policies to assess the achievement of the course intended learning outcomes.

2.10   In terms of improvement the Panel **recommends** that the College should:

- add Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) course when reviewing the programme in future

- move Training & Developing Human Resources (HR639) course from being an elective to a compulsory course

- revise the current grade distribution policy and develop a more flexible policy based on the course level and its nature

- investigate ways to incorporate independent learning in the curriculum through the usage of the available e-learning platform.

2.11   **Judgement**

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

2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

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

3.1 Admission to the MHRM programme is in accordance with the ASU wide admission policy for Master's studies. The policy is published on the University website, University Catalogue and the MHRM Programme Handbook. A detailed admission procedure including transferred students is provided in the Admission and Registration policy. In terms of the policy, admission to the MHRM programme requires a minimum of %60 in the Bachelor degree, passing the admission interview and having at least two years of working experience relevant to the field. Moreover, the SER states that one of the requirements is to pass two examinations; one in English and the other one related to the Human Resources field. This was the result of several benchmarking studies conducted regionally and internationally. However, it was evident from the interview sessions conducted with staff that some of the staff members are not fully aware that these two written examinations are actually part of the admission requirements. Moreover, no evidence was provided on the implementation of these tests. The Panel recommends that the department expedite the implementation of these requirements and keep the staff updated with issues related to the newly introduced admission criteria.

3.2 As stated in the Programme Handbook (2013-2015) and in the SER, the programme accepts BBA graduates and those who have Bachelor degrees in other disciplines on the condition that they take some fundamental courses as prerequisites for the MHRM programme to strengthen their background. The Panel is satisfied that one of the admission requirements is having at least two years of experience in a relevant field to ensure that students have the needed practical knowledge and skills to succeed in a postgraduate programme. The SER states that all the 75 enrolled students in the MHRM programme (2012-2013) have HR industrial experience in different organizations. In addition, staff interviewed clarified that although the MHRM programme is taught in Arabic, students have to pass an English placement test; as they will need to read from different English sources like textbooks, researches, case studies and academic journals' articles. The Panel is satisfied that the profile of admitted students matches the requirements of the MHRM programme.

3.3 The MHRM programme is managed by a Programme Coordinator and the Head of the Department (HoD), while individual courses are managed by assigned staff members. The different roles and responsibilities of each staff/position (Deans, HoD, Programme Coordinator and course coordinators) are clearly identified and distinguished through the different job descriptions. There is also a functioning academic committee structure which includes the University, College, and Department Councils, Programme and Curriculum Review Committee and Examinations Committee. The Panel was provided with several evidence of the

academic committee meetings and noted the department's efforts in using electronic methods such as emailing to facilitate interaction and communication with students. The Panel notes with appreciation the active engagement of students within the programme management. A representative from the students of the programme attends the Department Council meetings and is encouraged to participate in the discussion relevant to students' affairs. This was confirmed during various interviews conducted with the senior management, students and staff. The Panel confirmed from the interviews with students that the Student Council is active in advancing the interests of the ASU student body. The Panel appreciates that there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability embedded in the structures and processes related to the management of the MHRM programme.

3.4   There are nine full-time academic staff members teaching in the MHRM programme. The student-staff ratio in the MHRM programme is 15:1 (provided by the Dean of Students Affairs during the visit) which is in accordance with the requirements of the Higher Education Council (HEC). However, these faculty members contribute to the delivery of other undergraduate and graduate programmes, increasing the actual students–staff ratio and the teaching load of the staff. In this situation, it becomes difficult to be current in the field, develop new teaching methods, and contributes to the community. The CVs of the academic staff who are teaching on the programme confirmed that there is an appropriate diversified range of academic ranks, qualifications and specializations for all major fields of the MHRM programme. The Panel is satisfied that there is a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to teach the MHRM programme, and particularly notes the professionalism of the academic staff and their commitment to the successful delivery of the programme. The Panel appreciates the diversity in the nationalities of the teaching staff and the fact that many of them have industrial experience, as well as teaching experience, all of which enrich their teaching quality especially when it comes to real life applications, different culture applications and comparative studies. During interview sessions, staff members indicated that their workload is manageable for teaching although it does not allow much time for research related activities and professional practice. The Panel recommends that the College revise the workload of the academic staff members to allow more time for research and scholarly activities to ensure that teaching and learning is appropriately underpinned by research, scholarship and evidence-based contemporary professional practice as stated in the University Research Strategy 2013-2016.

