Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programme Follow-Up Visit Report

Bachelor in Interior Design

College of Art and Science

Applied Science University

Kingdom of Bahrain

First Follow-up Visit Date: 12-13 March 2018
Review Date: 9-11 May 201

HC079-C2-F014

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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 and 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 follow-up visit Report is a key component of this programme review follow-up process, whereby the Bachelor in Interior Design (BID), at Applied Science University (ASU) in the Kingdom of Bahrain was revisited on 11-15 March 2018 to assess its progress, in line with the published review Framework and the BQA regulations.

The subsequent sections of this Report have been compiled as part of the DHR/BQA's programme follow-up cycle highlighted in the DHR Programme Review Handbook, and associated with the on-going process of institutional and academic quality and enhancement reviews of Higher Education Institutions located in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

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 ASU's BID since the programme was reviewed on 9-11 May 2016.

(ii)   Provide further information and support for the continuous improvement of academic standards and quality enhancement of higher education provision, specifically within the BID programme at ASU, and for higher education provision within the Kingdom of Bahrain, as a whole.

B.   Background

The programme review of the BID programme, at ASU in the Kingdom of Bahrain was conducted by the DHR of the BQA on 9-11 May 2016.

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

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

Indicator 1: The learning programme; '**satisfied'**
Indicator 2: Efficiency of the programme; **'satisfied'**
Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates; **'not satisfied'**
Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance **'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 9-11 May 2016. 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 Bachelor in Interior Design

The Bachelor in Interior Design programme was first offered by the Department of Design and Arts in the academic year 2005-2006. The programme is delivered in Arabic, except for some courses that are delivered in English such as courses relying on computer software. The total number of enrolled students at the time of the follow-up visit was (30) students. The total number of faculty members was (3) members including: one associate professor, and (2) assistant professors working on full-time basis. The total number of graduates for the last four years was (28) students.

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1.   Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BID programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2016, 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 contents of the BID courses to eliminate similar contents, reduce the number of credit hours of history courses, and introduce specialised courses (compulsory and elective) that cover the various requirements of the labour market.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

As indicated in the progress report, the programme team has conducted a formal benchmarking for the BID programme against a similar programme offered by Al-Ahliyaa Amman University. An informal benchmarking was also conducted against a number of programmes, some of which were accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) such as Texas Tech University (TTU), and Samford University, in addition to conducting one benchmarking against a local government university (University of Bahrain). In light of those benchmarking processes, the number of history courses has been reduced from five courses (15 credit hours) in the previous study plan of 2013-2014, to four courses (12 credit hours) in the current study plan of 2017-2018. These courses include three courses that are related to the discipline, namely: 'History and Theories of Art & Design II' (ADE2102), 'History of Interior Design' (IND3103), in addition to one course offered as a university requirement with (3) credit hours ('History and Civilization of Bahrain' HBH105). The Panel reviewed the benchmarking study report conducted by the programme team and found that it states that the study plans of the benchmarked universities include (3) compulsory courses in history with (9) credit hours. This is considered in line with the current study plan of the programme with the exception of the 'History and Civilization of Bahrain' course, which is taught as a compulsory university requirement. The Panel also found through the verification of the study plan that there is a compulsory course has been added to support teaching the software associated with the modelling of building information BIM-Revit in the 'Building Information Modeling' (IND3051) course to meet the needs of the labour market. In addition, there is a wide range of elective courses (16) emphasizing on several core subjects, including materials, constructions, modern software, and development of design solutions. In response to the recommendations of the Advisory Board, which aims to link the students with the labour market needs in Bahrain, the number of elective courses becomes (21), among

