



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
Education & Training Quality Authority
Kingdom of Bahrain - مملكة البحرين

Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programme Follow-Up Visit Report

**Bachelor of Interior Design Engineering
College of Engineering
Gulf University
Kingdom of Bahrain**

First Follow-up Visit Date: 25-26 November 2019

Review Date: 9–12 April 2017

HC102-C2-F014

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Acronyms

BIDE	Bachelor of Interior Design Engineering
BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
CTLAC	College Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee
CQAC	College Quality Assurance Committee
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
GU	Gulf University
HEC	Higher Education Council
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
ID	Interior Design
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
IT	Information Technology
LMS	Learning Management System
MIS	Management Information System
PD	Professional Development
PIAB	Programme Industrial Advisory Board
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
PMO	Performance Management Office

PR	Progress Report
QADC	Quality Assurance and Development Centre
SDU	Staff Development Unit
SIS	Student Information System
ToR	Terms of Reference
UTLAC	University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee

The Programme Follow-up Visit Overview

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

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

This Report provides an account of the follow-up process and findings of the follow-up panel (the Panel), whereby the Bachelor of Interior Design Engineering (BIDE), at Gulf University (GU) was revisited on 25-26 November 2019 to assess its progress in line with the published Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework and the BQA regulations.

A. Aims of the Follow-up Visit

- (i) Assess the progress made against the recommendations highlighted in the review report (in accordance with the four BQA Indicators) of GU's BIDE since the programme was reviewed on 9-12 April 2017.
- (ii) Provide further information and support for the continuous improvement of academic standards and quality enhancement of higher education provision, specifically within the BIDE programme at GU, and for higher education provision within the Kingdom of Bahrain, as a whole.

B. Background

The review of GU's BIDE programme in the Kingdom of Bahrain was conducted by the DHR of the BQA on 9-12 April 2017.

The overall judgement of the review panel for the BIDE programme of GU was that of 'no confidence'. Consequently, the follow-up process incorporated the review of the evidence presented by GU to the DHR, the Improvement Plan submitted to BQA in March 2018, the Progress Report (PR) and its supporting materials, which were submitted in September 2019, and the documents submitted during the follow-up site visit and those extracted from the interview sessions.

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

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

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

Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates; **'not satisfied'**

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

The follow-up visit was conducted by a panel (the Panel) consisting of two members and focused on assessing how the Institution addressed the recommendations of the report of the review conducted on 9-12 April 2017. 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 of Interior Design Engineering

The College of Engineering is one of GU colleges, which was established in 2003. Currently, the College offers one bachelor's degree programme namely the BIDE. It was first offered in the academic year 2012-2013 and was revised and implemented in the academic year 2016-2017. The BIDE programme graduated its first batch, comprising four students, in the second semester of the academic year 2015-2016. The programme is offered in English through the Department of Architecture and Interior Design and consists of 136 credits. The statistics provided by the Department of Interior Design during the follow-up visit indicated that currently the total number of full-time academic staff contributing to the programme is seven with two part-time faculty members, who are all supported by three administrative staff. As for the current number of students, it is 74.

It is worth noting that admission of new students into the BIDE programme was stopped by the Higher Education Council (HEC) in the second semester of the academic year 2018-2019 based on the result of the BQA April 2017 review report. However, this was only temporarily; as, when GU communicated to the HEC that the programme has been revised and that admitting students into it will provide an opportunity to implement the programme in its revised form, the HEC reconsidered its decision and approved opening admission for new students again. This, in turn, allowed GU to admit new students in the Fall semester of the academic year 2019-2020.

1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BIDE programme of GU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of April 2017, 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, on the basis of formal academic benchmarking and market research, the programme's aims, in order to reflect better the nature and multidisciplinary dimension of the degree.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The April 2017 BQA review report of the BIDE programme pointed out that no rigorous formal benchmarking against dual degree programmes similar to BIDE had been conducted, nor any relevant market research, to ensure the appropriateness of the programme's aims. In response, GU has benchmarked the BIDE against 24 programmes selected from universities locally, regionally, and internationally. However, this benchmarking was only desktop-based, with the exception of that conducted against the Kingdom University in Bahrain, with which GU has a formal agreement. Interviews with senior management clarified that the benchmarked programmes were selected because of their similarity to BIDE in terms of being design-based, fundamentally multidisciplinary, and accredited internationally by professional bodies. However, this explanation was not explicitly stated in the resulting benchmarking report. Nevertheless, it was evident from the report that the benchmarking of the BIDE was conducted with similar interior design and engineering programmes and extended to adjacent specializations (e.g. Architecture Engineering and Industrial Design Engineering), in order to have a broader context from which to view the programme and analyze it. The report also indicated that the benchmarking exercise shed light on: the opportunity available in Bahrain for the programme, the relevance of its title, and the appropriateness of its aims and objectives.

Upon examination of the benchmarking report, the Panel confirmed that what was benchmarked were the programme's rationality; aims; Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs); curriculum (domains, units, weight, structure, and progression); teaching, learning, and assessment; and admission. Interviews with senior management further clarified to the Panel how the benchmarking exercise, along with the standards of international professional and accreditation bodies in the disciplines of design, engineering and technology as important reference points, have provided useful information on the programme aims, the reshaping of the programme structure,

curriculum content, teaching and learning strategies, assessment methodologies, admission criteria and learning resources. Feedback on the benchmarking report as well as on the programme's newly revised specification was taken from the BIDE's Programme Industrial Advisory Board (PIAB) and also from external international reviewers, where both parties validated the quality of the benchmarking process and confirmed that the title of the BIDE is appropriately reflected in its aims, Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), and curriculum. In addition to the benchmarking exercise and the reliance on external reference points, GU conducted with an external consultant a comprehensive market research study in 2019, which concluded that there is a need for BIDE graduates especially in the local Bahraini market. This need was similarly expressed by PIAB members during the site visit interviews and also in relevant minutes of meetings.

In conclusion, the benchmarking exercise and report have been, together with the standards of the external reference points, the results of the labor market study, and the feedback of the PIAB and the international programme reviewers, the key elements that have supported GU in reshaping and revising the BIDE programme aims, as well as all its other components. The aims have been revised in alignment with graduate attributes at the programme and the university levels, and the Panel finds that the compiled body of knowledge from all of the above is sufficient to support the rationale for the programme, its aims, and the associated claim that the revised programme reflects better the nature and the multidisciplinary dimension of the degree. The Panel also acknowledges that the outcomes of the benchmarking exercise have worked towards the purpose suggested by the recommendation. Despite this, however, the Panel considers this recommendation as partially addressed only; as the conducted benchmarking was not formal in most part. Additionally, the Panel advises the College to explicitly include the methodology adopted for selecting universities for benchmarking, as well as the reasons for benchmarking the BIDE programme on a wide spectrum of disciplines, in future benchmarking reports.