3.5   The process of staff recruitment, orientation and appraisal systems is a shared responsibility between the university's HR office and the Department where the different roles and responsibilities are well stated and identified in the University Recruitment and Retention policy 2013-2014. The recruitment process involves the Department, the College and a centralized recruitment committee at the University level which is responsible to prepare a report for the College Council for approval. Newly recruited staff members go through orientation and induction programmes at the University level and the College/Department level; where the Head of the Department plays an integral role in introducing the staff to the system. There is an

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annual appraisal process for all faculty members including the HoD. The appraisal sheet covers most of the faculty activities during the academic year: research activities, teaching load, development of the learning process, contribution to students supports activities and community services, and professional consultation. Interviews with staff members revealed that a staff promotion policy has recently been developed by ASU, and there has not been any cases of promotions in recent years. The policy stipulates that promotion files are reviewed by three committees at different levels. The faculty members are assessed based on their achievements and performance on the teaching, research, university services and community services. The Panel recommends that the University expedite the implementation of its newly developed Academic Promotion Policy 2013-2014 to ensure the retention of the highly qualified and experienced faculty.

3.6   ASU has a functioning Management Information System (MIS) and a Student Information System (SIS). Examples of information that can be generated by the SIS are: list of registered students, list of courses, examination schedule, admission profile, and student registration history. Students can also use the system to register courses and view their records. During interviews, staff clarified that the SIS has been implemented effectively during the last three years and supports the students in choosing their appropriate course load with the guidance of their academic advisors. Interviews with some support staff and academics confirmed that the reports they receive from the system are adequate for their needs, and allow for effective identification and monitoring of 'at- risk' students. Evidence was provided on how the SIS is used effectively as a communication tool between at-risk students and their academic advisors. The SIS enables academic staff to enter examination marks directly into the system and is used to generate a host of reports for the management's decision-making. Students have restricted access to the system *via* a secured login protocol and are able to access their examination results and academic records online. The Panel observed a demonstration of the SIS during the campus tour and noticed that there are sufficient security features to ensure the integrity of the system. Interviews with some support staff and academics confirmed that the reports they receive from the system are adequate for their needs, and allow for effective identification and monitoring of 'at- risk' students. Moreover, there is an effective Human Resource Information System (HRIS) that includes all needed personnel data and reports used to help informed decisions making. There are also effective information systems for the Finance Department and the library and e-learning resources. The Panel appreciates the effective use of the available information systems across the University to serve in different aspects; especially the MIS and SIS to support teaching and learning.

3.7   ASU has policies and procedures in place to ensure the security of learners' information. This includes having backup copies of records on-site and off-site and data administration arrangements related to authorizations for the different levels of users. There is also a policy in place to ensure the security of records through a defined authorization mechanism, storage of data, privacy and exchange of information, the usage of anti-virus and security tools, and security agreements with

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users. Users are provided with unique user-names and passwords for logging onto the system. All passwords are encrypted and pass along a firewall path through a server to the database. The Panel appreciates the arrangements in place to protect students' records. All marks entered into the system are printed and reviewed independently by an assigned faculty member before being submitted to the HoD for approval, and thereafter to the Dean for authentication. An additional validation is done by the Registration Department through a 'second marks entry'. The marks and results are confirmed on the system and could then be accessed by students. Interviews with academic and administrative staff confirmed the implementation of the approval and validation procedures. The Panel also learned from the interviews conducted during the site visit and the SER that ASU has a Disaster Recovery Plan in terms of which data from the SIS is backed-up periodically to a remote site to forestall any potential loss of data through disasters such as fire. The Panel appreciates the rigour of the implemented procedures to ensure the security of learners' information and accuracy of results.

3.8 ASU has a new purposely-built campus, where they moved to in September 2013, which offers staff and students a pleasant environment in which to work and study. The expansion of the University allows it to accommodate the enrolled students. There are 39 classrooms and seven computer laboratories. There are other facilities such as the library, staff offices, a *Wi-Fi* enabled cafeteria, a bookstore, and a health clinic. The lecture rooms, all of which are equipped with computers and electronic projectors, are designed in different ways to accommodate different teaching styles. Each floor of the academic building has a seating area for students to relax or to use for small group work or breakout sessions. The university's library is adequately resourced with books related to the HRM discipline, reading spaces, computers, conveniently placed LCDs to aid in allocating books, as well as online journals, periodicals and databases in both English and Arabic. The Panel was provided with a copy of the University Library Handbook and learned from interviews with staff members that the library budget allocation is managed by following certain guidelines for the issuing and renewal of library material to staff and students. Moreover, students can get further support from the office of the Deanship for Post Graduate Studies and Scientific Research which works closely with the faculty of Business Administration. There is a large auditorium used for conferences and external events. The Panel notes the investment ASU has made in providing physical and material resources to support the delivery of the MHRM programme, and appreciates that ASU has good facilities to support the students' learning experiences.

