



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

Higher Education Review Unit

Institutional Follow-Up Review Report

University College of 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 and 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 Appendixes. 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 University College of Bahrain (hereinafter referred to as 'UCB' or 'the Institution') 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 41 Recommendations contained in the Institutional Review Report. In November 2011 UCB 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 four 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 during the site visit and the Institutional Review Report. 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 26 December 2011, the purpose of which is (i) to assess the progress made in quality enhancement and improvement of the University College of Bahrain since the institutional review in February 2010, 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 December 2011.

2. Brief Overview of University College of Bahrain

The University College of Bahrain (UCB) was founded in 2001 as a private, not-for-profit organisation recognised by the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain as a provider of higher education. UCB offers undergraduate programmes in three areas: Business Administration, Information Technology, and Media and Communications. It also offers postgraduate programmes in Business.

At the commencement of the academic year 2010-2011, UCB had 427 undergraduate students registered, of whom 288 were studying Business Administration. There is a broad balance between male and female students. The majority of students are from Bahrain: about 35% of students are from outside of Bahrain, mostly from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations.

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 University College of Bahrain develop and implement a process of regular review of its Mission statement that involves a wide section of the internal UCB community and which takes account of the views of external stakeholders.*
- 3.1.2 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop a new strategy plan through an inclusive process with its community and ensure that the plan has clear objectives, Key Performance Indicators and time lines.*
- 3.1.3 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop a clear organizational chart with the proposed academic and administrative committee structure including reporting lines.*
- 3.1.4 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement its policies and procedures consistently across the institution and develop a strategy to ensure staff awareness and understanding.*
- 3.1.5 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain provide opportunities for student representatives to be included in appropriate committees and working groups as full members. These student members should be elected from an organized student association/council.*

3.1.6 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain give adequate delegated authority and control of the budget to the unit heads so that they are empowered to lead and manage their departments effectively.*

UCB has new vision, mission and value statements. These were developed through an extensive consultation process with staff members and a wide-ranging questionnaire/survey. The Panel heard from interviews with staff that the statements are a reflection of the college culture and are consistent with the aspirations of a niche liberal arts higher education institution. While the vision is aspirational in nature (as is expected of visions); i.e. 'to be a leading institution in higher education amongst top comprehensive universities at the national level', the Panel is concerned that UCB includes itself in the category of a comprehensive university or that it would wish to compete with them. The term 'comprehensive university' is typically used to define a higher education institution that offers a wide range of programmes both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and which also includes professional programmes. Furthermore, a significant amount of research is conducted and which results in, but is not limited to, research outputs in recognized peer review journals. Given that UCB programme offerings are still fairly limited; i.e. in the disciplinary fields of business, information technology and multimedia and communications, and are offered at bachelor level with the exception of the Master of Business Administration, the Panel suggests that the vision be further revised. As will be seen later in this report, research activity is still at an early stage of development.

With respect to the mission statement although in the sub-title it states 'what we aspire to be', the text is affirmative rather than as is more usual a statement which indicates how the institution will achieve its vision. During the next review of the statements, the Panel encourages the institution to give consideration to these points.

There is an approved Strategic Plan 2012-2015, which started to be developed through a 'brainstorming session' in October 2011. The Plan is supported by four pillars which sets out the goals and strategic initiatives for each pillar. However, the Plan does not have all the elements that are expected of a strategic plan, for example, there is not a SWOT analysis, there is no mention of resource allocation, or the persons or structures that are responsible for the achievement of the goals. The key performance indicators are all set for 2015 with no milestones in place in which progress could be measured towards the achievement of the 2015 indicators. This is a major risk for the institution as a lack of monitoring of progress could lead to few or even no indicators being met.

UCB has developed an organizational chart that shows clear reporting lines for each post. Job descriptions have also been developed for each of the posts. There is a committee structure – academic and administrative – that also shows their reporting lines.

The institution has started to develop policies and procedures, however, few are being implemented. Most procedures are embedded within the policies. Most policies have yet to

be developed or finalised. Approved policies are sent to the heads of departments and units which are then disseminated to staff within these departments. The Panel did not find evidence of a monitoring mechanism having been put in place to ensure consistent implementation of approved policies.

