



# **Directorate of Higher Education Reviews**

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

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

**Date Reviewed: 27-29 October 2014**  
HC051-C2-R051

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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
LABSTATS	Laboratory Tracking System
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 College of Business Administration was conducted by 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 of October 2014 for the academic programmes offered by the college; these are Bachelor of Science in Finance and Banking (BSFB), Bachelor of Science in Finance and Accounting (BSFA) and Bachelor of Science in Business Management (BSBM).

This Report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Bachelor of Science in Finance and Banking 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 its college self-evaluation of all its programmes and submitted the SERs with appendices on the agreed date of 24 August 2014.

The DHR constituted a panel consisting of experts in the academic field of Business 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 the KU will use the findings presented in this report to strengthen its Bachelor of Science in Finance and Banking. 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 members in the BSFB 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. The College was established in 2001 with a mission to be 'a leading business university in Bahrain, known for its high standards in academic programs, research and community engagement' as stated in the Self-Evaluation Report. The College currently comprises two departments, namely: the Department of Business Management and the Department of Finance and Accounting, and offers three undergraduate programmes (Bachelor of Science in Finance and Banking, Bachelor of Science in Finance and Accounting and Bachelor of Science in Business Management).

## 1.4 Overview of the College of Bachelor of Science in Finance and Banking

The Bachelor of Science in Finance and Banking (BSFB) programme is managed by the Department of Finance and Accounting, and was first offered in the September 2004-2005 academic year with 15 students enrolled. The programme has been reviewed in 2012-2013 and resulted in many changes. A total of 182 students have graduated since the commencement of the programme. During the academic year 2011-2012 admission to the programme was stopped by Higher Education Council (HEC). The BSFB 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 BSFB programme during the site visit.

## 1.5 Summary of Review Judgements

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

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 Kingdom University has clear mission and vision statements at an institution and college level. These statements are available and accessible to staff and students *via* a variety of methods including the University Website and the Student Handbook. The Bachelor of Science in Finance and Banking (BSFB) programme framework is aligned to the programme aims, objectives and Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) which support the mission and vision statements of the College. The programme has been scrutinized to ensure that it is up-to-date and reflects the local market needs. The Panel examined the evidence showing how the programme aims are mapped to the college's mission and vision statements. The Panel appreciates that the programme aims are clearly stated and contribute to the achievement of the college and the institution's mission and vision.
- 2.2 The curriculum of the Finance and Banking programme is well-organized to provide academic progression year-on-year and course-by-course, with suitable workloads for students. The BSFB programme consists of 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 BSFB programme is structured to enable students to get their degree in four academic years. The programme has gone through a number of reviews last of which was during the academic year 2012-2013. However, changes introduced to the curriculum in the last review are yet to be implemented once there is new intake to the programme. The currently applied curriculum is designed to balance knowledge and skills, theory and practice, and communication and critical thinking skills. An example of this balance is in the progression achieved from introductory courses such as 'Financial Accounting, and Economics 1' to more advanced courses such as 'Gulf Financial Systems and Islamic Banking'. 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. In the programme design and structure, there is clear evidence of suitable workloads for students. This was confirmed during the Panel's interviews with students. The range of the BSFB courses is consistent with similar programmes in Finance and Banking offered at similar institutions regionally and internationally. The curriculum also provides students with flexibility in terms of engaging in study of specific aspects which are related to their own career aspirations through the electives. The Panel appreciates that the curriculum is well-designed to provide academic progression, a balance between knowledge and skills and theory and practice, with suitable workloads for students.