3.9 The SER states that tracking is conducted to provide data on student access to the e-library where the system enables the library staff to get a real-time count of learners online who are using the e-library. The tracking system also enables academic staff, in the computer laboratories, to record the students' names and their assigned tasks. Each student has a unique user name and password to register into the electronic library. The Panel learned from interviews conducted with MHRM students that there is also an e-learning system (E-Brary) to allow both staff and students to

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download lectures, case studies and assignments. Although the tracking system facilitates staff and students communication; yet the Panel recommends that the College establish a comprehensive resource tracking system to track students and staff usage and utilise its outcome to support decision-making.

3.10   As stated earlier, there are arrangements in place to provide support for students in the laboratories and for the use of e-resources. This is represented by having the technical support unit for the University, staff in the library, the IT assistant in the laboratory and the teaching assistants in the College. In addition, ASU has a social care unit headed by a staff member and academic advisors allocated to all students for advising on academic issues. During the touring session, the Panel discussed with some students the support services offered by the University. The students were pleased with the availability and quality of the supporting staff. Moreover, the Panel studied the services delivered by the social care unit in order to address non-academic students' challenges. The Panel viewed the files of some cases where student's problems were resolved through the consultation with the social care unit. The Panel appreciates the arrangements in place and the support system provided by the academics advisors, the library, the student care unit, and the IT unit with qualified staff members.

3.11   An orientation and induction programme is offered at the commencement of each semester by the Deanship of Student Affairs and the Student Council where opportunity is provided for all students including transferred ones to undertake a campus tour to familiarise themselves with the University facilities and to be introduced to the administrative and academic staff. The Panel is pleased to note the active involvement of the Student Council and senior students, as well as academic advisors, in the orientation process. There are three compulsory orientation programmes on the University, College and programme levels. Training in the use of library resources is also noted as an important part of the orientation process. The Panel views the face-to-face orientation day to be very helpful in preparing students for their studies, and is pleased that efforts are made to provide material online for the benefit of those who are unable to physically attend the orientation sessions. All students are provided with most recent University Catalogues for further information. Students confirmed the orientation process during the interview sessions, and added that course tutors in their first contact sessions demonstrate the use of the web portal to access the requisite course material. The Panel appreciates the special care that is given to students with special needs and to transferred students. The Panel appreciates the effectiveness of the conducted orientation and induction programme for new and transferred students.

3.12   Student progress is tracked continually by academic advisors with the assistance of HoDs through the SIS to timely identify and provide support to at-risk students. At-risk students are identified as those with a cumulative GPA of 70% or less in any given semester throughout their study period of the MHRM programme. During the site visit, the Panel was provided with a Students at-Risk policy 2013-2014 which clearly states the key responsibilities of students, the Registration Department, Dean

of Students, and academic advisors in identifying and providing support for at-risk students. The Panel is pleased to learn that the Department has set a threshold of 72% as a proactive process to begin identifying students in the 'at-risk' category. Such students are blocked from online registration system and are required to discuss and agree an 'academic advisory plan' with their academic advisor before they are allowed to register any course. The advisor then meets with the student regularly and keeps a record of the progress made and the results of the discussion. All students are made aware of staff office hours, which are posted on staff offices' doors to arrange to meet their advisors accordingly. During interviews, the Panel found that the academic advisors, together with the Registration Department and HoD, have been actively involved in identifying and counselling students ahead of time. The Panel was informed that the Department is going to have a process during which at-risk status of students is highlighted on attendance registers in order to enable course tutors to specially cater for them in the delivery of courses. The Panel appreciates the mechanisms that are in place to identify at-risk students and support them when necessary.

3.13   Informal workspaces are provided at convenient places for students to interact and have small group discussions. Moreover, the ASU library is modern and comfortable with areas that allow students to meet and discuss topical issues. MHRM Students are encouraged to engage with their academic staff in discussing different topics whether formally during class or informally in the different recreation areas in the University. The Panel acknowledges the conduction of the annual 'Jobs Fair' day by the Deanship of Student Affairs where students are exposed to potential employers. In addition, the Panel notes that a Business Club has been formed to provide extracurricular activities to facilitate the informal sharing of student experiences. The Panel is satisfied that the overall learning environment is conducive to expand the student experiences and knowledge through informal learning.