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which student selects (5) courses rather than (2) as stated in the previous plan 2013-2014. Accordingly, the Panel recognizes that this change has led to the enhancement of the study plan with various courses covering different areas of the discipline and keeping up with the labour market with the exception of the '3D Printing & 3D Scanner' (IND 2097) course, which the Panel advises to cancel and incorporate its content into other appropriate courses. Hence, the Panel acknowledges the adjustments conducted by the programme team and considers them suitable for addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation 1.2: *ensure that the software included in the compulsory courses meet the labour market needs, provide a larger number of textbooks, references, and teaching resources, and incorporate current research findings and professional practice in the course provision.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report indicated that the programme – as revised in the new study plan 2017-2018 - uses a set of basic software, alongside a compulsory course, which includes the learning software associated with BIM-Revit. In addition to (3) elective courses, which include learning specialized software that are related and appropriate to the labour market requirements. This was confirmed during interviews with the Advisory Board and the employers; they also mentioned that some of their suggestions, which have been raised during the board periodical meetings, were taken into consideration in developing the new study plan. This was verified later by the Panel, and this procedure is appropriate. In regard to providing the courses with a large number of books and references, the progress report states that the percentage of courses that has utilized scientific research in teaching increased from (%1) in the academic year 2015-2016 to (%20) in the academic year 2017-2018. The Panel also reviewed a sample of course specifications, and noticed an increase in the number of references, in addition to adding a number of recent researches as a part of the scientific material in some courses, such as the 'Graduation Project (programming)' (IND432) course, which includes a number of the most recent researches in the field. However, by reviewing students' work in this course, it was not clear to the Panel that students had been benefiting from these researches in their works. This was confirmed to the Panel during interviews with the students, as the final year students who passed this course were not familiar with the recent research topics that were added. Thus, while the Panel acknowledges the modifications that were conducted recently, it recommends that the use of recent research findings must be activated in teaching courses, to enrich students' knowledge and skills; in addition, students should be informed with the most recent updates in the specialization. Hence, the Panel is of the view that the recommendation is partially addressed.

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Recommendation 1.3: *review and rewrite the programme intended learning outcomes of the BID programme to ensure that these learning outcomes are measurable and meet all requirements.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

According to the provided evidence, the programme team has reviewed and amended the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) based on benchmarking with Amman National University and Philadelphia University in Jordan, as well as, benchmarking with CIDA's learning outcomes. Furthermore, it was revealed from interviews with faculty members that the PILOs have been discussed with the external auditor. By reviewing the updated PILOs, the Panel found that the number of those PILOs have been decreased from (14) to (13) outcomes, divided into four main categories: knowledge and understanding, subject-specific skills, critical thinking skills, general transferable skills. According to the progress report and the provided evidence, the PILOs review process was associated with conducting sessions and workshops with the academic members for discussion. The Panel found that these updated outcomes are suitable for the programme type and nature, meeting all the discipline's requirements, and are clearly written in a measurable way. One exception is outcome (a) 'recognize administrative, financial, legal, and ethical issues in regard to its relevance and impact in the practice of the interior design profession', which needs to be rephrased in a more measurable way, as the verb 'recognize' is not measurable. Thus, the Panel is of the view that the implemented progress has addressed this recommendation partially.

Recommendation 1.4: *map the course intended learning outcomes to the programme intended learning outcomes and review these outcomes to meet all the requirements necessary to achieve the learning outcomes at the programme level.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

According to the progress report and the supporting evidence, the updated PILOs are mapped to the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs), which were developed according to the international standards identified by the CIDA. The programme team has developed a matrix to link the PILOs with those standards to ensure that the PILOs are at the same level of CIDA standards, in addition to another matrix to map the CILOs to the updated PILOs. The Panel examined the provided evidence and was confirmed that the CILOs -in general- are appropriately linked to the PILOs, and the CILOs were written in a way that considers the progress of the students' level throughout the courses, as well as, the progress of the course complexity level and its outcomes. Furthermore, during interviews with faculty members the Panel learned

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that they participated in both processes of modification and mapping, in addition to their awareness of the mapping between CILOs and PILOs. Hence, the Panel is satisfied with what was accomplished to address this recommendation and concludes that this recommendation is fully addressed.

