



# **Directorate of Higher Education Reviews**

## **Programmes-within-College Reviews Report**

**Bachelor of Science in Finance and Accounting  
College of Business Administration  
Kingdom University  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 27-29 October 2014**

**HC050-C2-R050**

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## Acronyms

AACSB	The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
AQAO	Accreditation and Quality Assurance Office
BSFA	Bachelor of Science in Finance and Accounting
BSFB	Bachelor of Science in Finance and Banking
BSBM	Bachelor of Science in Business Management
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
CCRMC	College Curriculum Review and Monitoring Committee
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEC	Higher Education Council
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
KU	Kingdom University
LACS	Library Access Control System
LMS	Learning Management System
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA-UK	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education – United Kingdom
QMS	Quality Management System
QQA	National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training

SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SIS	Student Information System

# **1. The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process**

## **1.1 The Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework**

To meet the need to have a robust external quality assurance system in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR) of the National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training (QQA) has developed and is implementing two external quality review processes, namely: Institutional Reviews and Programmes-within-College Reviews which together will give confidence in Bahrain's higher education system nationally, regionally and internationally.

Programmes-within-College Reviews have three main objectives:

- to provide decision-makers (in the higher education institutions, the QQA, the Higher Education Council (HEC), students and their families, prospective employers of graduates and other stakeholders) with evidence-based judgements on the quality of learning programmes
- to support the development of internal quality assurance processes with information on emerging good practices and challenges, evaluative comments and continuing improvement
- to enhance the reputation of Bahrain's higher education regionally and internationally.

The *four* indicators that are used to measure whether or not a programme meets international standards are as follows:

### **Indicator 1: The Learning Programme**

*The programme demonstrates fitness for purpose in terms of mission, relevance, curriculum, pedagogy, intended learning outcomes and assessment.*

### **Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme**

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

### **Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates**

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

### **Indicator 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance**

*The arrangements in place for managing the programme, including quality assurance, give confidence in the programme.*

The Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Panel’) states in the Review Report whether the programme satisfies each Indicator. If the programme satisfies all four Indicators, the concluding statement will say that there is ‘confidence’ in the programme.

If two or three Indicators are satisfied, including Indicator 1, the programme will receive a ‘limited confidence’ judgement. If one or no Indicator is satisfied, or Indicator 1 is not satisfied, the judgement will be ‘no confidence’, as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Criteria for Judgements**

Criteria	Judgement
All four Indicators satisfied	Confidence
Two or three Indicators satisfied, including Indicator 1	Limited Confidence
One or no Indicator satisfied	No Confidence
All cases where <b>Indicator 1</b> is not satisfied	

## 1.2 The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process at the Kingdom University

A Programmes-within-College review of the programmes offered by College of Business Administration was conducted by the DHR of the QQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place on 27-29 October 2014 for the academic programmes offered by the College; these are Bachelor of Science in Finance and Accounting, Bachelor of Science in Finance and Banking and Bachelor of Science in Business Management.

This Report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Bachelor of Science in Finance and Accounting based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and appendices submitted by Kingdom University (KU), the supplementary documentation made available during the site visit, as well as interviews and observations made during the review site visit.

The Kingdom University was notified by the DHR/QQA on 12 May 2014 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College review of the programmes offered by the College of Business Administration with the site visit taking place on 27-29 October 2014. In preparation for the review, KU conducted self-evaluation of all the programmes offered by the College and submitted the SERs with appendices on the agreed date on 24 August 2014.

The DHR constituted a panel consisting of experts in the academic field of Business, Accounting, Finance and in higher education who have experience of external programme quality reviews. The Panel comprised four external reviewers.

This Report records the evidence-based conclusions reached by the Panel based on:

- (i) analysis of the Self-Evaluation Report and supporting materials submitted by the institution prior to the external peer-review visit;
- (ii) analysis derived from discussions with various stakeholders (faculty members, students, graduates and employers);
- (iii) analysis based on additional documentation requested and presented to the Panel during the site visit.

It is expected that KU will use the findings presented in this report to strengthen its Bachelor of Science in Finance and Accounting (BSFA). The DHR recognizes that quality assurance is the responsibility of the higher education institution itself. Hence, it is the right of KU to decide how it will address the recommendations contained in the Review Report. Nevertheless, three months after the publication of this Report, KU is required to submit to the DHR an improvement plan in response to the recommendations.

The DHR would like to extend its thanks to KU for the co-operative manner in which it has participated in the Programmes-within-College review process. It also wishes to express its appreciation for the open discussions held in the course of the review and the professional conduct of the faculty in the BSFA programme and the interviewed staff members of the institution.

### **1.3 Overview of the College of Business Administration**

The College of Business Administration is one of four colleges within the Kingdom University (KU). The College was established in 2001 with a mission to be 'a leading business university in Bahrain, known for its high standards in academic programmes, research and community engagement' in the Self-Evaluation Report.

The College currently comprises two departments, namely: Department of Business Management and Department of Finance and Accounting. The College offers three undergraduate programmes (Bachelor of Science in Finance and Accounting, Bachelor of Science in Finance and Banking and Bachelor of Science in Business Management. At the time of the site visit, there were 27 students enrolled in the programmes with 10 faculty members contributing to the delivery of all the programmes.

## 1.4 Overview of the Bachelor of Science in Finance and Accounting

The BSFA programme is managed by the Department of Finance and Accounting, and was first offered in September 2004 with 19 students enrolled. The programme was last reviewed in 2012-2013 and resulted in introducing many changes. A total number of 541 students have graduated since the commencement of the programme. During the academic year 2011-2012 admission to the programme was stopped by the Higher Education Council (HEC). The BSFA programme is delivered in English. There are 10 full-time faculty members contributing to the delivery of the programme and six students were enrolled in the BSFA programme at the time of the site visit.

