



هيئة ضمان جودة التعليم و التدريب
Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training

Higher Education Review Unit Institutional Follow-Up Review Report

AMA International University- Bahrain
Kingdom of Bahrain

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1. Overview of the Institutional Follow-up Process

The institutional follow-up site visit by the Higher Education Review Unit (HERU) is part of a cycle of continuing quality assurance, review, reporting and improvement by the Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training (QAAET) in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

At least one year after publication of its Institutional Review Report the institution submits to HERU a report which clearly shows how the institution has maintained and/or enhanced the commendations of the review report and specifies how the institution has met its affirmations and recommendations. The institution substantiates its claims with supporting documents, in the form of Appendices. Details of how the institution is monitoring and evaluating the improvement activities should also be provided.

This follow-up review process applies to all higher education institutions that have had institutional reviews undertaken by HERU.

The AMA International University-Bahrain (AMAIUB) submitted an Improvement Plan to HERU in the required time set out in the Handbook for Institutional Reviews. In this Plan, actions were identified to tackle the 47 Recommendations contained in the Institutional Review Report. In June 2011 AMAIUB submitted its One Year Report, which contained a narrative and documentary evidence about the progress the institution has made thus far in implementing quality improvements.

The Panel responsible for the Follow-up comprised the Executive Director of HERU and two Senior Directors, one of whom was the Director responsible for co-ordinating this site visit. The evidence base included: the Institutional Improvement Plan and the appendices submitted in February 2011 and the Institutional Review Report. The Institution also submitted supporting evidences on 10 November 2011. Interviews were also held during the site visit with a range of senior managers, academics, administrative staff, students, employers and alumni. These interviews allow the Panel to triangulate the evidence.

The Follow-up visit took place on 16 November 2011, the purpose of which is (i) to assess the progress made in quality enhancement and improvement of the AMA International University-Bahrain (AMAIUB) since the institutional review in November 2009, for which the review report was published in October 2010; and (ii) develop a report which outlines the progress made about the extent to which the Recommendations have been addressed.

This Institutional Follow-up Review Report sets out the findings with regard to the Recommendations contained in the published Review Report. For ease of reading the Recommendations made in the 2010 published Review Report are clustered together (in italics) at the beginning of each sub-section where a different theme is considered. The text that follows reflects the findings of the Panel during its visit in November 2011.

2. Brief Overview of AMA International University-Bahrain

AMA International University-Bahrain (AMAIUB) is a member of the AMA Education System (AMAES) based in the Philippines. AMAIUB was established in 2002 as an independent private institution of higher learning and licensed by the Higher Education Council (HEC) in Bahrain on 22 October 2002. The University is located in a 57,450 square metre campus in Salmabad, Kingdom of Bahrain. AMAIUB is organised into four Colleges that offer a number of programmes, six at Bachelor's level and two at Master's levels.

3. Findings of the Follow-up Review by Theme

In the following sub-sections, the progress made in addressing the Recommendations under each theme is considered. The Recommendations from the Institutional Review Report are clustered together in italics.

3.1 Mission, Planning and Governance

- 3.1.1 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain review its Mission in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and that the new Mission is aligned to the mission of the parent institution. The University needs also to conduct an institution-wide debate before its new mission is formally approved to ensure stakeholder buy-in at all levels.*
- 3.1.2 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement policies, procedures and structures which provide regular feedback and guidance from business and industry in Bahrain on its programme offerings.*
- 3.1.3 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain refrain from further expansion of its programmes and enrolments until such times that the academic endeavour of the institution is placed firmly at the forefront of all decision-making rather than as a business enterprise.*
- 3.1.4 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement an Enrolment Plan aligned with its new Mission and which takes into account the need to ensure the embedding of quality in teaching and learning, research and community engagement given its existing infrastructure and other resources.*
- 3.1.5 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop its strategic plan complete with key performance indicators and annual target levels as bases for measuring effectiveness of its various functions, and in meeting stated goals and objectives and that this should be an inclusive process.*