- 2.3 The syllabus in general has good breadth and depth and is consistent with similar programmes, locally and internationally. Course Specifications were provided to the Panel. These outline the list of topics to be covered by the course and the content, the CILOs, teaching methods, assessment methods and their alignments to specific CILOs. The Panel notes that the topics are relevant to the discipline and is up-to-date. During staff interviews, the Panel was informed that the programme has benefited from a wide range of referencing with international universities and accreditation bodies. There is good evidence of professional practice and contact with the business community in Bahrain, through the eight-week training course and other interactions, such as visiting speakers, attending workshops, and academic conferences, which the university supports. One example, among others, was the course in Financial Planning where there was evidence of good integration of theory, practice and relevant context, which included developing entrepreneurship skills and application of these concepts to small and family businesses. The Panel interviews with students and alumni confirmed that they had benefited from all the above practices. The Panel appreciates that the syllabus has sufficient breadth and depth to support the delivery of the programme.
- 2.4 The Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) are outlined in the programme specification. The programme has 15 PILOs divided into four categories: knowledge and understanding (A1-A4), subject-specific skills (B1-B4), thinking skills (C1-C4), and general transferrable skills (D1-D3). Interviews with the academic staff confirmed that the PILOs were selected and developed to ensure that they are comparable to similar programmes and collectively cover programme aims and objectives. The Panel notes that PILOs are suitable for the programme, cover all major areas of the BSFB programme and are in accordance with its level. Programme ILOs are clearly aligned to programme aims and objectives. Examples include the emphasis on knowledge and understanding, cognitive skills, transferable skills, and values (such as business ethics and community engagement). These are clearly aligned with the PILOs. During interview sessions, the Panel noted that the faculty members have clear understanding of how the PILOs enable them to deliver the aims and objectives of the programme. The Panel appreciates that the PILOs are 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 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 at Kingdom University. 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 interviews 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 BSFB programme includes an internship programme consisting of six credit hours over a period of eight weeks where students are expected to attend 200 hours of on-job training. The Panel is of the view that the credit hours assigned to the internship is on the high side in relation to the amount of work expected from students. The programme team informed the Panel that this has been addressed in the latest revision of the programme which is yet to be implemented. Students are required to complete 105 credit hours before they would be eligible to enrol on the internship programme. The College has a practical training procedure which states that 30% of the assessment grade for the internship is awarded by an industry supervisor while the remaining 70% is awarded by the academic supervisor. Students have to submit weekly reports to their academic supervisors. In addition, students have to present their final training report in front of a practical training jury selected by the College Council. The Panel was provided with several documents related to the internship including site visit reports and samples of practical training evaluation sheet. The Panel appreciates that there is a well-stated procedure for the internship programme and it is effectively implemented. The Course specification states that the internship programme enables students to link theory with practice and reflect on what they have learned. The Panel's interviews with alumni and employers revealed that the internship programme has not only equipped students with practical experience, communication and soft skills but has also paved the way for some alumni to secure employment with the company which they were trained in. The Panel is satisfied with the current arrangements of the internship programme but recommends that programme team ensure that internship programme includes more tasks to link theory and practice to reinforce student's learning experience. The Panel recommends that KU implement the revised credit hours allocated to the internship programme.
- 2.7 The BSFB programme is 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 the site visit, it was clear that there is a

strong commitment from the programme team to encourage students to engage with the adopted teaching methods. This was evident in a number of courses where case studies and group work are incorporated. Examples include Business Ethics, Planning for Retirement Needs, Gulf Financial Systems, Islamic Banking and International Financial Management. The assessment of the BSFB courses reflected these different methods well. Interviews with students and alumni confirmed the appropriate use of a wide range of teaching methods such as students' participation in class discussions, use of case studies, encouraging students to further reading and research, and supporting students to become independent learners. Students interviewed by the Panel highlighted that these different teaching methods allowed them to link theory with practice and be updated with current global issues. However, the Panel notes that independent learning is not fully encouraged by staff. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the programme team try to create and develop more opportunities for independent learning tasks to fully achieve PILOs. After reviewing samples of course files, the Panel notes that the teaching and learning policy is consistently implemented in all courses of the BSFB programme. The Panel appreciates that there is an appropriate teaching and learning policy which is applied in all courses to support the achievement of the course ILOs and the programme aims and ILOs.