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2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BID programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 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: *conduct aptitude tests for applicants as a condition for admission to ensure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the programme.*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the admission requirements of the programme have been modified based on the formal benchmarking with the two Jordanian universities (Al-Ahliyya Amman University and Philadephia University), which resulted in adopting new procedures for admitting students. These new procedures were applied starting from the academic year 2017-2018 that include an aptitude test as a mandatory condition for admission, which is a special assessment test conducted to measure the applicants' capabilities and their readiness to study the discipline. Moreover, the Panel found that the admission policy allows applicants, who pass the admission test with minimal grade to register in the first semester of the programme. However, they must submit a portfolio at the end of the semester, with a minimum score of (65%), to be allowed to register in the second semester, if he/she does not achieve the intended score, he/she may repeat one or more of the courses or re-submit the portfolio to be able to register in the second semester. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel was confirmed that this policy is implemented. The provided evidence revealed that in the academic year 2017-2018, (19) students applied for the programme; (17) of them were accepted after they have successfully passed the aptitude test; and (2) students were conditionally accepted after they got a minimal grade in the aptitude test. The Panel examined the aptitude tests, alongside a sample of the assessed tests, and found that the tests complexity level was not appropriate to the programme's level. These tests only measure superficial information and do not measure the required skills needed for a programme in the field of interior design, particularly, the capability of 3D imaging, in addition to the lack of questions measuring creativity and innovative capabilities. Moreover, the Panel found that the admission aptitude test applied for both interior design and graphic design are the same, although the skills required to be measured in both disciplines are different. Furthermore, the Panel noted that neither the aptitude test's questions nor the measured skills have been benchmarked. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should improve the

aptitude test to measure the required skills for each discipline separately, while keeping the conditional admission, which helps the applicants to improve the skills related to the specialization. Accordingly, the Panel considers that the recommendation is not addressed in a way that positively affects the achievement of the programme objectives and its intended learning outcomes.

Recommendation 2.2: *appointment of specialized academic members in the faculty, who holding leading degrees in energy and environmental designs, specializations of hospitality design, sustainability, and healthcare, to allow achieving the professional level required for students in the field of Interior Design.*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

The progress report indicated to the efforts of the College to attract new academic members, including the involvement of an academic member, who is specialized in the energy sciences and sustainability from the College of Engineering at the University to teach some courses, on a part-time basis, starting from the academic year 2017-2018. By examining the timetables of the second semester of the academic year 2017-2018, as well as the timetables of the faculty members, the Panel noted that the number of full-time academics decreased from (4) members to (3) members in the current academic year. It was also revealed to the Panel that one of the academic members is working as deputy dean, while another member is working as a department coordinator, and a third member working as a head of the College QA Unit. Moreover, the Panel is concerned that the number of full-time academic members appointed in the programme is still small, especially with the fact that they are assigned to other administrative work at the same time. The Panel learned during interviews with the students that some faculty members provide them with help and assistance after official hours, which indicates the lack of time dedicated to advising students during the daily working hours. In the Panel's view, the congested schedule of faculty members is negatively affecting their performance in other activities such as conducting scientific research and community services. During interviews with administrative staff and senior management, it was clear that currently there is no plan to recruit new academic members, which was justified by some members due to the paucity of academics in certain specializations such as the interior design for healthcare and hospitality. Moreover, the Panel learned from interviews that the university identifies the need for academic members, primarily, based on the ratio of the number of students to the number of faculty members. The Panel is of the view that this ratio is neither sufficient nor appropriate to identify the department's need of academic members, especially in light of the limited number of students enrolled in the programme, and the diversity of minor specializations of the programme. Furthermore, the Panel scrutinized the list of academic members contributing to the

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programme during the past four years, as well as, the CVs of full-time faculty members and their timetables in the academic year 2017-2018, in addition to the statistics of the faculty's research for the past five years, and various evaluations by students. The Panel noted a low retention rate of faculty members, and only two faculty members have continued for several years, while the remaining members have changed. This raises a concern about the capability of both the College and the programme to retain the faculty members. Accordingly, the Panel considers that this recommendation has not been addressed. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should recruit full-time academic members holding scientific degrees in various specializations of interior design, to ensure that students achieve the required, the implementation of improvement plans of the programme, and enhancing of the scientific research process.