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 responsibility and accountability embedded in the structures and processes related to the management of the MHRM programme.
- There is diversity in the nationalities of the teaching staff and their industrial experience that enrich the quality of their teaching.
- There are effective information systems used across the University to serve in different aspects; especially the MIS and SIS which are used to support teaching and learning.
- Rigours policies and procedures are in place to ensure the security of the learners' records and accuracy of results.
- ASU has good facilities to support students' learning experiences.
- Appropriate support is provided to the programme students by the library, the IT unit and the student care unit and academic advisors.
- There is a well-organized and effective student orientation programme that is conducted to inform and prepare new and transferred students.

- Appropriate mechanisms are in place to identify at-risk students to provide counselling and support whenever necessary.

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

- implement the pre-admission examinations requirements stated in the college's documents and keep the staff updated with issues related to admission criteria
- revise the workload of the academic staff members to allow more time for research and scholarly activities to ensure that teaching and learning is appropriately underpinned by research
- expedite the implementation of its newly developed Academic Promotion policy to ensure the retention of the highly qualified and experienced faculty
- establish a comprehensive resource tracking system to track students and staff usage and utilise its outcome to support decision-making.

3.16   **Judgement**

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **satisfies** the Indicator on **Efficiency of the Programme.**

4. Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

4.1 The MHRM graduate attributes are stated and mapped to the programme's aims and ILOs. There are 16 graduates' attributes to enhance students' learning experience and enable them to face workplace challenges. Most of the graduates' attributes are gained through standalone courses such as gaining the transferable skills of 'developing interpersonal competence and leadership qualities to work in group with team building approach through Leadership and Organizational Behaviour course (BA654). Other graduates' attributes are gained through a combination of different courses such as gaining quantitative and financial subject-practical skills through both Human Resources Planning & Staffing course (HR633) and Scientific Research and Statistical Analysis course (BA601). Finally, the attribute of Ethics is gained through a combination of courses such as Employment Relations (HR635) and Practices and Labour Law & Legislation (HR631). Interviews with alumni and employers confirmed that the stated graduate attributes are successfully developed and assessed in relevant courses of the programme. The Panel is satisfied that there is a wide range of different assessment methods to enable the achievement of the stated graduate attributes. The Panel appreciates that graduate attributes of the MHRM programme are clearly stated and are in alignment with the programme aims and PILOs.

4.2 The MHRM programme was benchmarked locally, regionally and internationally to ensure that the quality and academic standards of the programme are comparable with other programmes. The Panel appreciates the good practice of benchmarking; especially that the programme team has clearly defined the purpose of benchmarking, the choice of what is benchmarked and against what, how the process is managed, and how the outcomes are used. There is evidence that the outcome of the benchmarking exercise is used to inform programme reviews in relation to the programme's admission and registration policies, the remedial courses, the curriculum and the PILOs and CILOs in order to meet the requirements of the local, regional and international standards. The Panel notes that the institution's benchmarking activities have appropriate internal and external reference points such as AACSB accredited institutions and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK standards for a master degree in HR. The Panel appreciates the efforts of the Department to benchmark its MHRM programme with local, regional and international bodies.

4.3 The MHRM programme has a clear and transparent assessment and feedback policy and procedures, which are in line with the general University Assessment and Feedback policy. The Panel established during interviews with the academic staff that assessment strategies are designed with due regard to the course ILOs. Course specifications examined by the Panel confirmed the matching of assessment tools and the ILOs they are intended to assess. The Panel notes that a variety of assessment

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tools is used such as case studies, group discussions and written examination. During interviews, the Panel learned how the Department and the College monitor the implementation of the assessment policy and procedures to ensure effectiveness through cooperation between the Quality Assurance Unit and quality assurance coordinator in the College. The Panel acknowledges that the Department Council has conducted several meetings to monitor and review the assessment procedures to ensure consistency with the general university policy. Students interviewed were fully aware and expressed their satisfaction with the assessment tools. The Panel welcomes the idea of establishing a 'Course Assessment Board' which will play a vital role in the assessment and feedback process, and recommends speeding up its establishment and activation. The Panel appreciates that the assessment policies and procedures are transparent, consistently implemented and subject to regular reviews.

4.4   There is a mechanism to ensure that course assessments are tied to the CILOs and hence support the achievement of the programme ILOs. The course specifications indicate the assessment tools used and the ILOs these intend to assess. Moreover, the SER clarifies that the internal moderation aims to ensure that both the mid-term and final examinations are aligned with the CILOs. Internal examiners are required to fill-in an 'Examination Questions Evaluation' form and submit it to the HoD. During interviews, the academic staff indicated that each one of them has to submit the assessment results of each student in a matrix form to the HoD to highlight the percentage of attainment for each course ILO. The dissertations are subject to external moderators to check that the quality of MHRM graduates output matches that of international universities. The Panel reviewed some of the provided course files and confirmed the application of internal moderation. The Panel acknowledges the mechanism in place to measure the achievement of the ILOs and the continues efforts on aligning and updating the assessments to ensure appropriate assessment of the achievement of the stated ILOs.