- 2.8 The programme has clearly stated assessment policy and procedures to ensure the level of students' achievement. The assessment tools include formative and summative methods and are divided into class participation (5%), assignments and case studies (10%), quizzes (20%), mid-term (25%) and final examination (40%). There is also evidence of good practice in relation to the mid-term examination where students are graded and then asked to reflect on their grade and provide comment on the marking. Examinations are subject to internal and external moderation and there is a transparent and fair system and mechanism for grading students' work. The College also has effective policy and procedure for providing timely feedback to students. Moreover, staff interviewed during the site visit clarified that according to the university regulations students have the right to be re-assessed in their final examinations, and to appeal their grades. The Panel notes that students are fully aware of the assessment policy and the allocation of marks for all kinds of assessments including class participation, projects, quizzes, assignments and examinations. However, the Panel is concerned with respect to the college assessment policy allocating the same weightings of marks across all course despite the level of the course, its 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 BSFB courses to ensure that the weightings are suitable to the course type, level and the learning outcomes the students should achieve through each course. The Panel was provided with the plagiarism policy along with a declaration form that students have to fill in when submitting their

work. The Panel appreciates that assessment policy and procedures are transparent, are well-known to students and staff, provide students with feedback and include elements of formative assessment.

2.9 In coming to its conclusion regarding The Learning Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- Programme aims are clearly stated and contribute to the achievement of the college and the institution's mission and vision.
- The curriculum is well-designed to provide academic progression, a balance between knowledge and skills and theory and practice, with suitable workloads for students.
- The syllabus has sufficient breadth and depth to support the delivery of the programme.
- The Programme intended learning outcomes are aligned to the programme aims and objectives.
- The effective mapping of the intended learning outcomes at course and programme levels.
- The appropriate teaching and learning policy which is applied in all courses to support the achievement of the course intended learning outcomes, programme aims and intended learning outcomes.
- There is a well-stated procedure for the internship programme and it is effectively implemented.
- The assessment policy and procedures are transparent and well-known to students and staff, and include elements of formative assessment and a provision for providing feedback to students.

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

- ensure that the internship programme includes more tasks to link theory and practice to reinforce students' learning experience
- implement the revised credit hours allocated to the internship programme.
- create and develop more opportunities for independent learning tasks to fully achieve programme intended learning outcomes
- revise the current distribution of marks for different types of assessments across all BSFB courses to ensure that these are suitable to the type and level of each course and the 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 BSFB 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 divides the applicants into two categories. Those with a score of 65% and above from a recognized secondary school and those with a score less than 65%. The former ones have to go through an interview which aims to test whether the applicant is suitable for the BSFB programme or not, after which the applicant has to pass two admission tests 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. Applicants with a score of 5.5 in IELTS or 550 in TOEFL 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 BSFB programme. The Panel is satisfied that the requirements of the admission policy are transparent and suitable to the programme.
- 3.2 The Panel studied the profile of the admitted students to the BSFB programme and noted that in general it matches the programme aims. The SER states 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 BSFB programme. Nonetheless, the Panel suggests 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 SER 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 BSFB 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 the Department Council, Curriculum Review and Monitoring Committee, Examinations Committee and Grievance Committee. The Panel examined several examples of evidence regarding 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 BSFB programme.

- 3.4 The programme is delivered by its staff who offer a variety of appropriate specialisms to deliver the BSFB programme. There are 10 full-time academic staff members (Professor (1), Associate Professor (3), Assistant Professor (5) and Lecturer (1)) contributing to the delivery of the programme, in addition to one part-time staff member. These staff members are also responsible for delivering the other two programmes offered by the College. However, with the currently small number of students enrolled in the College the student-to-staff ratio is around 3:1. The CVs of the academic staff who are teaching on the programme confirmed that there is a diversified range of specialisations suitable for the delivery of the programme with an average number of years of teaching experience of 20 years approximately. The SER states that KU conforms to the prescribed limits that Professorial staff deliver (9) credit hours per week, Associate Professors deliver (12) credit hours and lecturers/instructors deliver (18) credit hours per week which is currently feasible with the limited number of students. KU's policies provide academic staff with support to present a paper in one conference annually at a regional or international level. The Panel examined some of the individual research plans of academic staff and reviewed the type of publications produced by staff and noted that these were relevant to the discipline. The Panel acknowledges the staff's long years of teaching experience and the range of specialism which contributes 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 SER indicates a 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 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 programme delivery. KU has a formal appraisal system during which the University adopts a 360°-performance evaluation system. The appraisal form consists of peer evaluation of classes, self-evaluation and superior evaluation. The Panel notes that staff appraisal is undertaken regularly. Interviews with staff clarified that student evaluation of course delivery helps the promotion of teaching staff. There is a clear policy for promotion that stipulates the criteria needed and the procedures followed for promotion. 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, the Panel concludes that the University has robust and transparent policies and procedures for ensuring that staff are recruited, appraised and promoted. 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. During interview sessions, staff members confirmed their satisfaction with the induction process. Furthermore, KU has a Staff Development Procedure and a 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. The Panel appreciates that recruitment, and promotion procedures are sufficient for effective programme delivery on the BSFB.