### Summary of Review Judgements

**Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor of Science in Finance and Accounting**

Indicator	Judgement
1: The Learning Programme	Satisfies
2: Efficiency of the Programme	Satisfies
3: Academic Standards of the Graduates	Satisfies
4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance	Satisfies
<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Confidence</b>



## 2. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

*The programme demonstrates fitness for purpose in terms of mission, relevance, curriculum, pedagogy, intended learning outcomes and assessment.*

- 2.1 The Bachelor of Finance and Accounting offered at Kingdom University has clearly stated aims, objectives and Programme Intended Learning Outcomes ( PILOs) that are linked to the mission and vision statements of the College of Business Administration and the University. These statements are available and accessible by students and staff on the University Website and Student Handbook. The Self-Evaluation Report states that the University has conducted a major review to the programme to ensure that it is up-to-date and serve the local market needs. The Panel appreciates that the aims of the programme are well-stated and aligned to the mission and vision of the College of Business Administration.
- 2.2 The curriculum of the Finance and Accounting programme is well-organized to provide academic progression year-on-year and course-by-course with suitable workloads for students, and it is designed to provide a balance between knowledge and skills, and between theory and practice as demonstrated through the learning outcomes of courses. This balance is achieved through effective implementation of the Graduate Attributes identified in the SER. The BSFA programme consists of 129 credit hours distributed as 21 credit hours of university requirements, 45 credit hours of college compulsory requirements, 51 credit hours of major requirements and 12 credit hours of core elective courses. The BSFA programme is structured to enable students to get their degree in four academic years and course prerequisites are defined to support course-by-course progression. The progression achieved from introductory courses such as Financial Accounting-1(ACCT111), and Financial Accounting-2 (ACCT212) to the more advanced courses such as Accounting Theory (ACCT425) and Advanced Auditing (ACCT414) enables students to advance smoothly through the programme. In the latter courses, students are expected to integrate their knowledge and skills with appropriate application within the context of the local and regional economies. The programme provides a range of courses which are consistent with similar programmes in Finance and Accounting offered regionally and internationally. Examples include Economics (ECON201), Advanced Managerial Accounting (ACCT450) and Accounting for Islamic Banks (ACCT453). The curriculum also provides the students with adequate flexibility to choose courses related to their interest and career from a set of four elective courses consisting of 12 credit hours. The Panel appreciates that the curriculum is well-organized to provide academic progression, suitable workloads for students and balance between knowledge and skills, and between theory and practice.

- 2.3 The course syllabus meets the norms and standards of a Bachelor of Science in Finance and Accounting offered at Bahrain, regionally and internationally. This is supported by the exemption letter from ACCA which reveal that the Bachelor of Finance and Accounting graduates are exempted from five examinations (F1:Accountant in Business, F2:Managenet Accounting, F3:Finanical Accounting, F4:Corporate and Business Law and F8:Audit and Assurance). The programme has benefited from a wide range of benchmarks with universities, locally, regionally and internationally. The material used in the courses is relevant and up-to-date and is presented in the course specification template. The syllabus in general has good breadth and depth and is consistent with similar programmes regionally (Saudi Arabia and Qatar) and internationally (Malaysia, USA and India). Interviews with students and staff confirmed that the syllabus is suitable to achieve the overall goals of the programme. During interviews with alumni, they expressed their high satisfaction with the syllabus and its content. The Panel appreciates that the syllabus has good breadth and depth to enhance the delivery of the BSFA programme.
- 2.4 The Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) are described in the programme specification. There are 14 individual PILOs, divided into knowledge and understanding (A1-A4), subject specific skills (B1-B3), thinking skills (C1-C4) and general transferable skills (D1-D3). During interviews with staff, they indicated that the PILOs were carefully selected and developed to ensure that they reflect the aims of the programme and its objectives. An examination of these ILOs confirmed that they are appropriately aligned with the aims and objectives of the programme and that they are well-written and are appropriate to the type and level of the programme. The Panel appreciates that the PILOs are clearly aligned to the programme aims and objectives.
- 2.5 Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) are clearly stated in the Course Specifications. There is good evidence of effective mapping of the course ILOs to the programme ILOs which in turn, as stated earlier, are aligned to the programme aims and objectives. During staff interviews, they emphasised that they focus on developing group work and presentation skills to ensure that graduates acquire the intended learning outcomes and are able to compete in the labour market. A relevant example is the Graduation Project which includes a component for presentation in the assessment. This was confirmed in interviews with employers who expressed appreciation for the level of graduates from the programme. The Panel notes that academic staff have embraced the learning outcomes at course and programme levels. Considerable effort has been taken to ensure that appropriate mapping has occurred. In interviews with students, there was appropriate recognition and understanding of the importance of the course learning outcomes. Student interviewed confirmed that there was also a good level of understanding that learning outcomes were reflected in their assessments. The Panel appreciates the

effective mapping of the intended learning outcomes at course and programme levels.

- 2.6 The BSAF programme includes a practical training course ( ACCT 490) allocated six credit hours over a period of eight weeks with a minimum of 200 training hours as stated in the Student Handbook. Students have to complete 105 credit hours before taking the ACCT 490 course. Staff interviewed clarified that the practical training course enables student to get hands on training in an accounting or finance firm thus enhancing the skill and the practical components of the Finance and Accounting programme. Students are given the guidelines for the practical training course and are oriented about it. Kingdom University has a clear assessment policy for work-based learning. The process involves supervision and assessment by both an industrial supervisor and the academic supervisor. The policy states that 70% of the grade is awarded by the academic supervisor while the remaining 30% is awarded by the industrial supervisor. Students ought to submit weekly reports to their academic supervisors and present their final training report in front of a practical training jury selected by the College Council. During the site visit, several documents related to the practical training course were examined by the Panel such as site visit reports and samples of practical training evaluation sheets. During interviews with alumni, they confirmed that they were able to apply the knowledge gained during their studies into the workplace. Employers interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the standard of KU graduates and their commitment to their work, as they do not mind staying after working hours or working during weekends whenever needed. The Panel appreciates that there are clear guidelines and procedures for the work-based learning. Nevertheless, the Panel recommends that KU revise the allocated credit hours to the internship programme.
- 2.7 The teaching principles and methods in the Finance and Accounting programme are guided by the University Teaching and Learning Policy which documents the range of teaching principles and methods that suit the delivery of a bachelor degree in order to achieve its intended learning outcomes. During interviews with staff and students, the Panel confirmed that both are fully aware of the policy and its implementation. From interviews with staff, it was evident that there is a commitment from the programme team to engage students through adopting different teaching and learning methods that enables the students to achieve the course intended learning outcomes. This is exemplified in a number of courses where case studies and group work are incorporated. Examples include Intermediate Accounting (ACCT221), Cost Accounting (ACCT321), Governmental Accounting (ACCT445), Advanced Managerial Accounting (ACCT450) and Accounting for Islamic Banks (ACCT453). During interview sessions, students confirmed that the variety of the teaching methods used has enabled them to understand the course syllabus and prepared them to what is expected from them. During interviews, staff

indicated that the programme adopts a strategy to develop students as independent learners by guiding them to read more topics related to the courses and encourage them to use other resources such as e-learning materials and use of e-library resources. The Panel notes that there is limited evidence of independent learning in a form of case studies in advanced courses such as Advanced Financial Accounting (ACCT312). The Panel recommends that the programme team enhance this aspect in the BSFA programme where possible depending on the nature and level of the course. The Panel appreciates the range of teaching and learning methods which are suitable and aligned with ILOs.