Recommendation 2.3: review *the appraisal form to give more emphasis on the aspects related to research and add those elements that need to be considered for the purpose of faculty promotion, in line with the mission of the College and the goals of the University.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the College, in cooperation with the University, has re-designed the appraisal form of the faculty members. This form has been developed to include all issues related to promotion, such as scientific research and community service. The Panel reviewed a copy of this form, as well as a description indicating how evaluation elements are related to promotion requirements. The evidence indicates that this evaluation has been implemented since the academic year 2017-2018, and during interviews with senior management of the programme, it was revealed that the current appraisal form was designed after benchmarking with a number of regional universities. They also expressed their satisfaction toward the development of the appraisal form of the faculty members. The Panel noted that if any decrease in an aspect of performance is noted, the Department suggests taking appropriate actions to address this aspect, and some training workshops have already been held for faculty members to strengthen some aspects of their performance. In all cases, the faculty members are always notified with the result of the evaluation, as soon as, it has been issued. Accordingly, the Panel recognizes that actions taken to address this recommendation are in place; however, it is still early to judge their effectiveness in supporting the promotion of the faculty members and achieving the university's mission and objectives. Thus, the Panel considers that this recommendation has been partially addressed.

Recommendation 2.4: *provide adequate number of reference, books and learning resources, journals, and periodicals that are commonly used in the specialisation, and provide each individual student with a drawing table in the studio to be used for the whole semester.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The College, in coordination with the library, has provided scientific references, specialized textbooks, journals and periodicals that are adequate and appropriate to the discipline, in addition, the Panel learned during interviews with faculty members and senior management that there is a dedicated annual budget for buying books. As indicated in the progress report, the number of textbooks and scientific references related to the interior design discipline, have been increased from (1,060) books and (4) scientific periodicals in the academic year 2015-2016 to (1,500) books and (8) scientific periodicals in the academic year 2017-2018. This has raised the visits' frequency of students and faculty members to the library, and the statistics provided to the Panel in the progress report showed an increase in the number of borrowed books. During the follow-up visit, the Panel toured the university's library, and was confirmed that there is an adequate collection of textbooks and hard copies of modern scientific references provided for the discipline. In addition, a subscription has been held recently in the Avery Index database, which contains several journals and periodicals related to the specialization of Interior Design, Architecture, and Arts. The Panel learned during interviews with faculty members that their suggestions were taken into consideration when developing and updating the library. Furthermore, the Panel toured the Arts Studios and found that the number of drawing tables is adequate for the students particularly after the recent developments, as there is a table with a highly professional computer available for every student at the graduation level, located in a dedicated hall (Laboratory of Graduation Projects). The Panel also learned, during interviews with students that they can use the drawing tables after the lecture hours and throughout the weekdays to facilitate their work. Thus, the Panel considers that this recommendation has been fully addressed.

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3.   Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates

This section evaluates the extent to which the BID programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2014, 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: *revise the methodology employed to determine the achievement of the programme intended learning outcomes.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

To address this recommendation, the improvement plan has included developing a new mechanism to identify the extent to which the PILOs were achieved, in order to ensure the achievement of each outcome separately. The progress report states that there is a matrix that has been developed for mapping the assessment methods to the CILOs. The external moderator at the beginning of each semester reviews and evaluates this matrix to ensure its consistency with the course type and level. The assessments of each CILO at the course level are then gathered within another matrix that measures the achievement of each CILO at the courses level. Finally, the results are collected into a matrix at the programme level to measure the achievement of each outcome, independently. Hence, the Panel recognizes that the mechanism utilized to assess the achievement of the PILOs is appropriate to measure the attainment of the ILOs whether on the courses level or on the programme level and it also allows measuring the achievement of each outcome separately. Moreover, the Panel noted the implementation of this mechanism in some courses' report, such as 'History of Interior Design' (IND3103), where an academic staff member recommended to reconsider the assessment of outcomes related to knowledge and understanding (a1, a2). This was due to the low achievement level of these outcomes, which proves -in the Panel view- the implementation of this newly developed mechanism and the utilization of its results in improving the courses. However, the Panel is concerned that this mechanism did not reveal that outcome (A1), as previously mentioned in recommendation: 1.3, is unmeasurable, which may challenge the effectiveness of that mechanism. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should track the implementation of its new mechanism continuously, and measure its effectiveness. Accordingly, the Panel finds that the recommendation is partially addressed.