Recommendation 1.2: *revise the 2016-2017 curriculum to ensure greater synergy of the programme with its aims and intended learning outcomes and that it is aligned with the qualification's title.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

Based on the results of the April 2017 review report, the BIDE programme lacked in specialized engineering courses and did not provide the correct balance of skills and knowledge, theory and practice. As a result, its curriculum was revised in 2018-2019 on the basis of the outcomes of the benchmarking exercise, the market research study and in light of feedback from multiple sources including the PIAB and the external reviewers, as explained in the 2018-2019 Annual Report of the BIDE. The revision was conducted by an assigned Programme Review Team with the collaboration of the

Dean, and has led to the programme's new structure, where the curriculum contents and the teaching and learning strategies, as evident from the Study Plan and course specifications, reflect the programme title and the aims listed in the programme specification. As mentioned in the PR, specifications for all the courses, whether existing or new, have been either revised or developed, respectively, in line with the revised aims, ILOs, teaching, learning, and assessment, as well as learning resources, facilities, and most importantly, the qualification's title and its multidisciplinary nature. This was also confirmed through interviews with various stakeholders. The curriculum, thus, was revised in consideration with the revisions in the programme graduate attributes, aims, and PILOs. The revised curriculum focuses on a number of domains, namely: design, technology and engineering; communications; theory and history; professionalism; and elective courses, and the Curriculum Domain Analysis document shows which courses fall under which domain.

The Panel noticed that the courses included in the revised Study Plan are sufficiently balanced between the two disciplines (design and engineering), and the programme's structure with its components, such as the domains, the classifications of the PILOs (knowledge, skills and competence), and the PILOs themselves, are written in a clear and structured way. The Panel also noticed that the progression through the different courses across the years in the Study Plan can be clearer from their titles, as is the case with the 'Interior Design Engineering Studio' course, which clearly progresses in the Plan from level one to five and up till the capstone project. This is not currently the case with the other courses in the Plan, as their progression is evident only by referral to their course descriptions rather than from their titles. In addition, the revised curriculum has only been taught for one academic year (plus the current academic year), which makes it too early for the Panel to draw any conclusions about the quality of its implementation. However, the files reviewed by the Panel on-site, for courses taught in Year 1 according to the revised curriculum, have an improved structure, rich contents, and a good balance between theory and practice and are very clear in terms of expected outcomes and assessment criteria (e.g. ENGI 171 'Building Components and System' and ENGI 164 'Engineering Mathematics II'). In addition, the Panel found that courses of the 2016-2017 curriculum, even if taught separately from the 2018-2019 curriculum, as prescribed by the HEC, have been injected with the revised contents, which is something that the Panel acknowledges. Moreover, by comparing the same courses taught in previous academic years with last year, the Panel clearly noticed the improvement in their overall structure and contents (e.g. IND313 'Interior Design Studio V: Feasibility'). Collectively, all this provides the Panel with reasons to believe that the revised BIDE curriculum ensures greater synergy of the programme with its aims and ILOs, and that it is well-aligned with the qualification's title, and so the Panel considers that the related recommendation has been fully addressed.

Recommendation 1.3: *adjust the transition plan and the equivalency between the courses of the 2012-2013 and 2016-2017 curricula, and teach the two curricula separately, to ensure coherent delivery of each of them.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

According to the April 2017 review report, the transition plan between the 2012-2013 BIDE programme and the revised 2016-2017 BIDE programme lacked guidance and there existed a misalignment in the equivalency of the courses between their curricula. It was thus recommended that the transition plan and the equivalency between courses be adjusted and that the two curricula be taught separately. Based on the PR and interviews with various stakeholders, the Panel came to find that the Study Plan of the 2012-2013 cohort and that of the 2016-2017 cohort are running in parallel and that their programmes are being taught separately, as per HEC regulations.

To ensure equivalency between the courses of the two study plans, GU has revised both the 2012-2013 and 2016-2017 Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) to reflect the engineering and technology aspects. Interviews with the Programme Review Team and with the BIDE faculty members confirmed that not only have the CILOs been revised but also the contents of the course specifications, where their revision parallels the course specifications of the 2018-2019 curriculum, which is more balanced between interior design, engineering, and technology. These revised course specifications are subjected to further review by the Programme Review Committee before they are delivered. An examination of a sample of 2012-2013 course files by the Panel confirmed the adequacy of the revisions made and a greater integration of engineering and technology aspects in the course contents, teaching and learning strategies, and assessments. Interviews with senior management also clarified that the recruitment of more faculty members with an engineering background has helped in ensuring greater alignment in the equivalency of the different programmes, just as the revision and dissemination of relevant policies and procedures (e.g. assessment policy, plagiarism policy, internship policy) in synergy with these revisions has done. Consequently, based on the above, the Panel finds that this recommendation has been fully addressed.

Recommendation 1.4: *revise the syllabi of courses to ensure that they meet local, regional and international academic standards for the disciplines and provide currency, depth, breadth, and professional practice needed for a bachelor's degree in interior design engineering.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The April 2017 review report mentioned that not all the course syllabi of the then newly revised 2016-2017 curriculum were fully developed and that the majority of the

course specifications reflected course contents that are not at the appropriate level or standard of a higher education degree in interior design and engineering. This was due to the lack of depth, breadth, currency of information and research findings, as well as balance between theory and practice. In response, GU began by first revising at the university level the template of the course specifications, which was put into effect from the academic year 2018-2019. The new template includes the following: a brief course description; course aims; CILOs classified to reflect the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level descriptors; course topics; course references; teaching and learning strategies; assessment strategies, student's support, and policies on academic honesty, deferral and late assessment. This is in addition to sections on benchmarked courses, PILOs' mapping, and accreditation standards.

Upon the examination of a sample of course syllabi, the Panel noticed that the standards of professional accreditation bodies (e.g. CIDA, EAFSG, IET, CIBSE) were taken into account in the development of their contents. This is to ensure alignment with international academic standards for the disciplines (Design, Engineering, and Technology) that are covered by the BIDE and to help ensure currency, depth, breadth, and professional practice in the BIDE courses and their specifications. Each syllabus is supported by another document known as the 'Course Management Plan' that includes detailed information on the course assessment tasks and requirements, and together they are distributed to the students and discussed with them in the first class of each course, as confirmed through faculty and student interviews. The Panel finds that the revised course syllabi are well-organized, comprehensive in terms of what they cover, and in most parts reflect a multidisciplinary approach, global perspective, current reading lists, a diversification between theoretical and practical learning outcomes, and an exposure of students to professional practice. As such, and with the complete restructuring of the BIDE programme, the Panel finds that this recommendation is fully addressed, especially since all course syllabi for the 2018-2019 curriculum have been fully developed and reviewed, even for courses that have not yet been delivered.

Recommendation 1.5: *revise the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes to ensure their alignment with the programme aims and their relevance to the integration of both disciplines, interior design and engineering, to better reflect the type and level of the Bachelor of Interior Design and Engineering degree.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

During the April 2017 review of the BIDE programme, it was noticed that the PILOs were aligned only with CIDA professional standards, with a lack of engineering content in the curriculum, which as a result could not support the achievement of these PILOs. In a way, the April 2017 review report prompted a holistic rethinking of the

BIDE programme. In response, as mentioned earlier, a complete restructuring of the programme has been conducted, including a revision of the PILOs, in such a way that they align with the programme aims, graduate attributes, and the standards of various international professional bodies (e.g. CIDA, EUR-ACE, EAFSG, ABET). These PILOs as well as the programme aims and curriculum design and contents were developed on the basis of the subject benchmark statements of Engineering and Art & Design, ABET Accreditation Standards, and Standards of Engineering Council UK, as well as on the results of the labour market study conducted locally, the feedback of the PIAB, and the external reviewers' comments.