- 2.8 The programme is guided by a university wide Student Work Assessment Policy and Procedure. Students and staff interviewed clarified that a variety of assessment methods is utilized such as class participation (5%), assignments including case studies and presentations (10%), quizzes (20%), mid-term examination (25%) and final examination (40%). Staff interviewed clarified that there is a transparent system for grading students' work. This system is fair, and robust and well-known to students. From interviews with staff and students, the Panel noted that the assessment policy allocates the same weightings of marks across all courses despite the level, the nature of the course content and the type of CILOs to be achieved. The Panel recommends that the College revise the current distribution of marks for different types of assessments across all BSFA courses to ensure that these are suitable to the type and level of each course and its intended learning outcomes. The College has effective policies to provide timely feedback to students. During interviews, students highlighted that they receive feedback on their course assessments orally and in writing. This covers different forms of assessments including quizzes, case studies and mid-term examination. With respect to the final examination results, the students have the right to be re-assessed in their final examinations, and to appeal their grades according to the university regulations. There are university Plagiarism Policy and Procedures where students have to fill-in a Plagiarism Declaration Form when submitting their assignments or projects. The Panel's interviews with students, confirmed that staff use Turnitin to check their work. The Panel appreciates that there are transparent and fair policies for student assessments and that these assessments are well-known to students.
- 2.9 In coming to its conclusion regarding The Learning Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- The aims of the programme are well-stated and aligned to the mission and vision of the College of Business Administration.
  - The curriculum is well-organized to provide academic progression, suitable workloads for students and a balance between knowledge and skills, and between theory and practice.

- The syllabus has good breadth and depth to enhance the delivery of the BSFA programme.
- The programme intended learning outcomes are clearly aligned to the programme aims and objectives.
- There is an effective mapping of the intended learning outcomes at course and programme level.
- There is a well-stated procedure for the internship programme and it is effectively implemented.
- A wide range of teaching and learning methods is used; these methods are suitable and are clearly aligned with intended learning outcomes.
- The assessment policy and procedures are transparent and well-known to students and staff, and include a provision for providing feedback to students.

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

- enhance the aspect of independent learning in the BSFA programme where possible depending on the nature and level of the course
- revise the allocated credit hours for the internship programme to ensure a match between the amount of work accomplished by students and the assigned credit.
- revise the current distribution of marks for different types of assessments across all BSFA courses to ensure that these are suitable to the type and level of each course and its intended learning outcomes.

## 2.11 Judgement

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

### 3. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

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

- 3.1 Admission to the BSFA programme is in accordance with KU wide admission policy. The policy is published on the University Website and is also available in the Student Handbook and is periodically reviewed. A detailed admission procedure including transferred students is provided in the University Admission Procedure. The policy divided the applicants into two categories. Those with 65% and above from a recognized secondary school and those with less than 65%. The former ones have to pass an interview which aims to test whether the applicant is suitable for the BSFA programme or not. Once passed, the applicant has to pass two admission tests in English and Mathematics to be eligible to register in the programme. If the applicant fails in one of the tests, he/she is given a conditional registration during which the applicant has to undertake English Foundation, Basic Mathematics and University required courses. Applicants with less than 65% have to pass an interview in order to get a conditional registration provided that they undertake an orientation programme consisting of Arabic, English, Foundation Business and Foundation Mathematics to strengthen their skills and background. During interviews with staff, they clarified that if a student score at least 5.5 in IELTS or 550 in TOEFL he/she would be exempted from the English language test. It was evident from the interview sessions conducted with staff and students that they were fully aware of the admission policy and confirmed the procedures taken to enrol on the BSFA programme. The Panel is satisfied that the requirements of the admission policy are suitable and transparent.
- 3.2 The Panel notes that the profile of admitted to the BSFA programme matches the programme aims. The Panel notes from the Self-Evaluation Report that the Department requires all applicants to the BSFA programme to pass an interview regardless of their score in high school whether it was 65% or less along with an English placement test, or enrol in an English language orientation course if the minimum requirement is not achieved. The SER notes that a detailed student profile is generated by the Admission and Registration Department. These profiles incorporate information on educational background of students, as well as any relevant work experience and other training that would indicate a good match with the programme. In interviews with staff, they confirmed that these detailed student profiles were used to inform course instructors, academic advisers and the student counsellor of the details pertaining to each student and that this was used to enhance course delivery and counselling practice. The Panel is satisfied that the profile of admitted students matches the aims of the BSFA programme. Nonetheless, the Panel

recommends that the College conduct a study to evaluate students' performance against their entry profile to further inform admission process and decision-making.

- 3.3 The Self-Evaluation Report provides a diagram indicating the line management structure and the different roles and responsibilities of each staff members. The Panel notes that these roles are clearly identified in the staff's job descriptions. The Panel notes from various interviews with the senior management and academic staff that there is an evident line management structure in operation for the BSFA programme. The programme is managed by the Department Chairperson. Individual courses are managed by assigned staff members; while multi-section courses are managed by assigned Course Coordinators who are responsible to ensure that courses are up-to-date and intended learning outcomes are fully achieved in the courses. There is also a functioning academic committee structure which includes a Department Council, Curriculum Review and Monitoring Committee, Examinations Committee and Grievance Committee. The Panel examined several evidence of the effectiveness of these committees and is satisfied with the current arrangement as it facilitates the management of the programme. The Panel appreciates that the programme is well-managed as there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability embedded in the structures related to the management of the BSFA programme.
- 3.4 During interviews with staff, the Panel notes that the programme is well-served by its staff who offer a variety of appropriate specialisms to deliver the BSFA programme. There are 10 full-time academic staff members contributing to the delivery of the programme. The student-staff ratio in the College is 3:1. The CVs of the academic staff who are teaching on the programme confirmed that there is a diversified range of academic ranks (Professor (1), Associate Professor (3) and Assistant Professor (6)). The average number of years of teaching experience is approximately 20. During interviews with staff, the Panel was informed that KU conforms to the prescribed limits that Professorial staff deliver (9) credit hours per week, Associate Professors deliver (12) credit hours and Assistant Professor (15) credit hours per week. KU's policies provide academic staff with support to present a paper in one conference at a regional/international level annually. The Panel examined some of the individual research plans of academic staff and reviewed the type of publications by staff. The Panel notes the staff's long years of teaching experience and the wide range of their specialism which contributed effectively to the delivery of the programme.
- 3.5 The Human Resources Department at KU is responsible for implementing policies related to recruitment, appraisal, retention and promotion of academic staff. The Self-Evaluation Report clarifies the proactive approach to the sourcing of staff led by an initial manpower plan prepared by the Department Council, consolidated by the College Council and the Deans' Council. The Deans' Council recommendations are