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Recommendation 3.2: *use the benchmarking policy in a more professional way, benchmark the programme officially with the standards of professional bodies and leading interior design programmes, and expand the scope of benchmarking activities to include admission criteria, learning resources, and the methods used in assessing and measuring the learning outcomes.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the College has implemented a formal benchmarking with two Jordanian universities: Al Ahliyya Amman University, and the University of Philadelphia. The provided evidence includes the Memoranda of Understanding and correspondences sent by the University to these institutions. During interviews, the senior management of the programme indicated that the selection of the universities was based on the implemented benchmarking policy of the University; however, it was explained that one of the reasons for choosing these universities, in particular, rather than other universities, is their acceptance to conduct formal benchmarking with the College. In addition, the College had conducted an informal benchmarking with the American University of Virginia Commonwealth in Qatar, and on the local level with the University of Bahrain. By examining the provided documents, and what was mentioned in the progress report, the Panel found that the benchmarking results were utilized in improving the programme on different levels, including the study regulations, the admission policy, the PILOs, and the scientific references in the library. However, the Panel observed that the benchmarking process did not cover other areas, such as learning resources such as computer laboratories and different types of equipment related to the discipline. Moreover, the Panel learned that the programme seeks to be accredited by the CIDA as a sort of benchmarking with the best interior design entities, and noted some actions already taken to achieve that aim. The College also has employed an expert from CIDA to conduct the external moderation for the programme, which covered all aspects of the curriculum and its progress. The faculty members confirmed, during interviews, that the results of this benchmarking have been used in improving the programme, and the Panel acknowledges the implementation of benchmarking with two Jordanian universities. However, the Panel recommends that the College should conduct a comprehensive benchmarking for all aspects of the programme, and expand the scope of benchmarking to include regional and international universities, in order to achieve a higher level of excellence. Accordingly, the Panel finds that the recommendation is partially addressed.

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Recommendation 3.3: *develop a strict policy in relation to plagiarism and the protection of intellectual property rights, implement the procedures related to the detection of plagiarism in all the works submitted by students and raise their awareness about the broad concept of plagiarism.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the students' work is subject to verification *via* Turnitin as a compulsory procedure, which is available on the university's website for all users. The provided evidence also refers to conducting many workshops to raise the awareness and caution against academic plagiarism. Moreover, the induction day for the new students covers many topics including awareness of the academic plagiarism; the students are also trained to use Turnitin as one of the major topics included in some course specifications. Furthermore, it was revealed to the Panel that there is a policy in place for detecting academic plagiarism and imposing penalties on any detected cases, which was demonstrated by examining the university's policy of academic plagiarism, and some evidence on detected cases and applying the university's policy on such cases. With regard to plagiarism in scientific projects, the Panel found, through reviewing the provided evidence and from interviews with the faculty members, that there are procedures for preventing plagiarism within the scientific projects from the beginning, as the course instructor monitors all stages of developing the students' project starting from hand drawings until the project is finalized. Additionally, the deadlines for submitting the project in each stage are being previously fixed. The Panel also noted that if any case of plagiarism has been discovered, it shall be referred to the misconduct committee, which recommends the appropriate penalty. Furthermore, the Panel found during interviews with the students that they have full awareness of the plagiarism policy, how to avoid plagiarism and the imposed penalty in case of any detected plagiarism. However, it was not clear to the Panel how plagiarism of the projects' idea is prevented, and whether there is a special procedure to detect the plagiarism of the ideas from the beginning. Therefore, the Panel considers that the mechanisms adopted by the programme team have partially addressed this recommendation.

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Recommendation 3.4: *reconsider the methodology employed to ensure the alignment between assessment and the course intended learning outcomes, and ensure that all programme and course intended learning outcomes are systematically and exhaustively assessed.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