As a result of the analysis of the benchmarked standards, the new programme structure focuses on several domains, which are: design, technology & engineering; communication; theory & history; and professionalism. The new structure also has 17 PILOs grouped very clearly under three categories: Knowledge (Theoretical Understanding and Practical Application), Skills (Generic Problem Solving and Analytical skills & Communication, ICT, and Numeracy) and Competence. The Panel finds that the domains of study, classifications of the PILOs, and the PILOs themselves constitute a solid, adequate, and well-balanced foundation for the programme. The Panel is also of the view that the new 2018-2019 curriculum provides course offerings that support in depth and breadth the integration of both disciplines (interior design and engineering), through a balanced distribution of theoretical and practical courses and the provision of new learning opportunities for students to explore and experiment in many different ways and apply knowledge and skills acquired through their courses. This collectively contributes to supporting the achievement of the PILOs. Nevertheless, the Panel finds that even though the CILOs of the revised curriculum are clearly mapped to the PILOs, the progression of the achievement of the different PILOs across the four years of the programme is not very clear. As a result, the Panel suggests that the programme provides a clear explanation of how the PILOs are achieved progressively, other than the one provided in the PR, which refers to an 'incremental approach'. Overall, however, the Panel considers this recommendation as partially addressed.

Recommendation 1.6: *ensure that the programme adheres to higher education and scholarly codes of profession and academic conduct in relation to the writing, scoping, and mapping of the programme's Course Intended Learning Outcomes.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The 2017 review report had pointed to a significant lack of scholarly writing with regards to how CILOs are expressed as well as to a lack of monitoring of academic misconduct including plagiarism. In response, GU revised its Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure and it also started providing through its Staff Development Unit

(SDU) training sessions for its faculty and staff on the plagiarism-detection software 'Turnitin' and on academic misconduct and related disciplinary actions to be taken. This training was evaluated by the staff as evident from the Training Evaluation Analysis Report submitted with the supporting materials. The results of this evaluation were analysed by the Quality Assurance and Development Centre (QADC) and indicated an overall satisfaction of the staff members with the training and their willingness to implement what they had learned in their day-to-day practices. In addition, students receive similar training during their induction, in order to learn how to avoid plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct. As per GU's revised Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure and from interviews with faculty and students, the Panel was informed that major student assignments are screened through Turnitin and there are penalties for cases of repeated plagiarism. A sample of plagiarism cases and the actions taken in response to them was submitted as evidence. It confirmed to the Panel the programme's adherence to the University's Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that there is a good awareness of the accepted similarity percentage, which ranges between 15%-20%. As for the faculty, they submit all their course documents through Turnitin for plagiarism check, as was reported during interview sessions with them and with the senior management.

With respect to CILOs, in particular, course instructors were provided with training on how to develop and write them based on NQF level descriptors. The developed CILOs are reviewed by the Programme Leader/Head of Department (HoD) and by the Programme Review Team and are then sent to the concerned instructor for enhancement and finalization, if necessary. Once these CILOs are prepared and included in the course specifications, they are internally checked for similarity/plagiarism through Turnitin, in adherence to GU's Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures. All this was confirmed to the Panel through interviews with various stakeholders. In addition, the CILOs of each course have been clearly mapped to the PILOs by the Programme Review Team, and this mapping was found to be adequate upon examination by the Panel. The PR further explains that the CILOs that are significantly aligned with the relevant PILO are considered as 'high impact CILOs' and the weight of their assessments is higher than those that are considered as 'low impact CILOs' (meaning they indirectly contribute to the attainment of the relevant PILO/s) However, all the courses ILOs collectively contribute to the achievement of the PILOs and the graduate attributes. Considering the above measures, as well as the fact that the CILOs were benchmarked along with the courses against local, regional, and international universities and are also based on international standards of professional bodies, the Panel considers this recommendation as fully addressed.

Recommendation 1.7: *enhance its teaching and learning policy to meet the nature and needs of the programme in line with international good practice and current research findings.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The April 2017 review report mentioned that the Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Strategy of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design Engineering is not specific enough to deal with the different disciplines of the programme and includes nothing on e-learning. Additionally, the teaching methods are more theoretical than practical, are not informed by research, and are not suitable for meeting the nature and needs of the BIDE programme in line with international good practice. In response, the benchmarking exercise conducted by GU covered teaching strategies and methods and the results of this benchmarking highlighted teaching methodologies and tools through which the programme can deliver theoretical, historical, technical and studio-based knowledge (e.g. studio-based learning, lecture, tutorial, workshop with industry experts, practical sessions, computer laboratory sessions, guest lecturers, site visits and field trips). The results also drew attention to discipline specific contents and pedagogy (e.g. independent learning and self-evaluation). Using these results, the BIDE revised its Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, guided by standards of international professional bodies, to develop students' multidisciplinary knowledge along with their practical, intellectual, lifelong learning and employability skills. This was confirmed to the Panel through interviews with faculty and senior management, where it was explained that GU is following an outcomes-based and holistic approach to learning through the utilization of a variety of teaching and learning methods. Interviews with students confirmed this, as they reported that the teaching and learning in their courses includes methods such as: formal and interactive lectures, group discussions, case study analyses, e-learning, work-based or placement learning, seminars, extracurricular activities, site visits, field trips, laboratory work, guest speakers, and, most importantly, the design studio. E-Learning, which was one of the concerns in the previous review, has also been developed and embedded in the programme as a communication tool for exchange of information and documents, and to support in-class activities, as confirmed through the evidence submitted on MOODLE utilization and from interviews with students who mentioned that they use the Management Information System (MIS) 'Creatrix Campus' to download course materials, check grades and announcements, and participate in online discussions and online forums. Considering the above and taking into account the fact that the revised Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Strategy has been reviewed and validated by the PIAB and the external reviewers, the Panel finds this recommendation as fully addressed.

Recommendation 1.8: *revise the assessment policy framework to reflect the specificity of interior design and engineering and ensure the prevention of acts of academic misconduct.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

Based on the report of the April 2017 review, the assessment framework for many of the core interior design courses was unclear and did not reflect the pedagogy for the programme's disciplines. In addition, the related plagiarism policy and procedures were not found to be comprehensive, as they did not include or mention visual plagiarism, which is extremely important in a programme of this nature. Consequently, GU revised the BIDE Assessment Strategy on the basis of the standards of international professional bodies, and feedback on it was received from members of the PIAB and also from internal and external reviews. This was confirmed to the Panel through interview sessions with senior management and through an examination of minutes of meetings and reviewers' reports. This strategy supports the utilization of a wide range of assessment methods, which are well-aligned with the level and type of the courses. This alignment is also ensured by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment committees at the college and university level, in collaboration with the HoDs, as will be explained further in Indicator Three of this Report. This was confirmed through interviews with the BIDE faculty members and HoD, where it was reported that the course instructors make sure that the assessments they develop are aligned with the relevant CILOs, which are mapped to the PILOs and graduate attributes. In addition, marking criteria are also developed for different types of assessments. An examination of a sample of course files confirmed to the Panel that every course has formative and summative assessments and different methods are used (e.g. quizzes, assignments, projects, major examinations, jury/panel assessments) according to the course contents. Moreover, each Course Management Plan provides a detailed Course Assessment Plan, that explains the assessment criteria against the CILOs, and an Assessment Scheme and Schedule, which is distributed to the students in the beginning of each course. With regards to feedback on assessments, students reported during interviews that they usually receive it one week after they submit their work. However, as per what is mentioned in the 2017 review report, the Panel advises the College to include information about when exactly students should receive feedback on their work in the revised Assessment Policy.