UCB has established a Student Council which is governed by a clear set of bylaws. Student representation still does not occur in the institution's committees. The purpose of the Student Council, in effect, is for students to partake in social and community events.

The Institution has recently taken an initial step towards providing delegated authority for the control of budgets to heads of departments. An agreement was signed with an external auditor in September 2011 to review the institution's current financial status and to provide a report with recommendations regarding budget allocation to the heads of units and departments. The Panel is concerned that this and many other improvement activities are only beginning to be addressed and others have not yet received attention. Furthermore, the discontinuity in its improvement activities is hindering UCB's development.

3.2 Academic Standards

- 3.2.1 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement formal benchmark mechanisms for its programme structure and performance, and undertake benchmarking exercises on a regular basis.*
- 3.2.2 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain conduct a formal review of its programme offerings to eliminate duplication; then undertake reviews of programmes to be offered to ensure graduates are appropriately qualified.*
- 3.2.3 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain review the weekend MBA programme to ensure its compliance with HEC regulations and adjust its delivery format to fulfil set academic and regulatory requirements.*
- 3.2.4 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain establish an appropriate mechanism at institutional level for the systematic review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the admission criteria in all programmes.*
- 3.2.5 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement minimal admission standards for each of its programmes.*
- 3.2.6 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain takes urgent steps to develop its internal capacity both at management and faculty levels in order to ensure sustainability of the institution.*

- 3.2.7 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain, with the aid of appropriate expertise, develop and review learning outcomes for all courses and programmes provided.*
- 3.2.8 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain revise its Internship course to ascertain its effective contribution to the student academic training, and to justify the allocated credit.*
- 3.2.9 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement detailed guidelines and regulations pertaining to the management, supervision and assessment of the Internship.*
- 3.2.10 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement a comprehensive outcomes assessment system for all of its educational programmes.*
- 3.2.11 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement an external assessment moderation system to evaluate achievement of learning outcomes.*
- 3.2.12 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement a standard format for course portfolios geared to the evaluation of teaching and learning to include direct and indirect measure of student performance, graded assignments and examinations, faculty member reviews of the course, and improvement plans.*
- 3.2.13 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain redesign its management information system to allow for tracking and improving student performance and maintaining academic standards, as well as to provide a sound platform for decision making.*
- 3.2.14 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement an integrated architecture and infrastructure of its various information system applications to enable a holistic management of academic processes especially those targeting student needs.*

UCB has not yet implemented any formal benchmarking, although during the site visit, evidence was provided to the Panel of benchmarking activities through comparing curriculum content of programmes and courses with four higher education institutions. The Panel urges the Institution to develop and implement a systematic benchmarking mechanism for its academic programmes.

The Institution has a list of potential external programme reviewers and has developed a policy to improve its academic standards and quality. This policy will be applied to all external programme reviews. The Institution started the external programme reviews in November 2011. During the site visit the Panel saw evidence of some draft programme reviews. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of these.

A letter, signed by the President, suspending the weekend MBA classes from 27 May 2010 was provided to the Panel.

The Institution has established an Admission Criteria Review Committee and provided a draft mechanism for systematic review and evaluation of the admission criteria and its effectiveness.

The admission standards have been revised and include a requirement for interviewing applicants in some concentrations within programmes. However the Panel did not see major differences in the new updated admission standards to ensure that the Institution can admit students with a potential for successful programme completion in their discipline. The Panel concluded that the admission criteria are still weak and need to be more rigorous in order to ensure that students have the potential for successful programme completion in their chosen discipline.

UCB held a workshop facilitated by an international consultant on Intended Learning Outcomes and Assessment based on Bloom's Taxonomy which was attended by all faculty members. However, the Institution has not yet reviewed all learning outcomes for all courses and programmes. The Panel urges the Institution to review all learning outcomes. Moreover, it needs to develop and implement a plan to enhance further its internal capacity at both management and faculty levels.

The Institution revised its internship course, allocated three hours credit for the course, and also developed an Internship/Practicum Student Handbook. The Handbook is intended to introduce the students to the expectations and requirements for a satisfactory completion of the internship course as well as provide the students with information about the duration and guidelines for supervision.