- 3.1.6 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain ensure that the Board of Advisers meets regularly in order to fulfil their responsibilities towards the institution.*
- 3.1.7 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop a system for planning and resource allocation, which is aligned with the mission and strategic plan of the institution and supported by a properly designed management information system.*
- 3.1.8 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain revise its communication strategy to ensure a two-way flow of information and to monitor regularly the effectiveness of this strategy.*
- 3.1.9 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain put systems in place to ensure student participation on key committees, such as the University Council.*
- 3.1.10 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain ensure (i) staff involvement in the development of policies and procedures; (ii) upon approval of new policies and procedures develop mechanisms to ensure staff awareness and understanding across all levels of the institution; (iii) develop and implement mechanisms to ensure that the policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. Revision of policies*
- 3.1.11 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain use benchmarking and external moderation to set academic standards and to measure the University's performance in its academic programmes.*

AMAIUB reviewed its vision and mission statements through a wide consultation process as a consequence of which minor changes were made. The mission still refers to providing 'holistic, relevant, quality and globally recognized IT-based education at all levels in various disciplines'. While the Panel appreciates that AMAIUB as yet does not offer doctoral studies, given the current status of AMAIUB with respect to both external institutional and programmes evaluation this is not a feasible option; neither is the offering of master level programmes. The Panel did not hear in their interviews a clear conception of what is meant by 'holistic' education and how this is reflected in the programme offerings.

AMAIUB has appointed an Academic Advisory Council consisting of three persons for its programmes. Despite the agreement entered into with the members there is as yet, no formal policy and procedures in place to guide the Advisory Councils and ensure that structured feedback from industry is received. Feedback on programmes is still done on an *ad hoc* basis. The institution needs to develop and implement policies and procedures, which provide systematic feedback and guidance from business and industry in Bahrain on its programme offerings.

There has been no further expansion of AMAIUB's programmes and enrolments as directed by the Higher Education Council (HEC). The Panel still did not find that the academic project of the institution is the driver of decision-making. This is in part due to

a lack of academic leadership at the senior levels within the institution. Without strong academic leadership and an experienced cohort of academics and researchers from diverse backgrounds it will be difficult for AMAIUB to offer quality higher education provision. The institution may like to consider following the long-standing tradition of other universities in this regard by employing faculty members from different countries and higher education institutions. This allows for cross-fertilization of ideas and thereby encourages the flourishing of intellectual thought and innovation as well as innovative teaching pedagogies.

An enrolment plan aligned with the revised mission of AMAIUB and an accompanying resource plan have been developed. The former shows plans for student growth at an average of 12% over the next five years. The enrolment plan also makes provision for enrolling students for doctoral studies. The Panel is of the view that given AMAIUB's status these aspirations are too ambitious. It suggests that if AMAIUB is allowed to open up enrolment that faculty members and other resources should be focused on a small number of undergraduate offerings.

Through an inclusive consultation process with its stakeholders, AMAIUB developed a strategic plan which has key performance indicators and that takes into account some of the human resource needs of Bahrain. The plan seems to take no account of AMAIUB's current status and so is likely not to be achieved. Furthermore the small amount of funds budgeted for staff recruitment is unlikely to make any impact on the inadequate staffing at AMAIUB, especially given its current status and future ambitions.

While the Boards of Trustees (formally the Board of Advisors) meet regularly, the two Bahrainis on the Board have not attended any meetings. The Panel was told in interviews with senior management that this is a satisfactory state of affairs as these members receive minutes of meetings and communicate by telephone. For a Board of Trustees to be effective and discharge its responsibilities, members need to attend meetings regularly. This is especially the case where the other members of the Board are located in the Philippines whilst the University is operating in Bahrain.