With respect to ensuring the prevention of acts of academic misconduct, as was mentioned earlier, the Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures have been revised and there is an insistence on screening all major assignments through Turnitin, with related actions taken and penalties imposed in the case of any act of academic misconduct. Despite this, however, the Panel notes from the evidence presented about written components submitted in Turnitin, that so far, such components in the

programme are not complex and long enough to represent good examples of the implementation of the Academic Misconduct Policy. The Panel expects that the policy may work better with the 2018-2019 revised curriculum, but it is still early to judge, as there are no written components from this curriculum yet to compare with. In addition, the BIDE programme uses 'Tinyyeye', which is a reverse image search engine to detect cases of visual plagiarism. Although suggested by the Information Technology (IT) Department as an efficient tool, the Panel encourages the programme team to investigate this tool further, as it is not clear whether or not it would be able to detect visual plagiarism when a composite image is submitted. Also, although both students and staff have been inducted on academic honesty guidelines, Turnitin, and on avoiding plagiarism, the Panel finds a need for the programme to induct staff also on the use of 'Tinyyeye', especially with respect to complex images. In light of the above, the Panel finds this recommendation as partially addressed.

2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BIDE programme of GU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of April 2017, under Indicator Efficiency of the programme; and as a consequence, provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 2.1: *revise its admission and foundation programme policy and procedures in a way that attracts students who are more capable of dealing with the complexity of the programme's theoretical and practical demands.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

In response to the recommendation of the 2017 BQA review report in relation to the revision of the admission and foundation programme policy and procedures, GU responded by benchmarking the admission criteria for the BIDE programme against a range of programmes offered in local, regional, and international universities. The benchmarking was conducted by the Programme Review Team who selected programmes from the disciplines encompassed by BIDE, such as: Interior Design Engineering, Interior Design Technology, Interior Architecture, and Interior Design, Architectural Engineering, and Product/Industrial Design Engineering. Interviews with the Team confirmed that the benchmarking was partly formal (with Kingdom University) and partly informal and its results in relation to admission are found in the Benchmarking Report submitted as evidence. As a result of this benchmarking process, the admission policy, procedures, criteria, and tools were revised in 2017 and have been put into effect since the beginning of September of the academic year 2018-2019. The admission criteria can be easily accessed by the stakeholders on the GU website and on the intranet.

The admission involves placement tests (English Language Proficiency Test, Mathematics for Architecture and Interior Design Test, Computer Skills Test, and the Design Knowledge and Drawings Skills Test) and an admission interview. The Panel was informed during interviews with senior management and Admission and Registration staff of the benchmarking of the admission tools and examples were provided on how the mathematics test is now more specific to the engineering field and how the drawing skills test now tests applicants' backgrounds and interests in the fields of Design and Architecture, their skills in drawing, and creativity. Similarly, the interview questions were reported to have become more focused on interior design and engineering interests and skills. As per the revised Admission Policy, if students fail the placement tests, they enrol in a preparatory programme. The policy also stipulates that student applicants have the right to appeal their admissions' decisions.

Improvement in the revised admission tools and their fitness for purpose was evident to the Panel upon their examination. In addition, the evidence submitted on the students' progression and retention rates in the programme indicated to the Panel the enhancement made on the revised admission tools. Based on this, the Panel finds the recommendation as fully addressed.

Recommendation 2.2: *recruit more specialized faculty members to teach the specialized interior design courses in the revised programme.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

GU has a clear staff recruitment policy and procedures and these, as claimed in the PR, aim at fairness and non-discrimination in attracting and maintaining qualified staff, providing them with appropriate Professional Development (PD) opportunities, and supporting their promotion. In response to the issues with recruitment raised in the previous review report, a mapping of the BIDE courses to available teaching staff was conducted, in order to identify staffing needs. This exercise resulted in a five-year staffing plan for the programme from 2017-2018 to 2021-2022 academic years, prepared by the Architectural and Interior Design Engineering Department and approved by the College Council. The staffing plan indicated a need for one PhD holder in Architecture, an M.Sc. holder in Physics Lighting and Acoustics, and a PhD or M.Sc. holder in Mechanical Engineering for 2019-2020 academic year. As per interviews, three new faculty members were recruited for the BIDE programme in the academic year 2018-2019, and based on submitted evidence, the number of full-time faculty numbers with interior design and engineering specializations are currently seven. There are also five part-time faculty members, three of whom teach general courses (Mathematics, Arabic language, and Management and Finance) and two who teach Architecture Engineering and Interior Architecture and Design. In light of the above measures and based on an examination of the academic staff CVs, the Panel finds this recommendation as fully addressed.

Recommendation 2.3: *study the reasons behind the low retention and promotion rates amongst Bachelor of Interior Design Engineering faculty and develop and implement a related mitigation plan including that all human resources policies and procedures are available in both Arabic and English.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

As per the PR and as was reported in interviews with Human Resources (HR) staff members and senior management, a study was conducted by HR using data from exit and satisfaction surveys of faculty members, to understand the main reasons behind high faculty turnover. The results of this study indicated that most of the reasons were personal or family-related. Only in one case was the employment contract of a faculty

member terminated because their specialization was not considered by the HEC as suitable for the programme and so, to comply with HEC requirements, they were released from their position. Interviews also indicated that, in response, GU has tried to improve the faculty retention rate by taking a number of measures, such as developing and putting into effect in 2018-2019 a Staff Retention Policy, which aims at retaining competent employees through a number of mechanisms, such as: financial benefits and incentives; a friendly and healthy environment with adequate resources; rewards for good performance; provision of equal opportunities for PD; recognition of employees' right to make suggestions and to submit complaints; resolution of conflicts in a professional manner; and provision of an employee welfare programme (e.g. flexible working hours, medical care, nursery services). With respect to incentives, these include support for participation in PD opportunities, an annual certificate of excellence for faculty members who are distinguished based on their appraisal results, as well as monetary rewards for involvement in institutional and/or programme-related projects. Moreover, in addition, GU has established a University Happiness Committee, which has clear Terms of Reference (ToR) and which has as its aim the promotion of positivity across the Institution, through the organization of activities and events that help enrich the social life and welfare of students and staff. Based on the PR, this Committee's work went into effect in September 2019-2020.