The Institution has not yet developed a comprehensive outcomes assessment system for all its educational programmes. The Panel encourages the Institution to develop and implement a comprehensive outcomes assessment system for all its academic programmes. During the site visit, no evidence was found of any system for external scrutiny of the achievement of learning outcomes such as, introducing external examination or any other form of grade moderation. The Panel encourages UCB to develop and implement a formal mechanism for external scrutiny of the achievement of its learning outcomes in order to ensure the quality of its academic provision.

While the Institution updated the course portfolios, it did not standardize the format for all course portfolios in such a way that they are focused on the evaluation of teaching and learning. The Panel encourages the Institution to ensure the completeness of its course portfolios in such a way that it will enhance the student learning experience.

A Management Information System (MIS) Action Plan has been developed which includes the use of the electronic Blackboard system, the use of e-learning, the grade entry system, through system developer 'Logos'. There is now a portal to enable both the lecturer and

students from outside the campus to access the information about their courses and schedules.

3.3 Quality Assurance and Enhancement

3.3.1 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement a systematic and robust approach to quality assurance which is centred on continuous quality improvement rather than compliance and correction, and which is integrated with all aspects of the Institution including governance, administration and the core functions of teaching and learning, research and community engagement.*

3.3.2 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain provide a timed action plan showing how the 'Revised Strategic Plan', including proposed changes to structures, programmes and services, will be implemented, who is responsible in each case, and how progress towards achieving objectives will be monitored.*

The Institution established a Quality Assurance and Accreditation Directorate (QAAD) and a Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) in October 2010. At the time of the follow-up site visit the QAAD was populated with a director and a secretary. The Panel was informed that there is an intention to expand the Directorate to include two sections, namely: Internal Quality Assurance Section and External Quality Assurance Section. However, no timeline for this expansion was anticipated by the Institution. While UCB stated that a designated budget is allocated to the Directorate, the Panel was not provided with evidence of such budget allocation. The director of the QAAD is also the Chair of the QAC which has amongst its members: Executive Director for Administration and Finance, Executive Director for Planning, two programme directors, and Head of Human Resources (HR). The committee conducts monthly meetings for which records of minutes of meetings are kept. The Panel is of the view that the QAC could benefit from an increase in its academic representation.

The QAAD has developed a number of policies and procedures such as an HR policy, Faculty handbook, External Programme Review Policy, some of which have been approved while others are in various draft stages. Being a small institution, the Panel was informed that it has relied mainly on 'word of mouth' to disseminate the new policies. However, during interview sessions the Panel noted that staff members were not well informed about these new policies and procedures. UCB needs to develop a formal mechanism to disseminate its policies and procedures and to monitor their implementation and effectiveness.

The Directorate has also developed a set of procedures and mechanisms to review admission criteria and to review and develop curriculum and guidelines for internship, and a set of surveys that can be used to get feedback from different internal and external

stakeholders. However, most of these procedures and surveys are at an early stage of implementation, therefore their effectiveness cannot be measured. Moreover, assuring the quality of research activities within UCB is not considered to be the responsibility of the QAAD, the QAC or any other body. It is left for the individual researcher to do so.

Whilst the Panel notes the different activities initiated and conducted by the QAAD during the academic years 2010–2011 and 2011–2012, it is concerned that most of those activities were initiated by the director in reaction to external review reports. Moreover, the Panel did not see evidence indicating that there is a buy-in culture from the different academic and administrative units to the quality assurance activities conducted by the directorate. Quality assurance is still thought of as activities done to them instead of having a shared understanding and ownership of the process. The Institution needs to develop a sustainable quality assurance culture.

UCB still has no quality framework to guide the work of the directorate or the committee. Most of the quality assurance activities are based on compliance and correction rather than stemming from an approach that is based on continuous quality improvement. The Panel urges the Institution to develop a quality framework that is based on a continuous monitoring and improvements of all its core academic and administrative activities and a quality assurance manual that would encompass all relevant policies and procedures and insure its dissemination through the Institution.

Moving away from the revised strategic plan submitted in the original institutional review conducted in February 2010, UCB has gone through the process of developing a new strategic plan for the years 2012-2015. The new plan did not take the recommendations of the previous strategic plan into consideration. Hence, those recommendations were not addressed. Moreover, the new plan is still awaiting final approval and therefore, the Institution did not develop any operational plan that could be monitored or assessed.