4.5   The SER clarifies the internal moderation system at ASU which is applied to the MHRM programme. Final and mid-term examination question papers are set by the course lecturer and reviewed by the appointed internal examiner. This mechanism was first adapted in 2013-2014 academic year during which the Department formed the examination committee to handle the moderation process. The lecturer submits the examination paper at least 48 hours before the students sit for the examinations. The internal examiner has to ensure the relevance of the questions to the course and the appropriateness of the assessment tools to measure the achievement of the learning outcome and the distribution of marks. However, the Panel has concerns about the effectiveness of this mechanism. Practically, if changes are recommended to be addressed in less than 48 hours of the date of the examination. Moreover, examination papers will be exposed to a large number of people. The Panel suggests that as the Department further implements the policy, it should assess the effectiveness of this mechanism. The internal examiner also reviews a sample of the marked scripts (including all failures, scripts with marks above 80%, and some randomly selected scripts) to ensure consistency of grading by course tutors. The Panel noted from the provided evidence that the mid-term examination is not

moderated systematically. Moreover, assignments and other forms of assessments, which are allocated more than 30% of the total mark, are not subjected to moderation. The Panel recommends that ASU expand its internal moderation system to cover all forms of assessment in addition to mid and final examinations and revise the 48 hours given to moderate the examinations.

4.6   The Self-Evaluation Report states that the current system for external moderation is to send the external examiner at Yarmouk University in Jordan the final examination question papers, the model answers and the course syllabus two weeks before the final due date. Staff interviewed, clarified the process by indicating that Yarmouk University selects the faculty members to act as external examiners for the MHRM courses, after which the Departmental Examination Committee discusses the external examiner feedback to take suitable actions. The Panel raised their concerns that this arrangement places an over-reliance on Yarmouk University and does not allow enough time for the teaching staff to amend the final examination. The Panel noted that the College plans to introduce its modified external examiner policy by having two external examiners instead of one from two comparable universities; and approaching local, regional and international universities not only Yarmouk University. The Panel recommends that the College should directly select and appoint its own external examiners from different local, regional and international universities. Moreover, the Panel urges the College to reconsider the two weeks period to ensure that sufficient time is given to staff members to accurately amend the examinations.

4.7   The Panel studied the provided course files and examined samples of students' coursework in different courses. The Panel notes with satisfaction the wide range of assessment tools used to assess students' knowledge and skills. The Panel noted the emphasis on theory and practice, and that academic staff empower students to appreciate life-long learning and to be independent learners after graduation. Interviews with students and staff confirmed that there are clear and transparent assessment criteria, marking scheme, and constructive feedback (written, oral, and one to one basis) which are well aligned with the PILOs and CILOs and are known to staff members and students. The Panel is satisfied that students' assessed work is comparable to similar regional and international universities.

4.8   The MHRM programme follows ASU policy with respect to allocating 70% or above to measure the level of students' achievements of the CILOs and PILOs. The Panel perused some course files and a range of students' assessed work and confirmed that students' achievements in the MHRM programme have consistently exceeded this threshold during the past three years. The records also show that grades awarded for individual elements of assessment accurately reflect students' effort and ability. The evaluation of the grading is done by the internal and external moderation and by the Department Examination Committee. After interviews with different academic staff, the Panel is satisfied that final grades are approved not only by course instructors but also by the HoD and the Dean in order to ensure that students are equally treated within the programme and across all programmes offered by the College. The level

of students' achievements is also measured by distributing surveys to employers and alumni to gather information on the level of MHRM students' achievements. Interviews conducted with alumni and employers show an acceptable level of satisfaction on students' achievements. The Panel acknowledges the systematic manner in which assessment results and grade distributions are scrutinized to assess MHRM graduates' achievements.