With respect to promotion, although GU has revised its related procedures, it is explicitly mentioned in the PR, as well as in the Retention and Promotion Study, that with respect to the promotion rate of BIDE faculty members, none of the members have been long enough with GU to apply for promotion, as some of them do not meet the minimum number of years of service with GU to be eligible to apply, and some do not yet have the required number of publications since joining the Institution. This was also confirmed through interviews with various stakeholders. However, to help mitigate the issue of the low promotion rate, GU has revised its staff appraisal policy and procedures, as well as its appraisal form, in such a way that appraisal is now linked to PD, promotion, and renewal/termination of employment contracts. The staff appraisal form is also now more comprehensive in terms of the various aspects it covers, including research contribution, teaching performance, community engagement, administrative tasks and initiatives, interpersonal skills and ethics, and PD. This is all to oblige and encourage faculty members to diligently work on improving their research output among other things, so as to increase their chances of getting promoted. With respect to research contribution, faculty interviews confirmed that there are clear criteria, which specify that every faculty member is expected to publish at least one paper per academic year in a refereed journal or in a regional or international conference. They are also expected to organize or participate in in-house conferences in which they share their research findings. In addition, they are required to participate in interdisciplinary research projects and align their research with national priorities. Nevertheless, despite this and all the research training and support

provided by the Institution, a thorough examination of the list of the research papers published in the last three years with a sample of publications conveyed to the Panel that more research is needed, particularly in areas that are directly relevant to the multi-disciplines of BIDE. In addition, there is also a need for more publications in international scientific journals; as the majority of what is being published now by BIDE faculty is conference proceedings' papers, with only two journal publications. This is important especially since the weight of journal publications in comparison with conference papers is higher when it comes to promotion points. In light of this, and considering that it is not yet possible to evaluate the effectiveness of the mitigation plan related to academic promotion, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is only partially addressed.

Recommendation 2.4: *expand its AIMS system to embrace all aspects of the programme including student admissions, student and staff surveys, pre-requisites' selection, and programme schedules.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

Initially, in October 2017, GU was implementing a Student Information System (SIS) known as AIMS but then transitioned gradually in phases to Creatrix Campus, and so both systems kept running in parallel at the same time. Also, MOODLE was being implemented as a Learning Management System (LMS) as well as Focus System as an administrative system for accounts, HR, and assets. Now, in addition, there are a number of other systems implemented at GU, such as: Creatrix Campus SIS, Creatrix Campus LMS, Creatrix Campus Alumni, KOHA Library Management system, Dynamics 365 for management of university resources and planning, and Optime Scheduling Cloud for examination scheduling. All this was confirmed during interviews with senior management and IT staff as well as through the campus tour. Creatrix Campus is a powerful cloud platform that, among other things, allows for online course registration with electronic payment, transfer, withdrawal, documentation of grades, Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) calculation, issuance of transcripts, tracking attendance, and scheduling. Therefore, it is a comprehensive student-records system. It also has integrated with it MOODLE as an LMS. Interview sessions with students and IT staff confirmed to the Panel that course evaluations are also being completed through Creatrix, in addition to a few surveys, with the plan to have all surveys completed through the system by the end of 2019-2020 academic year. In terms of reports, Creatrix generates them in areas such as student admission and enrolment, progression, graduation rate, staff research and community engagement, staff development activities, and stakeholders' survey results. These reports are discussed in the relevant department meetings and recommendations are made on their basis, which are incorporated in the improvement plan for the next cycle. As a result, in assessing the progress of the College against this

recommendation, the Panel concludes that the College has managed to fully address this recommendation.

Recommendation 2.5: *enhance and update its library resources with specialized databases that reflect the scope of the Interior Design Engineering discipline and better serve the needs of the programme.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

GU has a library services policy and procedures that were revised in 2018 and went into effect in September 2018. There were 1,243 print books in the library in the academic year 2018-2019 including 254 Interior Design books and 989 Engineering books relevant to all the BIDE courses. The PR mentions that the library resources are updated before the beginning of every semester based on the requirements of the programmes and their courses. This was also mentioned during interviews with various stakeholders. At the time of writing the PR, GU had already ordered for the year 2019-2020 books and references, and as evidenced from the submitted book requisition/purchase requests and from the tour of the library during the site visit, the books are relevant to the BIDE courses and their level.

Additionally, GU subscribes to a number of electronic databases that include a huge number of interior design and engineering titles including e-books and e-journals. The databases are accessible both on-and-off campus. Also, GU subscribes to three print journals relevant to the BIDE programme and these are: the *Journal of Interior Design*; the *International Journal of Design, Creativity and Innovation*; and *Interiors: Design/Architecture/Cultures*. Finally, since 2018, GU started implementing KOHA software in its library, which is an open source library automation system utilized for managing the library and its services. KOHA generates utilization reports that demonstrate the extent of library resources and services' usage. An examination of a sample of these reports indicated to the Panel an adequate library usage by its patrons, whether students or staff. In light of the above, the Panel finds this recommendation as fully addressed.

Recommendation 2.6: *focus on its physical facilities and resources, such as: improving the equipment and facilities of the workshop and the interior design engineering studios, in order to reflect the pedagogy of its specialized dual degree.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The PR mentions that the BIDE programme team conducted a mapping exercise of the programme's domains to available infrastructure, facilities, and resources (i.e. physical teaching and learning spaces, hardware, software, and machines), which the Panel had the opportunity to examine. Based on this mapping exercise as well as on the

benchmarking report, several enhancements have taken place in the infrastructure, facilities, and resources, as was observed by the Panel during the campus tour. These include enhanced and/or newly established teaching and learning spaces, such as: an engineering workshop, four engineering laboratories (Material Laboratory, Physics Laboratory, Thermo-Fluid Laboratory, Civil Engineering Laboratory), four computer laboratories, an advanced computer laboratory (creativity platform), and a fab laboratory with 2D and 3D printers, and four design studios. Clear descriptions of these learning spaces are provided in the PR and also in the supporting materials submitted as evidence. From what was observed on site and from the interviews and discussions held during the site visit, the Panel finds that the current physical facilities and resources adequately reflect the pedagogy of the programme's disciplines. As a result, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 2.7: *enhance its facilities and resources' tracking systems in a manner that supports informed strategic decision-making and better future planning.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

As mentioned in the PR and confirmed in interview sessions, GU developed and began implementing in September 2018 its institutional performance measurement policy and procedures. The policy focuses on the institution's development and implementation of appropriate and effective tracking mechanisms, to measure the performance of its academic and administrative constituents. In addition, GU revised its organizational structure to include, under the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Unit, the Performance Measurement Office (PMO), which is responsible for generating a wide range of reports related to: students' cohorts, academic performance, course evaluation analyses, general satisfaction survey analyses, and exit survey analyses. These reports which were generated in the academic year 2018-2019 have, along with different facilities and resources' tracking reports, supported the university management in its strategic decision-making processes. Examples of tracking reports that are analyzed by this office include those related to the utilization of physical facilities and learning resources such as the library and the computer laboratories. LabStats is an example of a tool which the office applies for measuring effectiveness of laboratory usage by students, by generating reports on computer and applications' usage. LabStats can also track usage of local and web-based applications. As for the usage of the library resources, this was being measured previously through AIMS but now through KOHA since the beginning of 2019-2020 academic year. Finally, with respect to e-learning, it is tracked through MOODLE, as indicated from the sample MOODLE utilization reports submitted as evidence. All these tracking reports, alongside feedback from key stakeholders and programme review results, provide essential information for improvement purposes. As mentioned previously, the data included in these reports is discussed in department and college council meetings, as

evident from submitted meeting minutes, and then fed into programme improvement plans. Based on the above, the Panel finds this recommendation as fully addressed.

3. Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates

This section evaluates the extent to which the BIDE programme of GU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of April 2017, 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: *ensure that the achievement of graduate attributes is evaluated through the use of assessment which is valid and reliable.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

During the April 2017 review of the BIDE programme, assessment tools were found to be highly theoretical and lacking in components that cater to higher-order thinking skills, such as critical thinking. Additionally, they needed to be more focused on testing interior design and engineering skills. This yielded the conclusion that the assessment tools lacked validity due to not being aligned with certain graduate attributes that are linked with creative, reflective, technical and lifelong skills. As a result, GU revised its assessment policy and procedures in the academic year 2017-2018. Based on this revision, all assessments are to be aligned with the ILOs, must undergo internal and external verification, and must incorporate practical aspects and/or be linked to real-world problems. From interview sessions, the Panel realized that faculty members and other relevant stakeholders were well-informed about this policy and its guiding principles. Hence, different types of mapping were conducted in the process of adhering to this revised policy, such as: mapping of assessments to CILOs; mapping of CILOs to PILOs; and mapping of PILOs to graduate attributes. The programme has eight graduate attributes in total, which were revised to better reflect the engineering components of the programme and to better align with the revised programme aims. All these revisions and mapping exercises, among other mechanisms (e.g. internal and external moderation), have contributed to assessment methods and tools that are more valid and reliable and, thus, effective in evaluating the achievement of the graduate attributes. This was confirmed to the Panel through an examination of a sample of course files, including students' assessments, which the Panel found to be both well-aligned with CILOs, PILOs, and graduate attributes and adequate for measuring students' progress. Consequently, the Panel finds this recommendation to be fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.2: *conduct formal and effective benchmarking activities, which verify Gulf University's academic standards of the programme and its graduates with similar programmes offered locally, regionally and internationally.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

Based on the 2017 review report, the benchmarking activities that were conducted by the BIDE programme were limited to the curriculum and did not include other items such as students' works and/or achievements and resources available. As mentioned in Indicator 1, benchmarking of the programme was conducted against local, regional, and international universities and was also based on international standards of professional bodies. However, this benchmarking was mostly informal, with only one formal benchmarking agreement in place. Upon examination of the benchmarking report, the Panel noticed that the scope of the formal benchmarking with Kingdom University covered the following: 'curriculum design; learning resources; teaching, learning, assessments methods; admission criteria; student intake; student progression; graduate employability', and did not include students' works/achievements, which are important for verifying GU's academic standards of the programme and its graduates. Similarly, informal benchmarking conducted did not cover this aspect; although, it was clearly and explicitly highlighted as an issue in the previous review report, just as the aspect of benchmarking available resources was. In conclusion, considering that the learning resources as well as students' progression and graduate employability were included within the benchmarking scope, and given that the Panel acknowledges the importance of the general outcomes of the benchmarking exercise conducted, this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 3.3: *revise the mechanisms adopted for ensuring proper alignment of assessment with Course Intended Learning Outcomes and relevance of assessment tools to course specifications.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The April 2017 review report referred to a misalignment between assessment methods and CILOs, and expressed a concern that the assessments were too theoretical and basic for the academic level and type of courses, as was mentioned before in Recommendation 3.1. In response, as was explained earlier, GU revised its Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, following the outcomes of the benchmarking exercise, and developed the Course Management Plan, that was referred to in Recommendation 1.8, which includes a detailed Course Assessment Plan explaining the assessment criteria against the CILOs, and presenting an Assessment Scheme and Schedule for each course. As a result of these actions, the programme has been able to identify tools and methods of assessment that are well-aligned with the CILOs and that have been implemented in it according to the type and level of its courses. This

proper alignment of assessments was confirmed by the Panel through an examination of a sample of course files (e.g. IND313 'Interior Design Studio IV: Feasibility'; IND461 'Smart and Sustainable Interiors'; IND211 'Interior Design Studio 1: Functionality'; IND331 'Internship II'; INDE132 'Design Research & Methods'). Additionally, during site visit interviews, members from the College Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee (CTLAC) including external verifiers, who are responsible for the verification and moderation process of assessments, confirmed that the revised curriculum, including its assessment methods and tools, aligns better with the ILOs and that the quality of the outcomes has improved over the last two years. In conclusion, the Panel finds this recommendation as fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.4: *conduct a stringent evaluation of its internal moderation system and accordingly develop and revise the policies and procedures accordingly.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

During the review of the programme in 2017, the Panel had reached the conclusion that there was a lack of internal moderation efficiency. The Panel based this conclusion on the unsuitable assessment tools that were being implemented without being detected through the internal pre-moderation process, and also on the fact that internal post-moderation was not in place for assessments other than the major ones, such as the final examinations and projects. Thus, the recommendation to develop and revise policies and procedures related to internal moderation as well as to conduct a stringent evaluation of its system or process was made. To address this recommendation, GU revised its Assessment Verification and Moderation Procedures and implemented them since the Fall Semester of 2017-2018. The Vice President of Academic Affairs also provided training to members of the CTLAC on internal verification of assessment tools to ensure their validity and reliability. Interviews with senior management and faculty members confirmed general awareness of these revised procedures on the part of those involved, and that pre-moderation is now internally conducted by the CTLAC for midterms as well as for final examinations/projects. After this internal pre-moderation, these assessment tools are sent to external verifiers for external pre-moderation. In this process, the feedback received through internal and external verification and moderation is shared with the course instructors, who develop and enhance their assessment tools accordingly.

As for internal post-moderation, this is conducted by the University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee (UTLAC), the members of which have been trained on how to moderate the answer booklets of examinations and on marks' allocation, to ensure consistency and fairness of marking and grading. An examination of a sample of moderation reports and related revisions confirmed to the Panel that this internal pre-and-post moderation process is effectively implemented and its

effectiveness is further evaluated by faculty members, the HoD, internal and external verifiers and moderators, who provide feedback on it through newly developed feedback forms that have been implemented for the last two years. Additionally, both the CTLAC and UTLAC are required to regularly submit analysis reports on the effectiveness of the moderation and verification processes. Based on the aforementioned actions and considering the noted improvements in assessment tools and level of student' works, the Panel finds that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.5: *abide, when deciding on external moderators and jurors, by its set selection criteria, which can secure a high degree of objectivity, and should develop and implement formal mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the moderation process and develop a mechanism to assess the effectiveness of the process.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

An observation was made in the 2017 review report in relation to how external moderators and jurors for the BIDE programme were being selected. There, it was reported that the set selection criteria, which can secure a high degree of objectivity, were not being followed and that instead selections were largely made based on faculty networks. To address this issue, GU has revised the ToRs of both external verifiers/moderators and jurors, to ensure diversity in their academic experience in reputable higher education institutions as well as in industry expertise at the local, regional, and international level. This was confirmed through interview sessions with senior management of BIDE, as well as through interviews with external verifiers, who all confirmed that initial contact from GU had been made with their university/department, which then itself selected/invited them to serve in the capacity of a moderator/verifier for the BIDE programme. In light of this and based on a thorough examination of a sample of CVs of external verifiers and jurors for the programme, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.6: *develop appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the type and level of students' work, including the Capstone project, meet the requirements of the programme and are comparable with what can be found in other similar programmes offered locally, regionally, and internationally.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