then passed to the Human Resources Department for final endorsement and processing. During interviews, staff clarified that the Chairperson of the Department is responsible for developing the work plan and advising on the detailed requirements for the programme delivery. KU has a formal appraisal system during which the University adopts 360° performance evaluation system. The appraisal form consists of peer evaluation of classes, self-evaluation and superior evaluation. The Panel notes that regular staff appraisal is undertaken. Interviews with staff clarified that student evaluation of course delivery helps the promotion of teaching staff. The Panel was informed that seven staff members had been promoted during the last three academic years. The Panel also reviewed the minutes of the University Promotion Committee. From the interview sessions and evidence provided and concluded that the University has robust and transparent policies and procedures for ensuring that staff are recruited, appraised, promoted, and retained. Furthermore, KU has developed Staff Development Procedure and Staff Development Policy document. The latter stipulates that all academic staff are eligible to attend at least one international conference each year. Moreover, 20% of the academic staff time is allocated to enable them to work on research and scholarly activities. Staff interviewed showed full awareness and clear understanding of these policies and procedures. New staff members are inducted by relevant staff members within a month before their first semester of teaching after which they are assigned to the Department Chairperson who would be responsible for developing their work plan. The Panel appreciates that recruitment, retention and promotion procedures are sufficient for effective programme delivery on the BSFA programme.

- 3.6 The Self-Evaluation Report details the nature of information provided by the Enterprise Resource Planner (ERP) to underpin decision-making related to Admissions and Registration, Finance, Purchasing Services and the Human Resources. The ERP is accessed through Adaptive Tech Solution (ATS) based on Oracle and Java. During interviews, staff indicated that training is provided to facilitate access and that there is a special account code to control the access of users and level of authorization. The College operates on a Student Information System (SIS) which has five main functions including admission, registration, grading, academic affairs and academic follow-up. The latter includes information about tracking of students, data on student suspensions, course/instructor evaluations and advisory roles and matters relating to overall programme structure, Grade Point Averages (GPAs) and graduations. During the site visit, the Panel had the opportunity to view the operation of the ERP and the SIS and was highly satisfied with the efficacy of these two systems. Based on interviews with staff, there were no reports of any security incidents as both ERP and SIS systems are protected by tiers of security and firewalls and that front end applications are provided through two separate networks with daily back up. The Panel acknowledges that the ERP is accessible, secure and provides appropriate end user access.



- 3.7 The Self Evaluation Report clarifies that KU has policies and procedures in place to ensure the security of student records. These policies and procedures include a Retention Record Policy, Assessment Policy, Assessment Procedures, Backup procedure and Archiving procedure. The Panel notes that all these represent a comprehensive range of initiatives supported by an effective Adaptive Tech Solution (ATS). The Panel also learned from the interviews that KU has a Disaster Recovery Plan during which data is backed-up periodically to avoid any potential loss of data through disasters such as fire. There are two backup systems of records: on-site and off-site. The former is at the University and the latter at another local university campus. Staff interviewed clarified that KU has several procedures with respect to students deemed 'at-risk' and privacy when exchanging information during which a defined authorization mechanism is implemented to protect the security of data. Accuracy of students' results is facilitated by 'Edugate' software which is integrated with ATS. Before marks are approved, they should be reviewed independently by the Department Chairperson and thereafter to the College Dean for authentication. A final additional validation is done by the Admission and Registration Department. Then marks and results are placed on the system and are accessed by students. The Panel is satisfied with the arrangements in place to protect students' records. Mid-term examinations are monitored by the College Examination Committee whereas final examinations are monitored and supervised by the University Examination Committee (both types of examinations are conducted in accordance with the Assessment procedure). Interviews with academic and administrative staff confirmed the implementation of the approval and validation procedures. When touring the facilities, the Panel was informed that KU has two archiving rooms to store and protect learners' records and other important documents. The Panel appreciates that there are policies and procedures that are consistently implemented to ensure security of learner records and accuracy of results.
- 3.8 The site visit demonstrated that the physical and material resources (library, staff offices, 15 lecture rooms equipped with electronic projectors, multipurpose hall for seminars or workshops, a Wi-Fi enabled campus and a bookstore) are all adequate in number, space, style and equipment for the needs of the programme. The Panel notes that the University allocated good social space for students including breakout areas where students can interact with their friends, work on their projects or play tennis table. This engenders a caring and supportive environment for students and staff. Library and learning resources are new and provide a conducive and stimulating environment for study. During the site visit, the Panel reviewed the range of library resources available to students including books, e-books, journals, databases, audio-visual materials and open-access e-resources. The Panel acknowledges the level of investment in databases such as the Business Source Elite database which provides full access to 1000 business publications. This is a very useful tool for both teaching and research purposes. In terms of physical resources, there are four computer

laboratories containing 98 computers, where each laboratory can accommodate 25 students. The physical facilities also included an anti-plagiarism software Turnitin , Google Apps, digital signage and IP TV, as well as a wide range of other generic and subject-specific software. The Panel was satisfied with the range and access students have to extensive e-learning course texts and journal subscriptions. During interviews, the Panel learnt that there is a policy in place that class size should not exceed 38 students to enhance students' learning experience. The Panel acknowledges that the University has sufficient physical and material facilities to resource the programme and enhance students' learning experience.

- 3.9 LABSTATS is used to track usage of laboratories, e-learning and e-resources. Data extracted from the education management system is utilized to monitor the usage of the e-learning platform. LABSTATS generates reports that include data on current supply, use of resources and the need for additional ones whenever necessary. Moreover, these reports provide data on logins per college, per majors, and usage levels for different types of software. Further drilling down provides head counts and generates reports on faculty and student visits to the library and their duration. The University also subscribes to the Library Access Control System (LACS) which provides a headcount of the usage by staff and students from all the colleges including the duration of time of their usage. The education management system has a dedicated coordinator who demonstrated to the Panel how the system is used. The system has been developed using the Moodle Open Source platform which can be further developed to design appropriate reporting formats on e-learning usage and to ensure appropriate access. The Panel acknowledges the adequate tracking systems used to determine the usage of e-learning and other e-resources and encourages the College to further utilize the reports generated by these systems in decision-making.
- 3.10 As stated earlier, the library delivers a variety of services to users on lending, reference, photocopies, information literacy, and library orientation. Information literacy sessions are conducted frequently to make users aware of the array of library services and more generally how to effectively find and use information. The library has also prepared subject guides, institutional brochures and user guides. The site visit confirmed that KU library staff are enthusiastic, qualified and experienced in supporting the learning and research environment of the library which is new and spacious in order to house the current and future library collections. The Library subscribes to selective e-resources, wireless internet access and adequate ICT equipment to facilitate learning and research. During the site visit, the Panel was informed that library resources recommended by faculty are always purchased. The site visit also confirmed that teaching classes and computer laboratories are appropriately equipped. There is also a dedicated and supportive counselling service for students that is adequately resourced. This includes provision for physically challenged students who need special care and access to suitable library facilities,

multimedia PCs, display table and accessible shelving. Access for wheel chairs, power chairs and accessible paths are also provided for students with special needs. When touring the facilities, the Panel noted that there is a Medical Care Centre with a dedicated nurse who is available during the day. During interviews, the Panel raised the issue of appropriate cover for evening classes and how accidents might be logged when the nurse is not on site and the Panel was satisfied that alternative arrangements were in place. The Panel appreciates the arrangements in place and the support provided by the library, the Medical Care Centre, and the IT facilities.