According to the progress report, the College QA Unit has developed a mechanism to ensure consistency between assessment tools and both PILOs and CILOs, in which two matrixes have been designed. The first measures the achievement of the learning outcomes in each course, where the course instructor enters the results of the applied assessment tools at the end of each semester. This matrix feeds another matrix that is managed by the programme coordinator, to ensure the achievement of the PILOs, and allow the measurement of each learning outcome separately at the level of the academic programme. This also enables tracking the results of achieving the outcomes comprehensively. Furthermore, the progress report refers to a moderation process, which is conducted at the beginning of each semester by internal moderators, who are assigned by the programme coordinator, to review each course description. The review includes the learning and teaching approaches, assessment tools and the compatibility of these tools with the intended outcomes, and the infrastructure. It also ensures that the outcomes are written in a measurable and transferable way, and verifies the assessment tools and its consistency with the intended outcomes and the course level, and the quality of the assessment standards. The Panel was confirmed that this process is implemented through reviewing some samples of the internal moderation forms. Nevertheless, the Panel found that the assessment in a number of courses, such as 'Interior Design (1)' (IND231), 'Interior Design (3)' (IND331), and 'Production Project (programming)' (IND432), are not written properly, as they have been written within the course's specifications and the programme's specification in a form of required skills and objectives. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should conduct a workshop for faculty members in this regard, and review the assessment description in both programme and course. Hence, the Panel considers that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 3.5: *apply internal moderation to all student works, and develop a mechanism to monitor the implementation of internal moderation procedures and its effectiveness.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

According to the progress report, and as indicated in the provided evidence, the programme team in collaboration with the College QA Unit and the Quality Assurance

and Accreditation Centre (QAAC) at the University has modified the internal moderation policy to ensure that all students' work has been moderated. Internal moderation was expanded to include moderating the course specification before being offered, the examination questions, and ensuring the fairness of grades. The procedures also include the moderation of all students' work, which is done through two stages. The pre-moderation stage ensures the alignment between assessment tools and the intended outcomes, and the post-moderation stage includes final examinations and students' classwork. The results are collected and submitted to the Department Council, which may suggest recommendations that are raised to the College Council for further action in these cases. Furthermore, during the site visit, the Panel has reviewed filled templates of the newly developed forms of pre and post moderation and found that these forms cover many aspects. In addition, a column has been added for the internal moderator's comments, and another column has been added for the course instructor to mention the procedures taken to address the comments or the recommendations made by the internal moderator. During the follow-up visit interviews with faculty members, they confirmed to the Panel the implementation of these procedures on all student works in different courses. The Panel also learned that students' grades are not published unless the internal moderation report is discussed within the Department and approved by the College. The College QA Unit tracks the adherence to the internal moderator's comments through the 'Internal Moderation Audit Report', which is a template of one sheet checking whether the course specifications have been verified, as well as, the pre and post moderation. The Panel recognizes that the implemented mechanism and practices to address this recommendation are appropriate and have a positive impact on the assessment process of the students' work. Hence, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.6: *implement the ASU's policies and procedures, especially those related to the selection of external examiners, and ensure that all assessment methods as well as student assessed works by course instructors or different committees are subject to an independent external moderation.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

According to the progress report, the programme has updated its list of external examiners to include experts from Al-Ahliyya Amman University rather than relying entirely on the University of Yarmouk, as had been formerly done. The improvement plan has also referred to the necessity of implementing the university's policy related to the selection of external examiners, and through reviewing the progress report and the attached documents, it was clear that these policies are being implemented. The process begin at the Department, which reviews the CVs of nominees to select the most

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experienced individuals, then sends their CVs to the academic standards committee, which in turns raises its recommendation to the college's deanship and finally to the University for final approval. By reviewing the CVs of the external examiners, the Panel noted that there are three examiners from Al-Ahilyya Amman University, one of them is specialized in Graphic Design, and the specializations of the other two do not cover the minor specializations for all courses offered by the programme. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should expand the selection criteria of external examiners to include more experts in different aspects of the field of interior design, and with different academic backgrounds by selecting them from more than one university. The progress report mentioned that all assessment methods and student works are subject to independent external moderation, through reports submitted by the external reviewer of the programme. By examining the external reviewer policy and its implementation in the external moderation report, the Panel found that the report did not use the template attached to the external moderation policy. The Panel noted that although the external moderation report covers many aspects mentioned in the attached template, it did not completely cover all assessment standards as stated in the template. Additionally, the report did not include a judgment for each standard (excellent– good – satisfied – inadequate) as mentioned in the template. Accordingly, the Panel recommends that the College should ensure that the external moderator is adhered to the university's external moderation policy and using its template. Regarding the implementation of the assessment process for assessing the effectiveness of the external moderators' work, the Panel learned from the minutes of the academic standards committee that the results and recommendations of the external moderator reports have been discussed within the committee. It was not clear, yet, that the recommendations of the external moderators have been also discussed, nor actions, generated by the faculty members, have been taken to put them into practice. Moreover, during interviews with the academic members, the senior management, the advisory board, and employers, it was revealed that a jury including external experts from the labour market or from specialized academics assesses senior projects of the students. The Panel reviewed filled forms of some assessed practical projects of the students, which demonstrated the participation of an external member in the process, despite the lack of a mechanism to verify the assessments of different juries and ensure their moderation. Furthermore, through examining the external examiner policy of the University and the external moderation forms at the level of courses, the Panel observed that although the university's policy states that the tasks of external examiners include assessment of achieving fairness in the grading process, as well as, evaluation of student performance. The assessment form does not assess this and the assessment is implemented only before conducting the examinations. Furthermore, by examining the forms filled by the external examiners at the level of courses, it was confirmed that these forms neither include feedback about the students work nor include assessment of achieving fairness in the grading process. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should improve the mechanism used in