With respect to students, the previous review panel of the programme had noticed that most of their works, including the capstone projects, did not reflect critical thinking and analysis; were basic in their complexity; and lacked detailing of areas of focus normally characteristic of engineering-oriented programmes. However, with all the programme revisions and mapping exercises conducted so far, and with the implementation of

newly revised/developed policies and procedures mentioned earlier (e.g. assessment, plagiarism, internship, verification and moderation policies and procedures), the Panel is of the view that improvements in terms of course structure, contents, clarity and adequacy of expected outcomes and assessment criteria and methods have been made. Similar improvements were also detected in the courses of the 2016-2017 curriculum, which although taught separately from the 2018-2019 curriculum, have been injected with the revised contents and impacted by the revised policies and procedures.

These improvements were confirmed through the panel's examination of a sample of course files and students' work during the site visit, including capstone projects and internship files. They were also further validated through the site-visit interviews with members of the PIAB, who reported that the contents of the course curricula are now distributed more evenly between the two disciplines of interior design and engineering and that more materials on engineering aspects, for example, as well as practical experiences, have been added to the programme and its assessments, which can eventually lead to improved student outcomes. Interviews with external verifiers/reviewers similarly confirmed that the revised curriculum aligns better with the ILOs and that the quality of outcomes has improved over the last two years. According to their judgement, the integration of engineering aspects in the curriculum has helped enhance students' achievement; although, there remains to be room for the improvement of critical thinking and other higher-order thinking skills within the programme. In light of this and considering that only one academic year of the 2018-2019 curriculum has been actually taught, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is only partially addressed.

4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of Quality management and assurance

This section evaluates the extent to which the BIDE programme of GU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of April 2017, 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: *assess the effectiveness of the mechanisms utilized to communicate and monitor the implementation of all policies and procedures, to ensure shared understanding and implementation across the College.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

During the April 2017 review, it was noticed that there were some policies relevant to the programme which were not known by all stakeholders. In response, GU developed a communication policy with a relevant set of procedures in the academic year 2018-2019, which went into effect in July 2019. These policy and procedures are accessible by all staff through SharePoint. Their aim is to promote transparent communication and the sharing of information openly. In addition, GU put into effect a range of communication channels, such as: emails, text messages, memos, intranet, website, SharePoint, face-to-face and online meetings, bulletin boards, and social media to disseminate important information related to policies and procedures and to ensure shared understanding of them. When interviewed, various stakeholders confirmed the utilization of such communication channels and expressed satisfaction with the quality and frequency of the information received through them. Stakeholders also mentioned student and staff induction sessions as useful fora where important information related to policies and procedures is shared and where an introduction on the different communication channels and lines of hierarchy in the Institution is provided. This was also confirmed through the panel's review of the student and staff induction materials submitted as evidence.

To assess the effectiveness of these different channels of communication, GU provides stakeholders with opportunities to evaluate them (e.g. induction evaluation forms, satisfaction surveys) and generates analysis reports related to their results. Whereas, to monitor implementation of the policies and procedures, this is implemented through a number of mechanisms that will be elaborated later on in this Report, such as: the activation of the organizational chart and the committee structure; the implementation of internal QA system's policies and procedures related to moderation and verification processes, course evaluations, and administration of stakeholders' surveys, and annual and periodic reporting/auditing among others

things; and finally the employment of external academic reviews. Based on the aforementioned, the Panel finds that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 4.2: *ensure that there is a shared understanding of the lines of responsibility amongst academic and administrative staff to ensure that the programme is managed in a way that demonstrates effective and responsible leadership.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The April 2017 review report referred to an ambiguity among internal stakeholders with respect to the roles and responsibilities of senior management positions related to the BIDE programme. In response, GU revised all job descriptions of its staff and developed job profiles of academic staff during their recruitment and selection stage. These job descriptions and profiles, along with the organizational chart, are all published on the intranet and university website. During the site visit tour, the panel confirmed that the organizational chart is also posted in several places around campus, to be referred to when needed. In addition, GU revised or developed the scope of work and ToRs of several units (e.g. Student Support Unit) and centres (e.g. Community Engagement and Continuous Learning Centre, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre, and the Teaching Excellence and Technology Centre). As explained in the PR, the scope of work documents as well as the ToRs serve, above all, in informing the staff members of the roles and responsibilities of the different committees, councils, boards, units, and centres operating in the Institution.

Furthermore, GU has been conducting, through its SDU, staff training sessions on governance, the organizational structure, and the QADC Framework, where the training on the Framework covers the different roles and responsibilities of those in quality enhancement. In addition, staff induction sessions at GU have been focusing on the organizational hierarchy and how it reflects administrative supervision, starting from governance by the BoT, to the University Council, College Council, and Department Council, and also to the support of the different committees, centres, units, and offices functioning in the University. The Panel's interviews with senior management and faculty members during the site visit confirmed this area of concentration in the induction and training sessions held by the SDU, and the satisfaction of the different stakeholders toward their knowledge and awareness about the different roles and responsibilities of those managing and leading the programme. The Panel, as a result, is of the view that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 4.3: *develop a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of its internal quality assurance system's policies and implementation and for addressing the identified areas of improvement.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

Due to the many areas of improvement in the BIDE programme that were detected during the April 2017 review, the review panel then identified a need for a plan to guide the evaluation of the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system's policies and implementation. To fulfil this need, GU started off with revising its quality audit procedures, in such a manner that closes the loop of the enhancement cycle. The Panel examined the revised procedures and found them to be comprehensive in terms of the scope of the institutional aspects they cover. These revised procedures have been in implementation since the academic year 2017-2018. Next, GU developed- based on these procedures- an auditing system, which includes: QADC auditing of programmes and of committees' performance, QADC self-auditing, and auditing of the QADC performance by an external expert. All these audits result in reports including recommendations for the audited parties, which are then raised to relevant deans/directors/ councils for decision-making based on what each audit covers and at which level. The recommendations in each audit report are then included in future improvement plans for implementation and monitoring by the responsible parties.