- 3.11 At the commencement of each semester the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs offers an orientation programme during which an opportunity is provided for all students including transferred ones to undertake a campus tour to familiarise themselves with the university facilities and to be introduced to the administrative and academic staff. The Panel notes that the Dean of the College, academic staff and the Department Chairperson are all involved in the orientation process. Students are informed about issues related to the registration, code of conduct, elective and core courses, prerequisites of courses, grade distribution, how to calculate their Grade Point Average (GPA) and procedures for adding/dropping courses. All students are introduced to their academic advisors and given Student Handbook for further information. During interviews, students confirmed the orientation process and praised the efforts of the University in conducting the orientation day. Students also highlighted that they are encouraged to make use of the follow up sessions provided by the faculty members from time to time. The Panel appreciates the current arrangements for the induction programme.
- 3.12 Student progress is tracked continually by Admission and Registration Office, College Dean, Department Chairperson along with students' academic advisors. At-risk students are identified as those with a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.00 or less in any given semester throughout their study period of the BSFA programme. During the site visit, the Panel was provided with a Student at-Risk Policy and Student at-Risk Procedure both of them clearly state the key responsibilities of students, the Admission and Registration Office, Dean and academic advisors in identifying and providing support for at-risk students. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the university policy stipulates that students who completed 75% of total credit hours would be exempted from dismissal provided that their GPA is not below 1.8. Such students are allowed to register again in the courses they failed to enable them to raise their GPA provided that the duration of their study does not exceed eight years. The academic advisor has to meet students regularly and keep an updated record of their progress. The Panel reviewed samples of at-risk students' profile and it was apparent that appropriate actions had been taken. Interviews with students, confirmed their full awareness with Student at-Risk Policy and highlighted that they are always getting the support

and advice from their academic advisors and the Admission and Registration Office. It was also noted by the Panel that a new Learning Management System (LMS) is to be utilized by the University to identify students "at-risk" after 5-6 weeks of commencement of their courses. The Panel is satisfied with the current academic support provided to track students at-risk and intervening where needed; yet the Panel recommends that the University expedite the utilization of the Learning Management System (LMS) to enhance the process of identifying students at risk.

3.13 The learning environment at KU is conducive to expanding the student experience and knowledge through informal learning. In particular, the Panel was satisfied by the activities and the priority placed on community engagement and the development of transferable skills embedded in course specification. The Panel considered this as good practice and something which should be continued. There was clear evidence of the use of industry speakers attending the University to enhance the student learning experience. From interview sessions, the Panel noted that The Industrial Advisory Council and alumni were fully supportive and offered suggestions to introduce more informal activities. During interviews, students appreciated the efforts of the University to reinforce informal learning by regular career awareness workshops, scientific visits to key sites and enabling them to participate and get awards from national competitions. Students highlighted that they were encouraged by the Deanship of Student Affairs and the Career Guidance Unit of the university to contribute to social service activities and volunteering. The Panel acknowledges the learning environment at KU which enhances students' informal learning experience.

3.14 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Efficiency of the Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- The programme is well-managed and there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability embedded in the structures related to the management of the BSFA programme.
- There are clear procedures on recruitment, retention and promotion to support the delivery of the BSFA.
- There are policies and procedures, consistently implemented, to ensure security of learner records and accuracy of results.
- Support provided to the BSFA students by the library, the Medical Care Centre, and the IT facilities is appropriate to their needs.
- The orientation programme is well-organized to induct new and transferred students.

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

- conduct a study to evaluate students' performance against their entry profile to further inform admission process and decision- making.
- expedite the utilization of the Learning Management System (LMS) to enhance the process of identifying students at-risk.

### 3.16 **Judgement**

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

## 4. Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

- 4.1 The BSFA graduate attributes are stated and mapped to the programme's aims and ILOs. These attributes aim at reinforcing the achievement of the learning outcomes. There are 16 graduate attributes to enhance students' knowledge and skills to successfully face the challenges of the workplace. Graduate attributes are featured in many of BSFA courses. For example, planning and control topics occur in Intermediate Accounting (ACCT221) and Advanced Financial Accounting (ACCT312) where topics such as International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) within multinational enterprises are well-covered and assessed. Moreover, group work occurs in courses such as Managerial Accounting (ACCT310) and Auditing (ACCT413) where higher level skills in analysis and interpretation of finance are taught along with knowledge and skills to help in decision-making. From interviews, the Panel acknowledges that there is a wide range of assessment methods to support the achievement of the identified graduate attributes. The Panel appreciates that graduate attributes are clearly defined and aligned with the BSFA programme aims and PILOs.
- 4.2 The BSFA programme is benchmarked locally, regionally and internationally to ensure that the quality and academic standards of the programme are similar to programmes offered at other higher education institutions. The Panel notes that these benchmarking activities have benefited from external reference points such as the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA) in Bahrain and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of the UK. The scope of the benchmarking covers areas related to graduate attributes, admission requirements, programme aims, PILOs, teaching and learning strategy, assessment process and methods, curriculum, course syllabi, student workloads, student achievements and progression of courses. The Panel noted that the Department has defined the purpose of benchmarking, the choice of what is benchmarked and against what, how the process is managed, and how the outcomes are used. The Panel interviews with the programme team clarified that the process of benchmarking is directed by the Dean of College and involves a number of key academic staff such as the Department Chairpersons and Head of the university's Quality Assurance department. There are also good examples of where benchmarking has been applied in the programme such as introducing a course (QM204) to reinforce the quantitative methods in business components along with the decision to introduce the scientific research methodology (RES301) prior to students taking their Graduation Projects. The Panel appreciates the efforts undertaken by the College to benchmark its BSFA programme with local, regional

and international universities. However, as benchmarking is done informally, these activities are conducted at surface level and reduced mainly to matching some of the programme specifications available on the website. The Panel recommends that the College formalize its benchmarking to fully realize the objectives of doing it.