4.9   The Department submitted a detailed statistical data about admitted students, progression and graduation rates from the inception of the programme in 2008 up to 2013. In general, the number of admitted students in the MHRM programme is low but has consecutively decreased over the last three years (18 in 2008, 5 in 2009, and 3 in 2010). The Panel notes that the percentage of study period which is four years differs from one year to another (22% in 2011 for those who were enrolled in 2008, 60% in 2012 for those who were enrolled in 2009, and 33% in 2010 for those who were enrolled in 2010). The SER shows a high number of students graduating after three years specifically for those who were enrolled in 2010 as the percentage was 67%. During staff interviews, they justified this by clarifying that some students were transferred from a local university as it was closed. The Self-Evaluation Report states that there is no available data about the first destination of graduates. Interviews with staff clarified that lack of data is due to having a number of students from neighbouring countries. The Panel did not find evidence of a systematic methodology to monitor retention, progression, graduation and dropout rates. The Panel recommends that the College establish a methodology to regularly monitor the retention, progression, graduation and dropout rates of the ASU students.

4.10   There is a well-stated and detailed document stating the 'Dissertation Regulations and Procedures' covering all dissertation steps from identifying the research problem, choosing the academic supervisor, going through the internal and external supervision, field study and data analysis, and ending with the dissertation defence. The Self-Evaluation Report states that the dissertation's final draft goes through several scrutiny steps such as the internal examiner approval of the final draft; writing a report to the HoD; checking against plagiarism; submitting the draft to the Dean for postgraduate studies; and identifying the examination committee/panel (internal and external examiners). The Panel reviewed a number of dissertations and is satisfied that their academic standard is aligned with a Master's level. The alumni interviewed by the Panel expressed appreciation for the support they received from their supervisors. Both students and alumni confirmed that the dissertation rules, procedure and assessment are clear, transparent and consistently implemented. After interviewing students, alumni, employers and internal and external examiners, the Panel is assured that dissertations are of great importance as they tackle and solve real work problems. The Panel appreciates the mechanisms that are in place to monitor and ensure the quality of MHRM dissertations.

4.11   ASU has a Program Advisory Board policy that was revised in 2013-2014 to bridge the gap between academia and workplace requirements. The Advisory Board consists of strategic experts from the industry, alumni, employers, and active

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members of the society in order to play an effective role in enriching and strengthening the MHRM programme. The Advisory Board meets once a semester and the output of the meeting is then forwarded to the Department Council to discuss and integrate the outcomes into the programme improvement and development plans where applicable. There are evidence that the Board has played an important role in updating the programme's syllabus, aims and ILOs. During the site visit, the Panel met with members of the Advisory Board and confirmed that the Board plays an essential role in developing and fostering linkage between the College and the business world. The Panel appreciates the active Advisory Board that participates effectively in reviewing and improving the MHRM programme and is capable of developing and fostering linkages between the College and the business world.

4.12   The Self-Evaluation Report states that ASU conducts two annual surveys to measure the level of satisfaction towards its graduates; one survey for employers and the other one for alumni. These surveys are analysed to provide an effective feedback on the quality of the programme and academic standards of its graduates. However, the Panel noted that these are not conducted systematically. The Self-Evaluation Report confirms the satisfaction of both alumni and employers as indicated by the recent survey analysis. During interview sessions with the employers and alumni, it was evident that employers have high level of satisfaction with the MHRM programme graduates. The alumni expressed their satisfaction with what they learnt and highlighted that they managed to transfer what they learnt at ASU to their workplace. Interviewed employers made suggestions to add topics such as 'Competency Management' and to further develop the students' leadership and problem-solving skills, and enrich the programme with more practical and self-reflecting team projects. The Panel appreciates the high level of employers and graduates' satisfaction with the programme and its outcome and recommends that the College develop and implement a mechanism to systematically measure their satisfaction with the programme and its outcomes.

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

- The graduate attributes of the MHRM programme are clearly stated and are in alignment with the programme aims and programme intended learning outcomes.
- The programme has been benchmarked with other similar programmes offered by local, regional and international institutions and the requirements of professional bodies that have resulted in improving the programme.
- The assessment policy and procedures are transparent, consistently implemented, monitored and subject to regular reviews.
- There is an effective mechanism in place to monitor and ensure the quality of MHRM dissertations.

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- There is an active programme Advisory Board that participates effectively in reviewing and improving the MHRM programme and is capable of developing and fostering linkages between the College and the business world.
- Employers and graduates are highly satisfied with the programme and its outcomes.

4.14   In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the College should:

- expedite the establishment and activation of the Course Assessment Board
- expand the internal moderation system to conver all forms of assessment in addition to mid and final examination and revise the 48 hours given to moderate the examinations
- directly select and appoint external examiners from different local, regional and international universities and reconsider the two weeks period to ensure that sufficient time is given to staff members to accurately amend the examinations
- establish a formal mechanism to regularly monitor the retention, progression, graduation and dropout rates of the MHRM students
- develop and implement a formal mechanism to systematically measure the employers and alumni's satisfaction with the programme and its outcomes.