3.4 Quality of Teaching and Learning

- 3.4.1 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain should institute a formal curriculum review process to integrate evidence-based changes and improvements to programmes and courses.*
- 3.4.2 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement a clear decision-making process for curricular changes; one that is primarily vested in academics and not in administrators.*
- 3.4.3 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain provide its staff with development opportunities to support innovative teaching methods as well as scholarship in disciplines.*

- 3.4.4 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain conduct student evaluation of teaching systematically both for undergraduate and graduate courses and the resultant data is analysed and used as a basis for improving the quality of teaching and learning.*
- 3.4.5 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain institute formal mechanisms to determine employers' and alumni satisfaction with the quality of education provided by the Institution.*

UCB established a Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) in order to implement a clear decision-making process for curriculum development and review. In interviews, the Panel learned that changes in curricula are initiated by faculty members who forward their proposals to the Head of Department. The proposed changes are considered at the department level and are consequently forwarded to the Curriculum Development Committee for further discussions. The final changes in curricula are ultimately approved by the University College Council.

The Panel was provided with copies of the CDC meetings minutes for the period January – July 2011; upon examining these minutes, it was evident to the Panel that the committee has initiated processes for the standardization of courses outlines and the management of curricular changes. However, upon inquiring about the policies and procedures on curriculum development and review, the Panel was not provided with any documents in this regard. Not surprisingly, none of the faculty members interviewed were aware of these policies. The Panel encourages the Institution to progress its work in the development and review of curricula as outlined in its Institutional Improvement Plan (July 2011).

The Institution developed a Professional Development Policy that outlines the policy statement, responsibility for staff development, funding and types of development opportunities. However, many of the staff members interviewed by the Panel were not aware of this policy. In different interviews, the Panel was informed that requests for staff development are initiated by faculty members based on an *ad hoc* training needs analysis. The Panel was provided with a list of staff development activities. Upon examining this list, the Panel noted that only 12 faculty members benefited from professional development activities in 2010 while the number dropped to four in 2011. The Panel encourages the Institution to disseminate its staff development policies and procedures in a systematic manner and to provide more training opportunities for its teaching staff in the area of innovative teaching methods. The Panel also encourages UCB to set annual professional development goals for each faculty member and to link their annual appraisal to the achievement of these goals.

Student evaluation of courses has been conducted since 2005, however the analysis of course evaluation surveys only commenced in 2010. A copy of the course evaluation form was provided to the Panel, along with a sample of 'Course Evaluation Report'. In interviews, the Panel learned that course evaluation forms are analysed by the Quality Assurance

Directorate and are consequently forwarded to the respective Head of Department. The results of analysis are then discussed at the department level in order to identify possible areas for improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The faculty members interviewed by the Panel, however, were not able to give specific examples of course improvements made in the light of the survey findings. The Panel encourages the Institution to develop a set of recommendations based on the Course Evaluation Report results and to follow up on their implementation to ensure that the required improvements have been achieved.

The Institution has recently developed and implemented Alumni and Employer surveys; copies of the surveys that were conducted in July 2011, along with their statistical analysis, were provided to the Panel. The Panel encourages the Institution to continue the implementation of these surveys and to ensure that the recommendations made by these stakeholders are successfully addressed.

3.5 Student Support

- 3.5.1 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and document its own criteria and procedures for the allocation of scholarships.*
- 3.5.2 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement policies and procedures to identify and support academically weak students.*
- 3.5.3 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain provide professional counselling, career planning and health services to students to contribute to their well-being and academic success.*

As part of its community engagement services, UCB offers several scholarships to students, particularly to those from villages in the vicinity of the campus. During interviews with senior management, the Panel learned that the priority for these scholarships are for students who have a high GPA and who are financially challenged. Eligible students need to complete a Financial Aid application form and follow the provided instructions. The Panel was also informed that the selection of candidates is carried out by a committee that examines and ranks the applicants. A list of students who have benefitted from these scholarships, classified into categories ranging from 10-100% financial aid, was provided. The Institution needs to proceed with the formalization of the policies and procedures for the allocation of scholarships, as outlined in its Institutional Improvement Plan.