AMAIUB uses a number of its strategic documents as well as consultation processes with the relevant stakeholders to develop its budget so that it is linked to planning and resource allocation. While the University now has the elements of a functioning management system that allows for limited decision-making, the Panel was told the institution is now migrating to the Oracle system. This new system will allow better integration with all university systems. The Panel encourages the University to utilise this system to monitor and enhance the delivery of the academic programmes

There is no documented communication strategy to allow for a two-way flow of information between management and staff. Management communicates with staff through a variety of media; bulletins, website, public address system, SMS. As management operates an appointment system for staff, management is of the view that staff have adequate channels of communication. The Panel concludes that the University has yet to develop and implement a robust two-way communication strategy.

The University has recently allocated seats for students to participate on key committees such as the University Council and Student Disciplinary Tribunal. The Panel encourages the University to monitor the contribution of students in decision-making at the university level.

There is evidence of staff involvement in the development of policies and procedures. While staff are generally aware of approved policies there seems to be a lack of understanding of their role. The University needs to ensure that there is a shared understanding of policies amongst the different stakeholders and that these policies are implemented consistently throughout the University.

AMAIUB has now developed a policy for internal and external moderation. Evidence was provided of benchmarking activities through comparing curriculum content of programmes and courses with selected universities. The University needs to develop a fuller understanding of benchmarking so that it carries out benchmarking in a meaningful way.

3.2 Academic Standards

- 3.2.1 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement learning outcomes for its programmes, which are consistent with the programme aims and reflect an appropriate level of knowledge competencies and skills*
- 3.2.2 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement associated assessment criteria for learning outcomes.*
- 3.2.3 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain as a matter of urgency (i) ensure the coherence of the curriculum within the 180 credit system; and (ii) develop and implement mechanisms to ensure that staff and students are fully apprised of the credit system.*
- 3.2.4 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop a policy on the recognition of prior learning as well as having clear rules for the transfer of credits into its programmes, which are consistently implemented.*
- 3.2.5 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement a policy that ensures effective coordination between pre-clinical and clinical training in the College of Medicine.*
- 3.2.6 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain conduct a regular assessment of the teaching and learning of both pre-clinical and clinical education of the medical programme.*
- 3.2.7 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement effective measures to ensure that its protocols and requirements for admission are stringently enforced.*

3.2.8 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain further develop its capacity to collect and use data in order to initiate curriculum review and redesign.*

The University has developed and implemented intended learning outcomes (ILOs) for all its academic programmes which are categorised into knowledge, competencies and skills. Programme ILOs and course ILOs are stated in the programme specification document and the latter in the course syllabi. Programme ILOs are mapped to the course ILOs using a matrix. In general there is a connection between the course ILOs and the programme ILOs statements. However, the Panel found that there are some courses which do not cover any knowledge.

While AMAIUB established criteria for measuring the attainment of ILOs, it did not develop detailed assessment criteria for student work. However, it has conducted a series of workshops on Assessment and Evaluations of course and programme ILOs and updated the performance criteria and rubrics. The Panel encourages the institution to revisit its rubric system to strengthen the requirement for ILOs attainment.

The University operates on a trimestral system and currently each academic programme carries a total of 180 credit units. Faculty members are cognisant of this new credit hour arrangement.

AMAIUB has not as yet developed a policy on recognition of prior learning. Regarding its credit transfer system there are rules but these have yet to be developed into a formal policy.

The University has an active Memorandum of Understanding with the American Mission Hospital and Salmaniya Medical Centre. A clinical coordinator has been recently appointed who coordinates the clinical training between the hospitals and the College of Medicine. The University has conducted an assessment of teaching and learning for both pre-clinical and clinical education of medical programmes.

AMAIUB has revised its admission criteria. In the past the criteria involved an entrance examination and an interview with a Dean, the University has now added past records and 'relevant information'. This means that the revised admission criteria for undergraduate study are as follows:

- 60% test (includes specific requirement for each academic programme)
- 10% provision of past records
- 10% relevant information
- 20% personal interview.