- 4.3 The College of Business Administration has a clear and transparent assessment and feedback policy and procedures, which are in accordance with the general KU Assessment and Feedback policy. Interviews with academic staff revealed the assessment procedures have been structured with due regard to Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs). During the site visit, the Panel examined all Course Specifications and confirmed that, in general, there is appropriate matching between the assessment tools and the intended learning outcomes that they are supposed to assess. During interviews, the Panel was informed that all assessment methods and procedures are monitored and reviewed by the College Dean, Quality Assurance Department, Department Council and Programme Review and Development Committee. The Panel's interviews with student revealed that students are fully aware of the assessment methods and procedures. The Panel appreciates that the assessment methods and procedures are transparent, consistently implemented and subject to regular reviews.
- 4.4 The BSFA programme team has applied appropriate mechanisms to ensure alignment of the assessment tools used to the CILOs. Learning outcomes are measured through students' work and different methods of assessments including class participation, assignments and case studies, quizzes, mid-term and final examination. During the site visit, the Panel reviewed all course specifications and noted that they stated all the assessment tools used along with the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) each tool is assessing. Internal moderators and external examiners are used to ensure that the assessment tools used are appropriate for the specified ILOs. The former has to submit a form to the Department Chair before mid-term and final examinations while the latter submits the form after the examinations to give his/her feedback. Details of these processes are given in the sections below. The Panel appreciates that there is a mechanism to ensure that assessment is aligned with the intended learning outcomes to meet the academic standards of the graduates.
- 4.5 The BSFA programmes implements the College of Business Administration internal moderation system which is applied to BSFA programme. Final and mid-term examination question papers are moderated internally before the examinations as per the Internal Moderation Procedure. Internal moderation is done by the course coordinator (in case of multi sections) or a member of staff who has the same speciality with the assistance of members from the College Examination Committee. The feedback of the internal moderation is submitted to the Chairperson of the College Examination Committee who in turn informs the Department Chairperson of

the changes/amendments, if required. The SER provides a comprehensive overview of the internal moderation process in a flow chart. The internal moderator has to ensure the relevance of the questions to the course level, structure of the question paper, total marks, language, distribution of marks and the appropriateness of the assessment tools to measure the achievement of the learning outcomes. Moreover, the internal moderator has to review a sample of the marked scripts graded as excellent, very good, good or poor to ensure consistency of grading by course instructors. The Panel notes that other tools of assessments, which are allocated 35% of the total mark, are not subjected to internal moderation. The Panel recommends that the College expand its internal moderation system to cover all forms of assessment.

- 4.6 An external moderation procedure is in place for the BSFA programme and is implemented by the College Examination Committee. The SER explains that the current system for external moderation is to select local, regional or international academics to act as external moderators depending on their field of specialization. Several external moderators were interviewed by the Panel, and it was evident that they had been actively involved in evaluating final examinations, model answers and marking of a sample of students' examination scripts. However, external moderators highlighted that their feedback and comments are not always taken into consideration. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the programme team ensure that there is sufficient follow-up and implementation of feedback received. The Panel recommends that the Department clearly states the allocated tasks for the external moderators, induct them on what is expected from them and inform them about the timescale for their appointment. Moreover, the Panel recommends that the programme team reinforces/enhance the role of the external moderators to cover more types of assessments.
- 4.7 A sample of students' assessed coursework in different courses was reviewed by the Panel during the site visit. The Panel notes that students work is of an appropriate standard and consistent with what is expected from similar programmes. The Panel acknowledges the efforts of the programme team in aligning the assessment tools with the learning outcomes. During the site visit, staff clarified that several meetings are arranged to firstly discuss the performance of each student and then complete the Assessment Report Form. However, the Panel noted that some of the graduation projects did not contain adequate reference list and depth of analysis. During interviews with staff, they clarified that the University and College have introduced a new referencing procedure to improve this area. Interviews with students confirmed that faculty members provide students with feedback (written, oral, and on a one-to-one basis) on quizzes, mid-term examination, homework and assignments presented in the Assessment Report Template form. Staff interviewed highlighted that they follow the university's Plagiarism Policy which states that



students have to complete a Plagiarism Declaration Form when submitting their projects or assignments. Interviewed staff and students confirmed that a plagiarism software (Turnitin) is used. Staff interviewed clarified that a very strong indicator on the level of BSFA students work in courses is that they were exempted from five examinations of the ACCA Qualification. The Panel appreciates the faculty's effort in providing constructive feedback on all students assessed work.

- 4.8 KU has established a standard for ascertaining student achievement of the CILOs and PILOs as 60% and above. The Panel notes that this is not in line with the institution grading system as attainment is normally identified by acquiring at least a C grade, which is 70%. The Panel recommends that the College revise this issue. After the Panel interviewed the programme team and examined course files, it was clear that students' achievements during the last four years had gradually declined. As mentioned earlier (3.6 and 3.7) the Chairperson of the Finance and Banking Department, the Dean of the College and the College Examination Committee are all involved in the internal and external moderation. Rigorous procedures are in place to assess students graduation project. The Panel examined the Grade Book Report which is used to show how students' performance in all types of assessments (quizzes, assignments, participation and examinations) is linked to the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs). The Panel appreciates the department's efforts in ensuring that results of assessment and grade distributions are carefully scrutinized. During interviews, the Panel was informed that KU distributes surveys to employers and alumni to measure the level of BSFA students' achievements. The Panel's interviews with alumni and employers indicated an acceptable level of satisfaction towards students' achievements. The Panel recommends that the College revise the current allocated percentage (60%) for ascertaining student achievement of the intended learning outcomes.
- 4.9 The Self-Evaluation Report presents detailed statistics about admitted students, progression, graduation rates and length of study from the commencement of the programme in 2006-2007 up to 2010-2011. The number of admitted students in the BSFA programme was high but has consecutively decreased over the last five years (177 in 2006, 166 in 2007, 118 in 2008, 17 in 2009 and 62 in 2010). The Panel noted that the average study period is nearly four years (3.33 in 2006, 3.50 in 2007, 3.65 in 2008, 3.76 in 2009 and 3.49 in 2010).
- 4.10 A Practical Training Procedure is in place at KU to guide the internship programme in the BSFA. Roles and responsibilities of the academic supervisor and the industry supervisor are clearly defined and stated. According to the SER students have to complete 105 credit hours to be eligible to register for the internship programme. Six credit hours are allocated for the internship programme over a period of eight weeks. Interviewed students and alumni, expressed their satisfaction with the internship

programme. Alumni indicated that they benefited a lot from the internship programme as it exposed them to the working environment which is different from the academic world. The Panel acknowledges the arrangements and the support provided to students during the internship period. From interviews with staff, students and alumni it is evident that the College exerts a lot of effort in establishing, building and maintaining good relationships with organizations. The Panel appreciates that the internship programme is well-structured to enhance and widen students practical and soft skills.