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moderation, to ensure that student works, assessed by the course instructor or by various committees for external moderation, are subject to moderation, as per the university's policy; thus, the Panel recognizes that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 3.7: *develop and implement mechanisms to ensure the level of student works is appropriate for the type and level of programme.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The programme team implemented a number of mechanisms to address this recommendation, including developing a matrix to link the CILOs to the PILOs, in order to measure student's achievement level directly, in addition to benchmarking the level of the student's graduation projects against the level of the students in similar regional universities. The process of benchmarking resulted in detecting some strengths and weaknesses in students' work. Accordingly, a plan has been developed to improve the weaknesses. The strict implementation of the plagiarism policy also ensures the authenticity of students' works. Moreover, students' projects are presented to juries consisting of internal and external members, which monitor the work's authenticity, and its alignment with the level of each course; this was confirmed to the Panel through reviewing the practical projects assessment forms. In addition, the implemented procedures include pre and post moderation, as well as, external moderation, and the discussion of the advanced courses' projects by external members. However, there was no evidence about the feedback of external examiners at the level of all students work. The Panel observed through examining the external examiners forms of the courses, as well as, the external reviewer report of the programme, which only includes the moderation of the assessment approaches. It did not assess samples of students' works to ensure the alignment of their works with the programme level and requirements. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should include the assessment jury and discussion committees for projects across all levels, within the assessment policy to be regulated and mandatory. In addition, the roles of external examiners of courses, as well as, the external reviser of the programme should be activated in reviewing the students work and their level of achievement - as indicated earlier in (Recommendation: 3.7) - to ensure the consistency of their works with the programme level. Accordingly, the Panel recognizes that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 3.8: *provide opportunities for students to do their internship in interior design offices, by establishing stronger relationship with specialised employers*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

According to the progress report, the College has updated the list of the internship places, and has sought to conduct memorandums of understanding with several professional institutions, as the programme team -in coordination with the training unit of the College- held a memorandum of understanding with two companies specialized in the field of interior design. It will be activated starting from the second semester of the academic year 2017-2018. The Panel reviewed statistics related to the training places and list of trainees for the last three years, outlining the diversity of training places and their number. The Panel also found during interviews with students and employers that the College provides students with training opportunities in professional places and monitors their training by academic supervisors of the programme. The Panel notes that the programme team sought to enhance communication with the specialized employers during the previous period, as well as, conducting suitable arrangements to monitor the internship process. Hence, the Panel encourages the College to continue expanding the communication with employers to provide further training opportunities for the students. Thus, the Panel considers that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.9: *increase the number of Advisory Board members specialised in Interior Design, and ensures that the Board meets regularly according to the University policy, which specifies at least one meeting at every semester, in order to benefit more from its feedback.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

In response to this recommendation, the number of advisory board members has been increased to five members including specialized experts in the field of interior design rather than two members. By examining the CVs of the new experts, it was revealed that two of them were members in the former board -before modification- and three other members have been added including an academic member from the University of Bahrain. The other two members are working in the field of interior design, and have specialized operating offices in Bahrain. This is considered by the Panel as an enhancement for the board role in developing the programme and linking it with the labour market. The provided evidence and the site visit interviews with members of the advisory committee indicated that the Board held its meetings regularly according to the university's policy, at least one meeting every semester. The Panel found that

the Board is aware of many topics related to the development of the programme, such as admission requirements, modification of the study plan, specifications of the graduates and any other business, which are raised to the Board for discussion and taking suitable actions to issue recommendations in this regard. The Panel has found some evidence referring to addressing these recommendations by modifying the study plan and the admission requirements. The Panel recognizes that the College has achieved a reasonable progress in addressing this recommendation. Hence, the Panel considers that the recommendation is fully addressed.