- 3.6 The SER 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 was 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) module that has five main functions: 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. The Panel acknowledges that the ERP is accessible, secure and provides appropriate end user access.



- 3.7 The SER 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 for 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 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. Moreover, before marks are approved, they should be reviewed independently by the Department Chairperson and thereafter are sent to the College Dean for authentication. A final additional validation is done by the Admission and Registration Department. Only then, students can access their marks and results on the system. The Panel is satisfied with the arrangements in place to protect students' records. Interviews with academic and administrative staff confirmed the implementation of the approval and validation procedures. 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. 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, consistently implemented, to ensure security of learner records and accuracy of results.
- 3.8 The Panel toured the campus and notes 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 current needs of the programme. The Panel noted the social space available 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 tour to the library, 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. These are used by all programmes offered by the University. The physical facilities also include 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 is 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 Laboratory Tracking System (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, LABSTATS generates a number of reports that provide data on logins per college, per majors, and usage levels for different types of software. 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 learned that library resources recommended by faculty are always purchased. The site visit also confirmed that teaching classes and computer laboratories are appropriately equipped and designated staff members are available to support student in the usage of e-learning system and other soft wares in the laboratories. 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 Centre with a dedicated nurse who is available during the day. During interview sessions, 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 Department Chairpersons 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 Students' Handbook for further information. During interviews, students confirmed the orientation process and praised the efforts of the University in conducting the orientation day. They 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 of new and transferred students.
- 3.12 Student progress is tracked continually by the Admission and Registration Office, the Dean, the 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 BSFB 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 the student, the Admission and Registration Office, the Dean and the academic advisor 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 re-enrol 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 student at-risk 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 intervene where needed and recommends that the University expedite the utilization of the Learning Management System (LMS) to enhance the process of identifying students at risk of academic failure.

- 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 priority placed on community engagement and the development of transferable skills embedded in course specification. The Panel considers this as good practice that should be continued. There is clear evidence of the use of industry speakers attending the University to enhance the students' learning experience. From interview sessions, the Panel noted that the Industrial Advisory Board 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 provided to enhance students' informal learning experience.
- 3.14 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Efficiency of the Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- There are clear lines of responsibility and accountability embedded in the structures related to the management of the BSFB programme.
  - There are sufficient procedures on recruitment, retention and promotion to support the delivery of the BSFB.
  - There are policies and procedures, consistently implemented, to ensure security of learner records and accuracy of results.
  - Appropriate support is provided to the BSFB students by the library, Medical Care Centre, and the IT facilities.
  - 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:
- expedite the utilization of the Learning Management System (LMS) to enhance the process of identifying students at risk of academic failure.