The Panel concluded that the admission criteria are very weak and that as a consequence the University is admitting academically at-risk students for undergraduate study. The Panel did not find evidence of any robust strategies to assist such academically weak students to ensure their success in university study. The admissions criteria needs to be revised. The University uses the AMA College Admission Test (AMACAT) in assessing the English proficiency for new students

AMAIUB has still to ensure that there is comprehensive collection of data to assist it in meaningful curriculum review and redesign.

3.3 Quality Assurance and Enhancement

- 3.3.1 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement a programme for its entire faculty and non-faculty staff to promote a quality culture, and ensure awareness and understanding of its quality assurance system.*
- 3.3.2 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement a holistic approach to quality assurance, which is centred on continuous quality improvement rather than compliance and correction and ensure that the system is implemented consistently across the institution*
- 3.3.3 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement mechanisms to ensure that the results of user surveys and benchmarking are acted upon to improve the quality of provision at the institution.*

The University has established the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office (QAAO) responsible for the development of the university's quality assurance and management programme. In September 2011, the Office developed rubrics for different types of assessment, and a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) manual which reflects on the roles and responsibilities for quality assurance and the commitment of the University to continuous improve and deliver quality academic programmes. The QAAO has two full-time staff members. During interviews, the Panel noted that not all faculty members have an understanding of quality assurance ethos and programmes at the institution. The University needs to develop and implement a programme for all its staff members in order to establish a quality culture within the institution.

The University collects feedback through course evaluation, teaching evaluation, student satisfaction, alumni satisfaction, employer evaluation, and employee satisfaction questionnaires. The results are collated and presented to various management committees. For example, the course evaluation results are compiled by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office and presented to the departmental and programme committees for review. The Planning Office receives and incorporates all such results into the institutional and programme planning processes. The Panel met with faculty members and noted that few of them were able to give examples of how past reviews led to specific improvements in current practice. The institution still has to develop mechanisms to ensure that identified areas for improvement are acted upon so that there is a culture of continuous improvement.

3.4 Quality of Teaching and Learning

- 3.4.1 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain review its Teaching and Learning Plan and that this review should include the identification of pedagogical strategies necessary for it to achieve its Mission and Vision.*

- 3.4.2 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain ensure that academic staff members are appropriately qualified for the programmes they teach.*
- 3.4.3 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement rigorous procedures for programme development which are formalized in a policy and that arrangements are made to document these processes when they occur.*
- 3.4.4 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement formal policies and procedures for rigorous and regular curriculum review.*
- 3.4.5 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain review all curricula for coherence in the light of insertion of additional courses and their contribution to the programme outcomes.*
- 3.4.6 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement rigorous and well-theorized and conceptualized procedures for monitoring on a regular basis the satisfaction of students with its programmes and courses.*

The University provided evidence of meetings and consultations of the review of its Teaching and Learning Plan. However, in different interviews with faculty members, the Panel did not find that new and appropriate pedagogical strategies have been identified and used. Indeed the Panel was dismayed to find that teaching is at best done to one text book but that more often than not, power point slides were the main source of knowledge provided to the students. This misses the point about what higher education entails. The Panel was further concerned to learn from interviews with academic staff that there is little understanding of their role as faculty members in facilitating the development of students' analytical and problem solving skills as well as growing their knowledge base. The Panel formed the view that if AMAIUB were to be allowed to enrol new students these should only be in a small number of undergraduate programmes that have stringent admission criteria; highly experienced and diverse faculty and the appropriate resources needed to provide quality higher education.

While the University has approved new guidelines to hire new faculty members, the Panel is not convinced that this will solve the continuing problem of academic staff teaching outside their discipline. When the institution finds itself with staff shortages in a particular discipline it needs to develop and implement innovative strategies to ensure that students are only taught by subject discipline experts until such time full-time appointments are made.

The University revised its policy on curriculum and programme development, however it is not clear to the Panel that there has been a full review of all curricula to ensure coherence as additional courses have been inserted into the programmes and so fulfil the programme outcomes.

The University started to conduct surveys since 2010/2011 which monitor student satisfaction with its programmes and courses. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of these surveys.