The progress report indicated that the Institution is in the process of developing policies and procedures to identify academically at-risk students; however, during the site visit, no documents were provided to the Panel. Moreover, the staff and students interviewed reported that they were not aware of such policies. During interviews with academic staff,

the Panel was informed that academic advisors are responsible for identifying at-risk students by monitoring their GPAs and performance in classes. Once identified, these students are offered extra tutoring via the lecturers or students study groups. The Panel encourages the Institution to build on these initiatives and formalizes its procedure for tracking academically at-risk students to ensure that they have the required support.

At the time of the site visit, the Institution had not yet established professional counselling, career planning or health services. The Panel was however informed, during interviews with staff and students, that the faculty members undertake the roles of professional and career counsellors. Moreover, a Career Day is organised where various companies are invited to the campus to familiarize the students with possible career paths. The students indicated that they find this activity very useful for deciding on their area of specialization. The Panel is of the view that the Institution would benefit from establishing professional and career counselling services as this would contribute to the enhancement of their learning experience. The Institution has also recently initiated the process for signing a medical service memorandum with the American Mission Hospital to provide healthcare services to its staff and students. The Panel urges UCB to progress their work on this overdue initiative and to ensure the provision of first-aid services in a campus-hosted clinic.

3.6 Human Resources

- 3.6.1 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement a strategic human resources plan for the recruitment and retention of high quality academics.*
- 3.6.2 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain apply its Human Resources policies and procedures consistently and equitably.*
- 3.6.3 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement a regular survey for staff satisfaction and use the results to improve the working and learning environment.*
- 3.6.4 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop mechanisms to ensure that grievance policies are implemented and that staff members are aware of these policies.*
- 3.6.5 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain articulate a coherent professional development plan updated annually from information generated by individual reviews and reports of programme/ department needs.*
- 3.6.6 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain put in place transparent policies and procedures for recognising and rewarding faculty performance and high levels of motivation.*

The human resources department has developed a set of policies and procedures that embraces recruitment and retention of highly qualified academics. These policies and

procedures have recently been developed in collaboration with the recently appointed QA director and are not yet finalized. The Panel encourages UCB to expedite the process to finalize, obtain the necessary approvals, and make the newly established policies and procedures operative.

During interviews the senior management emphasized that UCB will implement its recently developed policies and procedures in all its activities, and that decisions are now shared between the departments and senior management with the final decision in recruitment and promotion resting with the President. Moreover, the implementation of these policies and procedures is left to the individuals without clear guidance. On examining these policies and procedures, the Panel found them to be underdeveloped and so open to different interpretations. The Panel encourages UCB to develop a mechanism to disseminate these policies and ensure a shared understanding in order to achieve equitable treatment for all staff members.

The staff satisfaction survey has recently been developed and at the time of the site visit completed copies of the survey were presented to the Panel, however, the results have not yet been analysed and therefore have not been acted upon for improvement purposes.

A grievance policy and procedure has been developed as part of the new set of human resource policies and procedures. During interviews the Panel became confident that staff members are aware of such a policy and procedure, but do not know of cases in which it was used as their complaints and problems are normally presented to their head of department or supervisor directly.

The Panel was informed in interviews with senior management that development activities are based on the results of the needs survey and departments' specific requests. The Panel was also informed that an informal survey was conducted last year, but the development activities did not match what was stated in the needs survey. A new more formal version was distributed and completed this semester, however, the results were not made available to the Panel. In interviews with academics the Panel heard that there is no other formal means of assessing faculty development needs in practice and that faculty members are limited in number, therefore their needs are assessed on 'know each other' basis. The Panel encourages UCB to revise its existing needs survey to incorporate academic skills such as, teaching and learning strategies, assessment techniques, research, and community engagement. In addition to the needs survey other assessment methods should be investigated by departments to determine their staff development needs.

UCB has developed a Faculty Handbook with performance appraisal and promotion policies, and procedures for academic staff members. The Panel heard during interviews, that a similar policy and procedure for administration staff will soon be finalized.