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 BSFB graduate attributes are stated and mapped to the programme's aims and ILOs. These attributes feature prominently in the programme and reinforce achievement of the learning outcomes. The College has defined 16 graduate attributes to enable students to compete and face workplace challenges. Most of the graduate attributes are gained through a number of courses. For example, there are good examples of effective group work in courses such as Managerial Accounting (ACCT310) and Auditing (ACCT413) where not only knowledge and skills are taught, but also higher level skills in analysis and interpretation of finance in areas such as decision-making. The Panel notes that there is a variety of assessment methods to support the achievement of the stated learning outcomes and hence the graduate attributes. During interviews, alumni and employers highlighted that the needed attributes are successfully developed in the programme graduates. The Panel appreciates that graduate attributes are clearly stated and aligned with the BSFB programme aims and PILOs.
- 4.2 The BSFB programme is benchmarked locally, regionally and internationally to ensure that the quality and academic standards of the programme are comparable with programmes offered at various universities. The Panel notes that the institution's benchmarking activities have appropriate external reference points such as AACSB in the USA and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in the UK. The SER states that the scope of the benchmarking covers areas related to 'graduate attributes, admission requirements, programme aims, PILOs, teaching and learning strategy, assessment process and methods, programme curriculum, course syllabi, progression of courses, student workload and student achievements'. The Panel acknowledges that the programme team has clearly 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 was provided with examples of where benchmarking has been applied in the programme such as to reinforce the quantitative methods in business components (QM204), as well as the decision to introduce a research methodology component (RES301) prior to students embarking on their Graduation Projects. The Panel appreciates the efforts of the College to benchmark its BSFB programme with local, regional and international universities and professional bodies. 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 BSFB programme has clear and transparent assessment and feedback policy and procedures, which are in line with the general KU Assessment and Feedback policy. Staff interviewed clarified that these assessment procedures have been carefully designed to be in line with course ILOs. The Panel was provided with all course specifications which confirmed that there is appropriate matching between the assessment tools and the intended learning outcomes that they are supposed to assess. Staff interviewed indicated that a variety of assessment methods is utilized such as examination, case studies, presentations, assignments and group discussions. All these assessment methods aim to cover the broad spectrum of the CILOs and PILOs. In general, the Panel notes that effort has been made to match students' assessments with the CILO's and PILO's. The Panel is satisfied that these assessment methods are suitable to the nature and level of the BSFB courses. Moreover, the assessment methods and procedures are monitored and reviewed by College Dean, the Quality Assurance Department, the Department Council and the Programme Review and Development Committee. Several meetings are held to discuss these issues. During interviews with students, they expressed their satisfaction with these assessment methods. The Panel appreciates that the assessment methods and procedures are transparent, consistently implemented and subject to regular reviews.
- 4.4 The College has implemented appropriate mechanisms to ensure alignment amongst assessment tools, learning outcomes and academic standards. Learning outcomes are measured through students' work and different methods of assessments including class participation (5%), assignments and case studies (10%), quizzes (20%), mid-term (25%) and final examination (40%). The Panel examined course specifications and noted that they included assessment tools which are used along with the ILOs. The SER clarifies that KU has internal moderators and external examiners. The former has to submit a form to the Department Chairman before mid-term and final examinations while the latter submits the form after the examinations to give his/her feedback. During interviews with staff, they indicated that one of the aims of these mechanisms is to ensure that course assessments are tied to the CILOs in order to support the achievement of the programme ILOs. The Self-Evaluation Report clarifies that assignments and quizzes are moderated informally within the department. The Panel appreciates that the current mechanism ensures that assessment is aligned with learning outcomes to meet the academic standards of the BSFB graduates.
- 4.5 The College of Business Administration has an internal moderation system which is applied to the BSFB programme. Final and mid-term examination question papers are moderated internally before the examination 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 and members of 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 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. 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 tutors. 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 Kingdom University has an external moderation procedure which is implemented by the College Examination Committee. The Self-Evaluation Report states that the current system for external moderation is to select national, regional or international academics to act as external moderators depending on their field of specialization. During the site visit, the Panel interviewed several external moderators and it was clear that they had been actively involved in evaluating final examinations, model answers and marking of a sample of students' examination scripts. However, external moderators expressed that their feedback and comments are not always taken into consideration. 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 During the site visit, the Panel reviewed the provided samples of students' assessed coursework in different courses. The Panel noted that students work is of an appropriate standard and consistent with what is expected from similar programmes. In addition, the Panel was satisfied with the range of the assessment tools which are well- aligned with the PILOs and CILOs. Staff interviewed indicated that student work is assessed in meetings where staff discuss the performance of each student and then they complete the Assessment Report Form. However, the Panel noted that in some cases, the marking of take home assignments was quite generous and the graduation projects did not contain adequate reference list and depth of analysis. During interviews with staff, they clarified that the University and the College have introduced a new referencing procedure to improve this area. Moreover, staff highlighted that they follow the university's Plagiarism Policy and Procedures which states that students have to complete a Plagiarism Declaration