3.5 Student Support

3.5.1 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain follow a more holistic approach to student academic support, which includes qualified counsellors and dedicated resources to the academic support functions at the institution.*

3.5.2 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain allocate a budget to support the activities of the Student Council.*

The University provides support services to the students through the following: Clinic, Cafeteria, Placement and Linkage Office, Student Affairs Office, Library, Research Office, Prayers Rooms, and Sport Facilities.

The University revised its guidance Counselling Centre and included the academic advising and academic counselling and appointed a full-time counsellor. The Panel could not find sufficient evidence that the institution provides structured resources to identify and assist students at risk of failure. The Panel urges the University to develop a formal mechanism to identify and support students at risk.

The University has allocated a budget to the Student Council to provide its range of activities for students. The Panel noted during interviews with members of the Student Council that some of the students are not aware of the allocated budget. The Panel encourages AMAIUB to consider formally informing members of the Student Council about the allocated budget so that it can effectively utilise the budget and provide a range of activities for students.

3.6 Human Resources

3.6.1 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain discontinue the practice of academic staff clocking in and out.*

3.6.2 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain review its current academic staff workload practices and introduce a carefully monitored workload policy that gives due consideration to time allocations for the three core functions of teaching and learning, research and community engagement.*

3.6.3 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement a systematic performance management and promotion programme for all staff.*

3.6.4 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain review its policy of appointing staff on one year contracts.*

3.6.5 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement a strategic human resources plan for the recruitment and retention of high quality staff and that includes a professional development plan.*

The University has implemented the Board Resolution NO. AMAIUB-19-06-2011-04 with regard to the removal of the clock-in and clock-out system for the teaching staff, effective September 2011. This was confirmed in interviews with the Deans, Heads of Departments and teaching faculty. The Panel, however, learned that some departments keep a weekly attendance log for the teaching staff who are required to sign a daily attendance sheet. The Panel urges the University to discontinue this practice which goes against the expected collegial nature of a university community as well as against international good practice in higher education institutions.

The University has also implemented a new workload policy which states that full-time faculty are required to have a regular teaching load of 15 hours per week in addition to nine hours per week for academic research and six hours per week for consultation and community engagement activities. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel confirmed that they teach a maximum of 15 hours per week, which is deemed to be too high in the light of the many other functions which they must perform. In exceptional cases, however, some staff will teach an extra three to six hours per week, but not exceeding 21 hours, which is in accordance with the Higher Education Council regulations. The Panel also learned that the Deans and Heads of Departments have reduced teaching loads of six hours and 12 hours per week, respectively. The Panel learned from both academics and students that the recently implemented workload policy has gone some way to improving the quality of teaching and learning. The teaching staff informed the Panel that having a reduced teaching load has enabled them to dedicate more time for the enhancement of their course materials as well as working on their research projects and community engagement activities.

The Panel was informed that the staff appraisal and promotion systems were recently revised to enable a more objective evaluation and judgement; detailed criteria for faculty performance evaluation and promotion are outlined in the new Faculty Manual 2011-2012. Faculty members are evaluated *via* a Performance Appraisal System for Teachers (PAST) whereas a PASNA system is employed for non-academic staff. A summary of PAST results for academic staff in all colleges were presented to the Panel. Staff members who obtain an average annual faculty performance rating above 90% are entitled for merit increase within the same rank.

The Panel learned that the University has reviewed its policy of appointing staff on one-year renewable contracts. Effective September 2011, all staff have signed a five year employment contract which is renewed on the basis of their performance evaluation results. Copies of employment contracts of staff from different colleges were provided to the Panel.

The University has recently developed comprehensive Faculty Development Plans for all its colleges for the period 2011-2016; these plans clearly outline the operational objectives, strategies, performance measures, activities to be covered, required budget

and assignment of responsibility. However, the Panel was informed that these plans have not yet been implemented. The University has also developed policies and detailed processes for staff development to be implemented effective 1 September, 2011.