4.15   **Judgement**

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

5. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance

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

5.1 The ASU management system comprises a range of policies, procedures and regulations on University, College and department levels that faculty members are familiar with and are involved in the implementation of those that are relevant to their duties. Examples of existing policies and procedures include a Teaching and Learning and Assessment Strategy, Assessment and Feedback policy Staff Development policy, Students at-Risk policy and Programme Review policy. The Panel met with some academic and administrative staff, including representatives from the department's QA Unit, who confirmed that these policies and procedures are applied effectively and well-communicated to both staff and students. During interview sessions, staff members were well-informed about these procedures and indicated their involvement in developing these procedures. The Panel appreciates that staff members are familiar with these policies and are involved in the development of those that are relevant to their duties.

5.2 The MHRM Programme is managed by a Programme Coordinator and the HoD. Both work collaboratively to run the programme. The SER states that the structure supporting the Programme Coordinator to manage the programme consists of the Department, Programme and Curriculum Review Committee, Examination Committee, Course Coordinators, and the Student Council, which has representation at all departmental meetings. Various internal bodies such as University, College and Department Councils are utilised to ensure that the responsibilities of all members involved in the delivery of the programme are executed in an effective manner and that leadership is provided where needed. The Panel met with some academic and administrative staff, including representatives from the QA Unit, who showed a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and were able to demonstrate many ways in which the policies and procedures are applied to enhance the quality of delivery of the MHRM programme. The Panel appreciates that the MHRM programme is managed in a manner that demonstrates effective and responsible leadership.

5.3 The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Center (AQQC) has an overall responsibility for ensuring that the programme adheres to the requirements of the ASU's quality assurance system. The SER demonstrates a number of ways in which the Department ensures that the quality management system in relation to the MHRM programme is monitored and evaluated. During interviews, the Panel learned that a comprehensive Quality Assurance Manual has been developed recently to enhance the delivery of all academic and administrative operations. The Panel further learned that quality assurance policy is operationalized at the College and departmental levels *via* the college and departmental QA units, which are overseen by a University-wide QA coordinating group consisting of the QAAC

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director and the Colleges QA Coordinators, among others. For example, the responsibility of the departmental QA Unit is to ensure that the assessment methods are properly aligned to the programme and course intended learning outcomes. In addition, the programme is evaluated annually within the Department and through a formal review in four year intervals by the Programme and Curriculum Review Committee to assess its effectiveness and relevance. The Panel acknowledges that the quality assurance management system is clearly specified, implemented, monitored, and evaluated across the College.

5.4   As stated earlier, the QAAC at ASU has oversight responsibility for quality assurance and improvement at the University, and is responsible for ensuring proper alignment of quality assurance processes and monitoring the professional development of staff. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that one of the primary objectives of the Centre is to inculcate a quality culture among both academic and administrative staff. The Panel was provided with evidence on QAAC conducting regular events and workshops to acquaint staff members with best practice approaches in teaching and learning and inviting facilitators from other higher education institutions in Bahrain to exchange good practices. Policies and procedures relating to quality assurance are made available on the university intranet for easy access by staff. Both academic and support staff interviewed showed a clear understanding of the quality management arrangements and their role in ensuring the quality of the provision. The Panel appreciates the commitment of the ASU staff in ensuring the quality of delivery of the MHRM programme.

5.5   The Self-evaluation Report states that ASU has a procedure for the development of new programmes. In terms of the procedure, proposals for introducing new programmes go through internal and external approvals. The former starts with the Programme and Curriculum Review Committee (PCRC), after which the proposal is presented to the College and then to the University to get their approval. Once approved, the external procedure starts by submitting the approved proposal to the HEC so that the new programme is licenced. The Panel notices that no new programmes have been introduced in the last three years. The Panel is satisfied that the procedure ASU has put in place for the development and approval of new programmes is adequate but encourages the University to clarify the trigger factors for introducing new programmes.