- 4.11 KU has two well-stated documents on Graduation Project Procedure and Graduation Project Guidelines covering all steps taken by the student after completing 90 credit hours in order to be eligible to register for the graduation project. The Self-Evaluation Report explains the roles and responsibilities of student, supervisor, internal and external examiner and the College Research Committee. The Graduation Project Procedure states the registration and assessment requirements for the graduation project. The assessment of the project is divided into 70% for the written project and 30% for the oral presentation. Staff interviewed clarified that all graduation projects go through a scrutinizing software (Turnitin) in order to be checked against plagiarism. There is also a Plagiarism Declaration Form that students have to submit to the Department Chairperson before presenting their projects. Two examiners along with the supervisor are required to assess students' projects. Students interviewed were appreciative of their project supervisors as they supported them throughout the phases of graduation project. Furthermore, the College has organised several awareness sessions to ensure that students enrolled on the graduation project course (ACCT 499) are well-equipped to compose their graduation projects. In addition, the College has introduced a course in research methodology (RES301) to ensure that students are familiar with different research methodologies. The Panel notes the department's effort in improving the standard and quality of the graduation project and encourages the Department to continue with its current practice. During the Panel's interviews with alumni, they expressed their appreciation for the support they received from their supervisors from the time they selected their topic until the time they presented it. The Panel's interviews with students and alumni revealed that the graduation project procedures and guidelines are clear, transparent and well-communicated to them. Interviewed students highlighted that they value the experience they gained during their graduation project. Students confirmed also that they were able to integrate theory and practice when working on their graduation projects. The Panel appreciates that there are clear and transparent stated guidelines for students' graduation projects that are well-implemented.
- 4.12 There is a College Industrial Advisory Council consisting of experts from industry, employers, alumni, the Dean of the College, the chairpersons of different

departments and senior faculty members nominated by the Dean. There is a diverse range of companies represented on the Council. The Advisory Council meets once a semester but in 2013-2014 members of the Council met twice and provided their feedback on the College operational plan, research plan and the curriculum of the BSFA programme. The feedback is then discussed in the College Council and Curriculum Review and Monitoring Committee meetings. During the site visit, the Panel met with members of the Advisory Council and confirmed that the College Industrial Advisory Council played a vital role in developing, updating the programme and enhancing the relationship between the University and the business sector. The Panel appreciates the role of the Advisory Council in improving and enhancing the delivery of the BSFA programme.

- 4.13 Kingdom University has two annual surveys to measure the level of satisfaction of its alumni and their employers. These surveys are analysed to provide feedback on the quality of the BSFA programme and the academic standards of its graduates. Results of the two recent surveys analysis confirm that alumni and employers are satisfied with the structure of the BSFA programme and its content. Results of the alumni surveys revealed that they were highly satisfied with what they learned from the BSFA courses and highlighted that the University responded to their suggestions and established an Alumni and Career Office to have continuous communication with its graduates. During interview sessions with employers, they expressed a high level of satisfaction towards the standards of the BSFA graduates. The Panel acknowledges the college's effort in responding to the alumni's suggestions. Furthermore, the Panel appreciates the high level of employers and alumni satisfaction toward the delivery of the BSFA programme and its outcomes.
- 4.14 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Academic Standards of the Graduates, the Panel notes, with appreciation, the following:
- Graduate attributes are clearly defined and aligned with the BSFA programme aims and PILOs.
  - The BSFA programme has been benchmarked with local, regional and international universities and professional bodies.
  - Assessment methods and procedures are transparent, consistently implemented and subject to regular reviews.
  - There is a mechanism in place to ensure that assessment is aligned with the learning outcomes it intends to assess.
  - Constructive feedback is provided on all students assessed work.
  - The internship programme is well-structured to enhance and widen students' practical and soft skills.
  - There are clear and transparent stated guidelines for students' graduation projects that are well-implemented.

- The College Industrial Advisory Council has an effective role in improving and enhancing the delivery of the BSFA programme.
- Employers and alumni are highly satisfied with the delivery of the BSFA programme and its outcomes.

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

- formalize the benchmarking activities to fully realize the stated objectives in the institution's benchmarking policy
- expand the internal moderation system to cover all forms of assessment
- reinforce/enhance the role of the external moderators to cover more types of assessments and take their feedback/comments into consideration when amending the final examination papers
- state the allocated tasks for the external moderators, induct them on what is expected from them and inform them about the timescale for their appointment.
- revise the current allocated percentage (60%) for ascertaining student achievement of the intended learning outcomes to ensure appropriate level of attainment

#### 4.16 **Judgement**

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

## 5. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance

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

- 5.1 KU's management system consists of a range of policies, procedures and regulations on University, College and department levels that all academic staff are familiar with and are implementing those that are relevant to their duties. Examples of existing policies and procedures include a University Teaching and Learning Policy, Teaching and Learning Procedure, College Teaching and Learning Strategy, Student Work and Assessment Policy, Assessment Procedure, Assessment Appeal Procedure, Benchmarking Policy, Benchmarking Procedure, Students at-Risk policy and Examination Procedure. During the site visit, the Panel interviewed some of academic and administrative staff, including representatives from the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Office (AQAO), who confirmed that these policies and procedures are reviewed, applied and well-disseminated to all staff members and students. Staff interviewed clarified that were well-involved in developing and revising these policies and procedures. The Panel appreciates that KU staff members are familiar with these policies and are involved in revising and developing those that are relevant to their duties.
- 5.2 The BSFA Programme is managed by the Department Chairperson. The SER clarifies that the structure supporting the Department Chairperson to manage the programme consists of the Department Council, College Curriculum Review and Monitoring Committee, College Examination Committee, Student Council and Course Coordinators. As mentioned earlier several internal bodies including University, College and Department Councils are utilised to ensure that the programme is effectively delivered and each party is responsible for its role. During the Panel's interviews with some academic and administrative staff and members from AQAO, it was evident that all of them had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in order to enhance the BSFA programme. The Panel appreciates that the BSFA programme is managed in a manner that demonstrates effective and responsible leadership.
- 5.3 The Accreditation and Quality Assurance Office (AQAO), has an overall responsibility for ensuring that the programme adheres to the requirements of the KU's quality assurance system. The SER clarifies a number of ways in which the Department ensures that the Quality Management System (QMS) in relation to the KU programme is monitored and evaluated. During interviews, the Panel learned

that the college has developed a Business Quality Manual to enhance the delivery of all academic and administrative operations. There was clear evidence during the site visit that the University and college have paid considerable attention to the key roles in quality assurance. Examples included the job description of the assistant to the President for accreditation and quality assurance, the job descriptions of the AQAO coordinator and the senior technician for AQAO documents. Moreover, the Panel also reviewed the terms of reference and minutes of the University and college quality assurance committees. Together, these indicated a strong commitment to quality assurance. These commitments were also reinforced by the an external audit report on the college which reflected well on its desire to benchmark its procedures. In areas ranging from monitoring student progression and retention to programme review, the programme team has implemented the university's quality assurance policies and procedures in a transparent and effective manner. The complete process for confirming assessments is carried out by the Chairperson and the Dean of the College. The Panel appreciates that the University has developed a comprehensive system of quality management arrangements which is implemented consistently.