The Panel heard in different interviews that, over the past year, each college prepared its own Faculty Development programme covering the areas of instruction, research and community engagement. During interviews with teaching staff, the Panel was informed that on completion of each staff development activity, the staff member is required to write an Accomplishment Report that summarizes the lessons learned and benefits gained from participating in this activity. Copies of accomplishment reports from different colleges were provided to the Panel.

The Panel also learned that at the end of each trimester as well as at the end of the academic year, each College Dean submits a faculty development progress report to the Head of Academic Affairs; however, no information was provided with regard to what use is made of these reports in fulfilling the university's strategic goals. The Faculty Development Activity Report that was provided to the Panel was a compilation of lists of activities attended by various staff members, official correspondence and copies of Accomplishment Reports. The Panel recommends that future Faculty Development Activity Reports for each college are aligned with its Faculty Development Plan, particularly with regards to achieving the operational objectives and the stated performance measures.

While the Panel was provided with a copy of the two page Human Resources Functional Plan, no explanation was offered on how this plan would ensure the recruitment and retention of high quality staff. Accordingly, the Panel encourages the University to build on the existing Professional Development plans and the Human Resources functional plan in order to develop a comprehensive human resources strategic plan with detailed strategies and measurable key performance indicators; and to ensure its alignment with the university's strategic plan.

3.7 Infrastructure, Physical and Other Resources

3.7.1 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain find ways of making space available to students that can be used for social and recreational purposes in order to provide a quality learning environment for its students.*

3.7.2 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain ensure (i) academic staff members have appropriate working space and computers and other equipment needed to provide a quality learning experience for students; (ii) staff and students have the space for private interaction and (iii) that the facilities available to students on Saturdays are comparable with those available for the other days of the week.*

3.7.3 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain review its policy with regard to safety notices in laboratories and similar facilities and its general policy regarding safety.*

- 3.7.4 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement a suite of policies and procedures to ensure that students with special needs are adequately supported*
- 3.7.5 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain improve its resources; including the library resources, services and opening hours to provide a supportive learning environment.*
- 3.7.6 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain ensure as a matter of urgency that it is in possession of the necessary software licenses.*
- 3.7.7 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop and implement an ICT disaster plan that includes the storage of back-up in a separate location.*

The Panel toured the university campus facilities and found that students are using the entrance hall to meet with each other and socialize. The Panel met with a group of student and found that the University does not provide special common rooms for the students to meet. The Panel urges the University to provide common rooms for social and recreation activities.

The Panel visited the rooms of the faculty members and found that most of the academic members are sharing the working space. The faculty members have no privacy to carry out any consultation with the students, and there is a very limited number of desktop computers in the office area to be shared by faculty members. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel heard that some faculty use the computer laboratories designated for students access to prepare and upload course materials. This is not in line with accepted international good practice. Furthermore, it is not in line with the university's mission statement on 'providing IT-based education'.

The University has equipped all the teaching rooms with multimedia projectors with computer. During interviews with students the Panel heard that many facilities including the library are now available to student attending classes on Saturdays.

During the site visit tour, the Panel noticed that the University has posted various safety notices in the laboratories. The University has also prepared a Laboratory Safety Handbook which intended to serve as a comprehensive guide for the staff and students in issues pertaining to safety management. However, during interviews several staff members and students were not aware of key elements of laboratory safety. The Panel encourages the University to develop mechanisms to ensure that all safety procedures are effectively implemented.

The University has not developed policies or procedures to assist the learning of students with visual or hearing impairment. If the institution enrolls such students, it needs to develop and implement a suite of policies and procedures to ensure that students with special needs are adequately supported.

The University has updated its library collection and included subscription to e-library like ACM, EBSCO, Questia and IEEE. The Panel visited the library and found that the collection of text books is small in meeting the needs of the students and the faculty members. The number of available text books and periodicals is not sufficient enough to provide the necessary support for students' further readings and the faculty members' research needs. The hours of operation of the library appear to be reasonable in meeting the needs of the students, including Saturdays.