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4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance

This section evaluates the extent to which the BID programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 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: *ensure that the Quality Assurance Unit monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the implementation of the policies and procedures relevant to assessments of student works.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report states that the College QA Unit monitors and evaluates the implementation of the policies related to assessing students' work through tracking the internal and external assessment processes, and then submits a summarized report to the Dean. The work of the Unit is subject to the internal moderation of the QAAC. During interviews, the Panel learned that the Unit has made several developments and improvements, as it has developed new mechanisms and activated others. For example, a number of forms have been developed and tracked electronically (e.g. the Internal Moderation Form, the Verification Form, and the Academic Staff Appraisal Form), as well as checking the students' work through Turnitin to detect any academic plagiarism. According to the progress report, the monitoring process conducted by the Unit had led to exploring some areas that need to be improved, accordingly, the Unit has developed some recommendations to tackle them, and follow up their implementation. The progress report and the supporting materials provided to the Panel offers many examples on how the areas for improvement have been detected and the recommendations have been addressed and tracked by the Unit. However, the Panel has detected some mistakes in the course and programme specifications related to the description of the assessment tools that were written as learning objectives (see recommendation: 3.4), as well as other observations that have already been mentioned in relation to the implemented internal and external moderation mechanisms (see recommendations: 3.5 & 3.6). The Panel found during interviews that a director, who is supported by three faculty members (the three coordinators of the Graphic Design, Interior Design, and Computer Science programmes), manages the College QA Unit. They all undertake their responsibilities in the Unit beside their usual teaching responsibilities. The Panel acknowledges the efforts of the College QA Unit and its working staff; nevertheless, the Panel is concerned about the heavy workload of its staff members, who work in the Unit beside their usual work as teachers, which may

affect the proper implementation of policies and procedures. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should continue monitoring and assessing the efficiency of the applied policies and procedures related to the assessment of students' work through the College QA Unit, as well as, decrease the academic workload of the QA team to ensure the accuracy of the monitoring and evaluation processes. Therefore, the Panel recognizes that the recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 4.2: *ensure that all the structured comments of relevant stakeholders are gathered, analysed and used for the improvement of the BID programme and that the outcomes of the questionnaires and meetings are communicated to the stakeholders on a regular basis.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

According to the progress report, the feedback is gathered from different resources including surveys. During the site visit, the Panel reviewed samples of surveys collected from students, meetings with alumni, employers, faculty members and others. During interviews, the students confirmed that the College utilized this feedback in improving the programme and solving problems related to the students. Moreover, the programme senior management and the faculty members stated during interviews that all the results of the surveys, as well as, the opinions and suggestions of faculty members are discussed at the Departments, where the necessary actions are taken to be implemented, and are then submitted – when needed - to higher levels for approval. Moreover, members of the Advisory Board indicated that their opinions and suggestions, which are raised during the board meetings, are taken into consideration and are tracked. For example, the software of Building Information Modelling (Revit) has been purchased and applied, as per their recommendation. The progress report indicates that stakeholders have been informed with taken decisions and modifications. However, the Panel found that the mechanism of informing internal stakeholders about the result of surveys and the extent of the achieved progress is not clear. This was confirmed to the Panel during interviews with the senior management, the faculty, the Advisory Board, and the students, whereas their responses were inconsistent regarding the mechanism of informing them with the decisions taken and adjustments. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should adopt clear and specific mechanisms to ensure the stakeholders' awareness of the achieved progress in relation to improvement suggestions. Based on the above, the Panel considers that this recommendation is partially addressed.

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5. Conclusion

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

The Bachelor in Interior Design programme offered by Applied Science University has made (Adequate Progress) and as a result, the programme will (not be subjected to another follow-up visit).

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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.

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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,

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