- 5.4 As mentioned earlier, the AQAO, at KU has an overall responsibility for quality assurance and improvement , and is responsible for reinforcing the quality assurance processes and monitoring the relevant professional development of staff. The Panel interviewed members from AQAO during which they clarified that their primary role is to embed a quality culture across academic and administrative staff. The Panel notes that the staff appear to have benefited greatly from the many training workshops on quality assurance in areas such as course design, intended learning outcomes, and course review. Staff interviewed highlighted that all quality assurance policies and procedures are available online for easy access. During interviews, academic and administrative staff were fully aware of their role in ensuring the quality of the provision and they all showed a clear understanding of the quality management systems at KU. The Panel appreciates the commitment of the AQAO to disseminate the culture of quality amongst academic, administrative and support staff.
- 5.5 Kingdom University has developed a policy for the development of new programmes. In terms of the policy, proposals for introducing new programmes go through internal approval by the University Council and external approval by the Higher Education Council (HEC). The former starts with the New Programme Development *Ad-hoc* Committee, after which the proposal is presented to the College Council and then to the University Council to get its approval. Once approved, the proposal is submitted to the HEC to get it licensed. The Panel notices that no new programmes have been introduced recently. The Panel acknowledges the procedure KU has in place for developing and approving new programmes.

- 5.6 The SER stated that KU has two kinds of internal reviews for the BSFA programme. One is done annually while the other one is done periodically every five years. At the end of the semester, each course is reviewed by students and the instructor. The annual review is done by the department and supported by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Office which keeps records of all the reviewed programmes and the outcomes. The SER demonstrates a detailed explanation of the review process along with three flow charts. From these charts, it was clear how decision-making was undertaken in relation to programme review, with clear roles set out for the departmental chairperson and the College Curriculum Review and Monitoring committee (CCRMC). The Panel notes that as far as internal review of programmes is concerned, the University and the College have good structures in place for undertaking major/and minor reviews of the curriculum. Internal programme review involves a range of stakeholders including graduates, employers, staff and current students. The Panel interviewed students and alumni who confirmed that they were given the opportunity to voice their opinion on various aspects related to the quality of the provision. During interviews, staff highlighted that a number of key parameters influence the review process including peer review, staff profiles, exit surveys, benchmarks and interaction with research and community engagement. The Panel is satisfied with the annual internal programme review arrangements.
- 5.7 The CCRMC at KU is responsible to review the BSFA programme at least once every five years. During interviews, staff indicated that the last periodic review was done in 2013 in preparation for this external review in 2014. The periodic review process starts by the CCRMC gathering feedback from academic staff, students, employers and alumni of each batch to ensure that the BSFA programme is up-to-date, relevant and that the PILOs are well-aligned to the college vision and mission statements. The Panel acknowledges the current arrangements of the periodic review.
- 5.8 The SER clarifies that KU conducts several kinds of surveys to collect feedback from students, alumni and employers. Evidence was provided during the site visit of samples of these surveys such as Course Evaluation Surveys, Student Satisfaction Surveys, and Senior Exit Surveys, Alumni Survey and Employer Survey. Interviewed students and alumni indicated that the programme team had taken their suggestions into consideration. Examples included providing additional support in research methodology for the graduation project, enhancing the practical training programme and increasing the use of case studies. The Panel notes that the AQAO takes an active role in ensuring that improvement plans are followed thoroughly and implemented with due attention paid to the views of the various stakeholders of the programme. This is achieved along with the CCRMC and decisions reached are recorded. During interviews with employers, the Panel was informed that the BSFA provides its graduates with leadership, interpersonal and teamwork skills. The Panel viewed samples of alumni surveys and noted that there was a comment on the

graduation project that they needed more support when composing it. The Panel is satisfied with the college's efforts in conducting different kinds of surveys. The Panel recommends that KU enhance its surveys procedure by systematically collecting, analysing and responding to stakeholder surveys in order to inform them about actions taken to address their recommendations.

- 5.9 There is a Staff Development Office at KU which oversees the professional development of the academic and administrative staff and is responsible for evaluating all training programmes offered at KU. Several policies and procedures are in place to enhance staff development needs (mentioned earlier in 3.5). For example, Staff Development and Training Procedure covers issues related to providing financial support for conference attendance and release time for academic staff to enhance their qualifications. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the Staff Development Office ensures that continuous development plan is in place for both academic and administrative staff. Attending conferences and workshops and participating in professional training sessions are of high importance to all faculty members. During interviews, academic staff confirmed that they had benefited from the staff development training programme. The Panel acknowledges that KU is keen to involve its administrative staff in workshops whenever related to their duties.
- 5.10 The BSFA programme depends on its internal and external stakeholders to gather intelligence about the local market needs. The College Industry Advisory Board members have extensive years of experience in Bahrain's labour market needs. Furthermore, Alumni Survey and Employer Survey are considered as vital tools when discussing the structure and the content of the BSFA programme. The Panel notes the college's efforts. However, the Panel was not provided with evidence of systematic formal methods used to assess labour market needs. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College develop and implement a formal mechanism for scoping labour market needs to enhance the BSFA programme design and its delivery.
- 5.11 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
  - Staff members are familiar with all KU's policies and procedures and are involved in revising and developing those that are relevant to their duties.
  - The BSFA programme is managed in a manner that demonstrates effective and responsible leadership.
  - A comprehensive system of quality management arrangements is in place and is implemented consistently.
  - The Accreditation and Quality Assurance Office is committed to disseminate the culture of quality amongst academic, administrative and support staff.



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

- enhance the surveys procedure by systematically collecting, analysing and responding to stakeholder surveys in order to inform them about actions taken to address their recommendations
- develop and implement a formal mechanism for scoping labour market needs to enhance the BSFA programme design and its delivery.

### 5.13 **Judgement**

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

## 6. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own self-evaluation report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the site visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/QQA *Programmes-within-College Reviews Handbook, 2012*:

**There is confidence in the Bachelor of Science in Finance and Accounting of the College of Business Administration offered by the Kingdom University.**