The University purchased licenses for all the software currently being used in the delivery of instruction, and developed a Disaster Recovery Guidelines to enable the University to identify and deal effectively with an IT disaster to ensure that the effect of both short and long-term incident is minimized. The Plan has no details of data backup and restore guidelines.

The University performs a weekly back-up of its data through sending the data to the head office in Manila. The Panel visited the IT room and found that the IT manager is using the File Transfer Protocol (FTP) to transfer and backup all university data to the head office. This approach is very difficult to be implemented since it takes a very long time for all data to be transferred. The Panel encourages the University to find a faster method to transfer and back-up the data in a separate location.

3.8 Research

- 3.8.1 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain review its Research Agenda, involving relevant stakeholders, to ensure that it is responsive to the needs of the local community and its faculty, and that the Agenda is realistically implementable in the light of the affordable human, physical and fiscal resources.*
- 3.8.2 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain (i) revise its research management plan and ensure that annual plans are in alignment; (ii) ensure that there is a shared understanding across the institution of the research plan.*
- 3.8.3 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain review its current policy on funding of individual research projects so that appropriately adequate funding is available to support research and scholarly activities.*
- 3.8.4 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain evaluate the effectiveness of the present policies and procedures of its research activities and enhance the support the University provides to its postgraduate students in order to assure the quality of the programme outcomes in term of research training, adequate supervision, and access to journals, other materials and research laboratories.*

AMAIUB has developed a Research Development Plan that provides guidance and direction in the research activities of the institution. The University has also now increased the hours of teaching staff dedicated to research from three to nine hours and has concomitantly reduced the teaching hours load to 15 hours, which is still high.

The institution has aligned its research agenda with considering the university's Mission and Vision., and has allocated a research budget of 3% for scientific research as required by the Higher Education Council regulations. As matters stand at the moment faculty members are able to pursue their own research interests even if this is not the thrust of the University.

While the University has developed a document entitled Research Guidelines, the Panel was concerned to find that the Research Guidelines has been plagiarized. The Panel urges the University to develop a mechanism to ensure that this bad practice does not recur in the future. The institution needs to develop its own guidelines which are aligned with the mission of the institution and which are realistic and achievable. The Panel did not find evidence that AMAIUB has evaluated the effectiveness of its research policies and procedures.

AMAIUB has still to develop and implement a holistic programme for its postgraduate students to ensure that they have appropriate training in research methodology, clear guidelines of their own and their supervisor's responsibilities and duties and graduate holdings in the library need to be considerably enhanced if appropriate postgraduate research is to be undertaken.

3.9 Community Engagement

3.9.1 *HERU recommends that AMA International University-Bahrain develop a conceptual framework, coordinating structures, policies and resource allocation for community engagement and integrate its community engagement activities into the curriculum and research as appropriate.*

The University has established a Community Engagement Office which is responsible for the coordination of the University's outreach services. The Panel was provided with copies of the Community Engagement Office's functional plan for the year 2010-2011 and the Community Engagement Manual. The Panel noted that the main focus of these documents is on the implementation procedures for projects conducted by faculty; these include the procedures for project approval, development, management, evaluation and monitoring. The Panel was also informed that each College has prepared its own Community Engagement Development Plan which outlines the main objectives, strategies and required budget. Upon examining these plans, it was not clear to the Panel how these plans were developed and how they can serve in achieving the University strategic goals. The Panel encourages the University to re-visit these plans and ensure their alignment with the university's mission and strategic goals.

During different interviews, the Panel did not find sufficient understanding of what constitutes community engagement and the teaching staff were not able to give specific examples of how they integrate community engagement activities into their teaching and research. Moreover, no information was provided with regard to how the University implements quality assurance mechanisms for its various community engagement activities. The Panel encourages the University to focus its future efforts on (i) the

conceptualisation of its own understanding of community engagement and its consequent integration with the core functions of the University; (ii) the development of clear community engagement policies and plans that enables the University to achieve its goals.