3.7 Infrastructure, Physical and Other Resources

- 3.7.1 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain continue to improve its resources, including the library collection, services and opening hours to cater for the current and projected growth in student numbers.*
- 3.7.2 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement an ICT disaster recovery plan that includes the storage of back-up data in an off-site location and ensure that there is sufficient staffing of the Information Technology Department.*

The Panel was provided with evidence suggesting that the library holdings are increasing to 15073 out of which 7053 are available and 8020 being processed. The library has reading space for up to 40 students and is equipped with eight computers that facilitate access to the e-library resources and the internet. An additional 12 computers are situated in the e-learning centre in the administration building. Online access to the library's search facility and e-resources from ABI/INFORM is provided to students and faculty members from within the library and from outside the campus. However, during interviews with students the Panel heard that students can only access such facilities within the campus. The library has recently extended its opening hours from 8 am till 6 pm; a matter that has not been well communicated to the students who complained that the library is only open till 4 pm but lectures extend till 7 pm. The Panel encourages the library management to measure systematically the students and faculty members satisfaction of its holdings and services through various means such as meetings upon which appropriate improvements can be made.

The Institution made an agreement with a provider for backups of UCB's databases in a remote location. In case of power failures the IT server is connected to a UPS system that can provide enough power to shut down the system in an orderly manner without interrupting active data or systems. The Panel encourages UCB to establish a more formal disaster recovery policy and related procedures for possible hazardous situations and carry out drills.

3.8 Research

- 3.8.1 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and document a clear and detailed research strategy, with specific KPIs, and provide appropriate resources to support this function.*
- 3.8.2 *HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement equitable and transparent formal policies and procedures to support the research ambitions of the institution.*

UCB has developed a Research Policy, which was approved by the University College Council in June 2010. The Panel did not receive clarity as to whether the policy has as yet been approved by the Board of Trustees, however it was informed that the policy is being implemented.

There is not yet a research strategy that outlines how UCB wishes to position itself in the core function of research in the light of its vision, mission and current capacity. There is no plan which contains key performance indicators as well as the required resource allocation – human, financial and infrastructural – for the achievement of goals. The Panel heard in a range of interviews with various levels of academic staff that funds are available for faculty members to attend international and regional conferences for which there is an allocated budget of 3% of the institution’s revenues, as per the Higher Education Council regulations. The Panel also heard that while faculty members are encouraged to conduct research ‘in all fields of knowledge to the institution’, the Institution also permits academics to follow their own research interests. While the Panel notes the efforts being made to develop research at UCB; more attention needs to be given to the research enterprise. In interviews with a range of academics the focus is primarily on conference attendance. Attention needs to be given to the expected research outputs for each faculty member in an academic year and the type of publications/journals in which academic articles are published. Definitions of research output in the field of multimedia need to be defined as the traditional outputs of publication in academic articles is generally not appropriate here. This is particularly important for promotion criteria. There is no formal procedure on how to access funds for research projects and/or conference attendance.

3.9 Community Engagement

3.9.1 HERU recommends that University College of Bahrain develop and implement a conceptual framework, coordinating structures, policies and resource allocation for community engagement so that individual efforts become part of an institutional plan, that is implemented, monitored and reviewed.

UCB developed a Community Engagement Policy and Agenda which was approved by the University College Council (UCC) in June 2011. As stated in the policy, community engagement events are funded on a one-by-one basis. This might hinder the planning and prioritising of those activities as no clear budget is allocated to these activities on an annual basis.

The Panel was pleased to note that UCB offers several scholarships to students, particularly to those from villages in the vicinity of the campus. The Institution also provided evidence on community service activities that has been conducted in the academic year 2010–2011. These activities include students volunteering in special need centres and awareness

campaigns in Bahrain, social gatherings arranged by the Institution, students participating in exhibitions and forums in and outside Bahrain.

Generally, community engagement is perceived by UCB as social and volunteer activities conducted mainly by students, which explains why community engagement is the responsibility of the Students Affair Unit. However, the community engagement policy defines the community UCB intends to serve as 'the greater community of Bahrain and also for people residing in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia'. UCB needs to revise its understanding of the central function of community engagement in the Institution as a whole and in doing so it needs to integrate its community engagement activities into its other core functions and develop a mechanism to monitor and evaluates the effectiveness of these activities so that it can serve its community.