Form when submitting their work. During interviews with students, they confirmed that staff use the plagiarism software. Interviews with students confirmed also 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. 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 CILOs and PILOs as 60% and above. This, the Panel notes is not in line with the institution grading system as attainment is normally identified acquiring at least a C grade, which is 70%. The Panel recommends that the College revise this issue. The course files and interviews with the academic staff confirmed the claim in the Self-Evaluation Report that achievements during the past three years varied from year to year. The SER states that 'during 2010-2011 average GPA of graduates was 3.20 and declined to 2.94 and 2.88 in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 respectively but increased to 3.48 in 2013-2014 as only six students graduated in this year.' The Panel notes, however, that there is a skew in the average of students achievement and suggest that the College further investigate the reason for this. As mentioned earlier, the Chairperson of the Finance and Banking Department, Dean of the College and College Examination Committee are all involved in the internal and external moderation. There are also clearly stated procedures to assess students graduation project that are adopted from other local universities to ensure consistency with graduates' achievements from these universities. The Panel notes the college's efforts in monitoring assessment results and grade distributions to assess the achievements of the graduates.
- 4.9 The SER 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 BSFB programme is low but has consecutively decreased over the last five years (52 in 2006, 50 in 2007, 55 in 2008, 8 in 2009 and 20 in 2010). Currently, the programme is not admitting any new students. The Panel suggests that the institution should investigate ways to attract new intake.
- 4.10 KU has a Practical Training Policy that guides the internship programme in the BSFB programme. Roles and responsibilities of the academic supervisor and the industry supervisor are clearly defined and stated. As stated earlier, 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. Interviews with students and alumni revealed that they are very satisfied with the internship programme. Some of them were also pleased as they managed to secure jobs in the organizations where they did their training. The Panel acknowledges the

support provided to students during this period. Staff interviewed clarified that the College works hard to build relationships with organizations and to keep itself updated with current labour market trends. This in turn will enhance students' knowledge and transferable skills, increasing their opportunities to secure jobs in organisations. The Panel appreciates that there are clear and transparent stated guidelines for students' internship programme that are well-implemented.

- 4.11 KU has two well-stated documents on Graduation Project Procedure and Graduation Project Guidelines covering all steps the student goes through after completing 90 credit hours in order to be entitled to register for the graduation project. The SER clarifies in detail the roles and responsibilities of student, supervisor, internal and external examiner and the College Research Committee. The Graduation Project Procedure indicates the registration and assessment requirements for the graduation project. The assessment comprises 80% for the written project and 20% for the oral presentation. All submitted projects go through Turn-it-in software to be checked against plagiarism. There is also a Plagiarism Declaration Form that students have to submit to the Department chairman before the oral presentation. Two examiners along with the supervisor are required to assess students' work. Students interviewed clarified that project supervisors provide effective and regular (weekly) support to them. Furthermore, there is an appropriate awareness session organised at College level to ensure that students embarking on the project are well-prepared. A recent introduction in this area is the provision of training in research methodology. The Panel reviewed a number of graduation projects and noted that the level of these projects are in general acceptable. However, as stated earlier, some of samples provided did not contain adequate reference list and depth of analysis. During interview sessions, it was evident that the Department is tackling both issues as explained earlier under this indicator. During interviews, students and alumni confirmed that the graduation project guidelines are clear, transparent and well-implemented. In meetings with students, it was evident that they value the experience of completing their project. They confirmed that in the process of writing their project, they were able to integrate the various learning outcomes acquired throughout the programme, especially the higher analytical and transferable skills. Moreover, during the Panel's interviews with alumni, they expressed their appreciation for the support they received from their supervisors from the time they choose their topic until the time they present it. The Panel appreciates that there are clear and transparent stated guidelines for students' graduation projects that are well-implemented.
- 4.12 The College Industrial Advisory Council consists of experts from industry, employers, alumni, Dean of the College, Chairpersons of different departments and senior faculty members nominated by the Dean. There is a good and diverse range of companies represented on the Council and this is a very positive aspect in its

structure. The Advisory Council meets once a semester but in 2013-2014 members of the Advisory Council met twice and provided their feedback on the College operational plan, research plan and curriculum. 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 Council plays an important role in developing the programme and enhancing the relationship between the College and the business sector. The Panel appreciates the active involvement of the Advisory Council to improve and enhance the delivery of the BSFB programme.