With respect to the QADC audit reports of programmes, these are eventually submitted to the University President after passing through the programmes' relevant deans. QADC audit reports of committees, on the other hand, are submitted to the College Quality Assurance Committee (CQAC); whereas, all QADC documents including action plans self-evaluation reports, and audit reports, in addition to its policies and procedures, as well as audits and other services are sent to an external expert for auditing purposes. The Panel found evidence of this external auditing exercise, which had taken place in November 2018. The Panel examined the external expert's report, as well as the corresponding improvement plan that was developed based on its recommendations and the submitted evidence of the implementations of this improvement plan. As a result, the Panel concludes that GU is on the right track, and is exerting serious efforts, in enhancing the effectiveness of its internal quality assurance system, especially given the evidence noticed by the Panel during the site visit of quality assurance practices being more embedded in GU day-to-day practices (e.g. in course files, course syllabi learning outcomes, assessment criteria, PILOs, moderation, dealing with plagiarism & cheating, etc.). The Panel is of the view, therefore, that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 4.4: *ensure that the periodic review is well-informed by stakeholders' feedback and market professional needs and is comprehensive enough to cover all aspects of the review.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The April 2017 review report mentions that in the periodic reviews that were conducted of the programme, there was almost no evidence of clear strategies for obtaining feedback from relevant stakeholders. In response, GU has widened the scope of feedback sources through which data is to be collected and analyzed for inclusion in the periodic reviews of programmes. From the feedback sources mentioned in the PR, the site-visit interviews, and the supporting evidence, the Panel was able to identify the following: students' course evaluation survey, which is conducted electronically through MOODLE-SIS; student general satisfaction survey conducted annually; the graduating students' exit survey, which is conducted every semester; the internship and graduation project feedback survey administered at the completion of internship/graduation project; the alumni survey; and the employer survey. All these surveys are analyzed and reported on, just like the course evaluation survey.

In addition to the surveys, the PR mentions other sources of feedback that are to be included in the periodic reviews of programmes, and for which evidence was found, such as: the labour market scans or research findings; results of programme mapping to learning resources, staffing, and infrastructure and facilities; external validator's feedback on the proposed programme; external reviewers' findings; the annual reports of the programme; and feedback from the PIAB. Since the 2018-2019 revised programme has yet to be periodically reviewed after five years of its implementation, the Panel finds this recommendation as partially addressed.

Recommendation 4.5: *develop clear and programme-specific mechanisms to analyze all stakeholders' feedback and utilize its results to inform programme development and improvement in a transparent manner available to relevant stakeholders.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

During the April 2017 review of the programme, it was noticed that although a variety of stakeholders' surveys were being administered, there were no clear mechanisms in place for responding to stakeholders' feedback, and some of the survey forms needed to be improved in terms of content. As a result, since then, GU has revised and enhanced all internal and external stakeholders' survey forms, to better suit the needs of the BIDE programme and to more effectively feed information back into the revised programme. The Panel had the opportunity to examine the current survey forms during the site visit, and notes their improvement. Additionally, the Panel was

informed through interviews that to ensure responding to the feedback of stakeholders, surveys are analyzed by the PMO and the analysis reports are sent to the respective college deans and HoDs to share with the concerned stakeholders. After this, the survey results are incorporated in the colleges' improvement plans by the concerned parties. Afterwards, QADC audit cycles as well as the improvement plans and follow-up audits, as explained in Recommendation 4.3, help ensure that stakeholders' feedback is utilized in programme development.

With respect to the PIAB members, PIAB meetings serve as a forum for informing them of changes incorporated into the revised programme based on their comments and advice. Interviews with some of the PIAB members during the site visit, as well as minutes of PIAB meetings, confirmed to the Panel that their feedback is taken into consideration. For example, one change to the programme that was based on the PIAB members' feedback, involved adding more technology-oriented courses and more project-based work to the programme, as was reported to the Panel. Finally, as for the students' feedback, GU has installed a 'You Said, We Did' bulletin around campus as a tool to show students that their concerns are addressed and that their voice matters. In conclusion, the Panel finds the mechanisms described above as satisfactory and, thus, considers the recommendation as fully addressed.

Recommendation 4.6: *revise its staff appraisal form and develop and implement suitable professional development mechanisms in a manner that ensures the accurate identification of faculty's training needs and the availability of sufficient time and relevant professional development and research opportunities to address them.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

As already mentioned in Recommendation 2.3, GU has clear staff appraisal policy and procedures, which were last revised in 2018 and which are subject to periodic reviews every four years. As per the policy, faculty appraisal is linked with PD, promotion, and renewal/termination of employment contracts. In addition, GU has a staff appraisal form that was revised based on the recommendation of the BQA April 2017 review of the BIDE programme, which has been implemented since the academic year 2017-2018 and was then further enhanced in the academic year 2018-2019. Based on an examination of this staff appraisal form, the Panel finds it to be comprehensive in terms of the various aspects or domains it covers, which include: teaching performance, research contribution, community engagement, administrative tasks and initiatives, interpersonal skills and ethics, and PD. Each of these domains has a percentage assigned to it in terms of the weight it has in the evaluation of the faculty member's performance. As explained in the PR, the average score for PD is calculated by adding up the scores given by the faculty member themselves, the HoD, and the QADC. This score is important because it helps in determining what training needs

the faculty member has. Once the PD needs are determined, the Head of SDU of the QADC coordinates with relevant internal and external trainers to organize the necessary staff development activities. GU supports staff PD activities by spending 2% of its net income as per HEC regulations on participation in and attendance of training workshops within and outside Bahrain.

GU has also redesigned its training needs' form, which it started implementing from the academic year 2017-2018. Upon receipt of the filled forms from staff members, the SDU analyses the training needs and documents the analysis in a report, showing the areas or topics most needed by the staff. The Unit then discusses this report with the concerned deans and HoDs, and after listening to their suggestions, prepares the final staff training plan to be approved by the University Council. Through interviews with various stakeholders, the Panel was informed that the staff development programmes that are organized are evaluated by their participants and the evaluation results are analysed and the feedback is used in improvement planning for the next year. In addition, the trainer has the opportunity to evaluate their training events in terms of organization, timing, technical support, audience participation and interaction, venue, and refreshments. Finally, the SDU also surveys the participants of training sessions six months after the sessions are conducted and analyzes the survey results, to measure the direct impact of the training on their performance (e.g. teaching, assessment practices, research, QA practices). Considering the aforementioned and the evidence examined by the Panel, the Panel finds this recommendation as fully addressed.

Recommendation 4.7: *conduct an up-to-date rigorous labour market research, to ensure the validity and sustainability of interior design engineering, and its relevance to the needs of the labour market.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

As reported in site-visit interviews, and as explained in Recommendation 1.1, within the evidence submitted to the Panel is a Market Research Report dated 2019, which is a result of a comprehensive market study that GU conducted in collaboration with an external consultant. The conclusion of this study is that there is a need and a demand for the BIDE programme and that the need for BIDE graduates will continue for the coming five years. The study also shows that there is saturation in the market with respect to conventional interior design graduates; however, there is a market niche for the BIDE and its graduates, as there is a need for graduates with engineering knowledge and technical skills, such as: building service engineering and technology, construction and execution of interior design projects and facilities, technology application and calculation, specifications in the area of built environment in terms of construction, light structure, air quality and ventilation, lighting, acoustics, electricity,

plumbing, and insulation. Thus, the Market Research Report concludes that the BIDE curriculum with the engineering core knowledge and skills embedded in it can help fill a skills' gap in the labour market. Bearing in mind the currency and relevance of this labour market study, and considering that its results have been used to inform the revision of the BIDE programme toward greater integration of engineering, design, and technology, and toward stronger concentration on the development of future graduates' soft skills, the Panel finds this recommendation as fully addressed.

5. Conclusion

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

The Bachelor of Interior Design Engineering programme offered by Gulf University has made 'good progress'.

Appendix 1: Judgement per recommendation.

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

Appendix 2: Overall Judgement.

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