5.6   The SER stated that at the end of each academic year, an internal self-evaluation report for the MHRM programme that includes recommendations for the improvement of the programme and courses is developed and submitted to the QACC. The SER demonstrates a number of ways in which the Department reviews and evaluates the MHRM programme. These include regular course evaluation reports, student feedback, student satisfaction surveys, alumni and employer surveys, regular departmental council and programme team meetings, external examination and moderation, and a functioning programme Advisory Board. During interview sessions, the faculty members explained the mechanism in place to revise the course specifications, and the cycle to approve the suggestions and changes to the

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courses. The cycle involves the Programme Coordinator and the Department Council to approve the changes to the course and align it to programme aims and ILOs. The Panel met with students and alumni who confirmed that they were able to provide feedback on various aspects relating to the quality of the provision. The academic staff also confirmed that the process of student evaluation has led to many improvements in the teaching of specific courses. The Panel notes the annual programme review, and recommends that the Department develop a clear follow-up mechanism to ensure that recommended enhancements are implemented. Moreover, the Panel encourages the Department to revise its programme review mechanism to align its procedure tightly with the ASU curriculum change procedures as specified in the Quality Assurance Manual.

5.7 The Self-Evaluation Report clarifies that in terms of the ASU Programme Review policy, the Programme and Curriculum Review Committee (PCRC) is responsible for reviewing the MHRM programme in a four year cycle. The review process requires the PCRC to gather feedback from teaching staff, students and other stakeholders such as employers and alumni of each batch to ascertain the relevance and currency of the programme, and to assure alignment of the PILOs to the College vision and mission statements. The Panel was informed during the interviews that the last periodic review was conducted in 2013 in preparation for this external review in 2014. The Panel appreciates the tenacity with which the programme is reviewed.

5.8 ASU conducts surveys of its students, alumni as well as employers. Evidence was provided during the site visit of some previous surveys and departmental meetings that were held to consider the findings of these surveys. Whilst students feedback on courses and teaching and learning is sought systematically at the end of each semester, employers and alumni surveys are not conducted regularly or systematically. During interviews with different employers, the Panel was informed that the MHRM provides its graduates with important skills such as leadership, interpersonal, creative thinking and teamwork skills; yet there is a need to enhance problem-solving skills. Employers were pleased with the MHRM programme and recommended that the College of Administrative Sciences introduce more business specializations. The Panel recommends that ASU adapt a more formal procedure to collect, analyse and respond to stakeholder surveys, and provide timely feedback to the stakeholders on actions taken to address the identified issues.

5.9 ASU has a Staff Development Centre which oversees the professional development of the academic staff and is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of staff training programmes. In addition, there is an Academic Staff Development policy that stipulates the basis for an academic staff development budget and specifies some development initiatives and activities that are supported as part of academic staff professional development. These include providing financial assistance for conference attendance and financial support and release time for academic staff to enhance their qualifications or undertake other scholarly activities. During the site visit, the Panel visited the Staff Development Unit in ASU. The Panel learned that the Unit ensures that continuous development plan is in place for faculty members. This

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is achieved through annual workshops, and participation in professional training and signing memorandum of understanding with professional bodies. The Unit keeps electronic records of all faculty members who attended professional development activities. The staff development policy is translated to a yearly plan along with its allocated budget. The Staff Development policy encourages the participation in conferences, sabbatical leaves, study leaves and other development activities. A number of the interviewed academic staff confirmed that they have benefited from the staff development programme. The Panel acknowledges the arrangements in place to provide professional development opportunities for faculty members. The appraisal system used also includes a section on the staff training needs. However, the Panel did not see evidence of a formal process to link the professional development needs of academic staff to the actual activities conducted. The Panel recommends that the Department develop and implement a formal mechanism to link the annual performance review process of all faculty members to their professional development needs.

5.10   The Department relies on internal and external stakeholders to gather intelligence about the local labour market from its dedicated staff members and the external members of the programme Advisory Board, many of whom have several years of experience in the local labour market. In addition, ASU has links through employers and its alumni to market intelligence. However, the Panel was not provided with evidence of a systematic scoping of the labour market. The Panel recommends that the College develop and implement a formal mechanism for continuous scoping of the labour market needs.

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

- There is a set of defined policies and procedures that staff members are familiar with and are involved in the development of those that are relevant to their duties.
- The MHRM programme is managed in a manner that demonstrates effective and responsible leadership.
- The ASU staff members are committed to ensuring the quality of delivery of the MHRM programme.
- The quality management system and arrangements in relation the MHRM programme are effective, consistently implemented and reviewed.
- There is an effective programme review system that has led to major improvements in the curriculum.

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

- adapt a more formal procedure to collect, analyse and respond to stakeholder surveys, and provide timely feedback to them on actions taken to address the identified issues
- develop and implement a formal mechanism to link the annual performance review process of all faculty members to their professional development needs

- develop and implement a formal mechanism for continuous scoping of the labour market needs.

5.13 **Judgement**

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **satisfies** the Indicator on **Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance.**

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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 confidence in the Master in Human Resources Management (MHRM) programme offered by the College of Administrative Sciences of the Applied Science University.

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