- 4.13 Two annual surveys are conducted by KU to measure the level of satisfaction of its alumni and their employers. These surveys are analysed to provide feedback on the quality of the BSFB programme and the academic standards of its graduates. Results of the two recent surveys analysis confirm that alumni and employers are satisfied with the programme and its content. Curriculum Assessment Study which had been prepared by the Quality Assurance Office and the programme team, and conducted by a consulting Company, indicated a positive evaluation of the quality of the graduates and strong appreciation of the student experience gained. The alumni survey presented data on how courses were perceived by graduates in terms of preparation for the workplace. The Panel recommends that the academic staff consider this valuable information or any other valuable suggestions from other stakeholders when reviewing the BSFB programme. During interview sessions with employers, they expressed a high level of satisfaction regarding the standards of the BSFB graduates. In addition, the alumni expressed their satisfaction with what they learnt and highlighted that the College responded to their suggestions and established an Alumni and Career Office to have an ongoing linkage with its 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 with the programme and its delivery.
- 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 stated and aligned with the BSFB programme aims and PILOs.
  - The efforts of the College to benchmark its BSFB programme with local, regional and international bodies.
  - The assessment methods and procedures are transparent, consistently implemented and subject to regular reviews.
  - The assessment is aligned with learning outcomes to meet the academic standards of the BSFB graduates.
  - The college's efforts in ensuring that assessment results and grade distributions are carefully scrutinized to assess the achievements of the graduates.

- Work-based learning is well-structured and emphasised in the programme.
- The faculty's effort in providing constructive feedback on all students assessed work.
- There are clear and transparent stated guidelines for students' graduation projects that are well-implemented.
- There are procedures to monitor and ensure the quality of students' graduation project.
- The active involvement of the Industrial Advisory Council to improve and enhance the delivery of the BSFB programme.
- The high level of employers and alumni satisfaction with the programme and its delivery.

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

- formalize its benchmarking activities to fully realize the objectives of doing it
- 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 examinations
- 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
- consider the data collected from different stakeholders when reviewing the BSFB programme.

#### 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 The University's management system consists of a range of policies, procedures and regulations on the 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 the 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 they 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 the revising and developing those that are relevant to their duties.
- 5.2 The BSFB Programme is managed by the Department Chairperson. The Self-Evaluation Report 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 structures including University, College and Department Councils are utilised to ensure that the programme is effectively delivered and each party is responsible for its role with clear academic leadership. The Panel appreciates that the BSFB 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 Self-Evaluation Report 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 is clear evidence 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 indicate a strong commitment to quality assurance. This commitment is also reinforced by the external audit the College has subjected itself to. 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 Dean of 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 Accreditation and Quality Assurance Office (AQAO), at KU has an overall responsibility for quality assurance and improvement, and is responsible for reinforcing the quality assurance processes and monitoring the effectiveness of the 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 is then submitted for licensing 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. 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 states that KU has two kinds of internal reviews for the BSFB programme. One is conducted annually while the other one is conducted periodically every five years. At the end of the semester, each course is reviewed by the students and the instructor. The annual review is executed 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 is clear how decision-making is undertaken in relation to the programme review, with clear roles set out for the Departmental Chairperson and the College Curriculum Review and Monitoring Committee. 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 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 College Curriculum Review and Monitoring Committee (CCRMC) at KU is responsible to review the BSFB 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 BSFB 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 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 College Curriculum Review and Monitoring Committee (CCRMC) and decisions reached are recorded. The Panel is satisfied with the college's efforts in conducting different kinds of surveys. Nonetheless, the Panel recommends that KU enhance its surveys procedure to timely inform stakeholders about the outcome of these surveys.

- 5.9 There is a Staff Development Office at KU which oversees the capacity building activities and professional development of the academic and administrative staff and is responsible for evaluating all training programmes offered by KU. Several policies and procedures are in place to enhance staff development needs. 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 BSFB programme depends on its internal and external stakeholders to gather intelligence about the local market needs. The College Industry Advisory Council 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 BSFB 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. The Panel recommends that the College develop and implement a formal mechanism for scoping labour market needs and inform programme design and 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 policies and procedures and are involved in revising and developing those that are relevant to their duties.
  - The BSFB 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.
  - There are clear procedures in place for developing and approving new programmes.
  - There are clear arrangements for the BSFB periodic review.
  - The college is committed to develop the BSFB programme to reinforce its contribution to the local, regional and international economies.



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

- 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

5.13 **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 Banking of the College of Business Administration offered by the Kingdom University.**