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

Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design

College of Art and Design

Royal University for Women

Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 31 October – 2 November 2016

HC091-C2-R091

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Acronyms

BAGD	Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design
BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
HEC	Higher Education Council
HoD	Head of Department
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
MIS	Management Information System
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
RUW	Royal University for Women
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SIS	Student Information System
WVU	West Virginia University

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The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process

A.   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 Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA) 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 BQA, 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.

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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 **Indicator 1** is not satisfied	

B.   The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process at the Royal University For Women

A Programmes-within-College review of the programmes offered by the College of Art and Design of the Royal University for Women was conducted by the DHR of the BQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place on 31 October -2 November 2016 for the academic programmes offered by the College, these are: Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design; Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design; Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design; and Master of Design Management.

The Royal University for Women was notified by the DHR/BQA on 17 April 2016 that it would be subject to Programmes-within-College reviews of its College of Art and Design with the site visit taking place in October/November 2016. In preparation for the review, the Royal University for Women conducted self-evaluation reviews of all its programmes and submitted the Self-evaluation Reports (SERs) with appendices on the agreed date in June 2016.

The DHR constituted a panel consisting of experts in the academic field of Fashion Design, Graphic Design, Interior Design and Design Management, and in higher education who have experience of external programme quality reviews. The Panel comprised eight reviewers.

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This Report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design 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 Royal University for Women will use the findings presented in this Report to strengthen its Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design. The DHR recognizes that quality assurance is the responsibility of the higher education institution itself. Hence, it is the right of the Royal University for Women to decide how it will address the recommendations contained in the Review Report. Nevertheless, three months after the publication of this Report, the Royal University for Women is required to submit to the DHR an improvement plan in response to the recommendations.

The DHR would like to extend its thanks to the Royal University for Women 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 and administrative staff of the College of Arts in Graphic Design.

C.   Overview of the College of Art and Design

The College of Art and Design is one of the four colleges of the Royal University for Women (RUW), which was established in 2002. RUW currently offers ten undergraduate and two postgraduate programmes in a range of disciplines. The mission of the College is aligned with the vision and mission of RUW, which seeks to offer students 'a rewarding and challenging multi-cultural learning environment that cultivates strong, well-rounded personalities, encourages leadership, and builds character, social consciousness and community'. Currently, the College offers four bachelor degrees and two Master degrees through two departments: the Department of Design and the Department of Architecture. The statistics provided by the College during the site visit indicate that the total number of academic staff was 22; 17 of them are full-time and five are teaching on a part-time basis.

D.   Overview of the Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design

The Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design (BAGD) was first offered in the academic year 2004-2005, graduating its first batch comprising four students in 2008-2009. The BAGD programme is offered through the Department of Design and currently there are eight

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full-time and two part-time faculty members contributing to the programme. The programme was initially designed by Middlesex University in the U.K. and has been revised based on internal and external reviews. According to the statistics provided by the institution, during the time of the site visit, there were 83 students registered in the BAGD programme and 90 students have graduated since the commencement of the programme.

E.   Summary of Review Judgements

Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design

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
Overall Judgement	**Confidence**

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1.   Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

1.1   There is a clear academic planning framework in place for the BAGD programme that outlines policies and processes for approval and modification of the programme. The Panel notes that significant changes have been made to the programme since the 2013 review by West Virginia University (WVU). These improvements are underscored by a clear set of aims to improve student education through enhancing flexibility of study and increasing specialist academic programme content. The Panel also notes that the programme aims are appropriate for a Bachelor of Arts degree in terms of breadth and level. The four programme aims together form a coherent whole that provides a graduate with flexibility of employment/further study, and there is a good alignment of the programme aims with the mission of the University in terms of the student experience. Interviews with alumnae and students confirmed that they find the programme 'empowering'. This demonstrates how the programme itself is reflecting well the college's mission to enhance 'leadership' and 'strong personalities'. The college's mission describes graduates as being creative, confident and forward thinking. Whilst the Panel appreciates that the programme aims align well with the mission of the University in terms of immediate employment and producing highly skilled graduates, words such as 'creativity' are missing within the written programme aims. Moreover, although, the university's mission statement includes a statement about social consciousness and community building, this is not explicitly stated in the programme aims. The Panel advises the College to address these issues in its next periodic review of the programme.

1.2   The BAGD programme comprises 132 credits hours that are distributed as follow: 30 credits foundation; 21 credits liberal art requirement courses; 21 credit general courses; 54 credits major requirements and six credit electives. The Panel notes that there is clear progression evident in the design of the curriculum. For instance, the large project demands independent thinking and research-based decision making at the end of the degree and Graphic Design history appears at an early level, aiding broad understanding of the discipline. The two typography courses (Typography I: Fundamentals of Typography and Graphic Design (GRD231) and Typography III: Layout Design, Print Management and Production (GRD360)), for instance, clearly demand higher-level skills as the year progresses. Examining the Curriculum Skills Map reveals an appropriate progression of skills and understanding through the levels and pre-requisites were found to be appropriate. Workload (15-18 credits per semester) is clearly described in the programme study plan and is appropriate for the type of courses described. One mechanism in place to ensure balance between theory and practice is the WVU review, the outcome of which is used to enhance the balance

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of theory and practice and the specialist content of Graphic Design courses. Nonetheless, the Panel notes that the theoretical components of the fourth year courses need to be strengthened to ensure that students are provided with sufficient depth that support the programme aims of graduating critical thinkers and preparing them for further studies. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should review the theory components of the advanced courses to ensure that it equips students more readily for further study and that the final year is significantly more academically challenging than the third year.

1.3   The Panel notes that course documents are well designed and thorough. They are all complete and particularly detailed in terms of assessment methods and descriptions. They also include the number of contact hours, pre/co-requisites, the instructor contact details, the course structure, the ILOs, the required readings, and facilities (e.g. guest lectures and field trips). The Panel appreciates the inclusion of guest lectures and trips into courses to aid experience insights from the design industry. The Panel also notes that the syllabus meets the norms and standards expected for the discipline. There is sufficient breadth within the programme. Furthermore, the introduction of the History of Islamic Art offers a good insight into the local and regional history of design. Interviews with faculty members and management staff evidence that informal benchmarking takes places - this is still a valid form of checking programme content. Overall, the Panel appreciates that the syllabus includes all expected content of a varied Graphic Design degree and there are topics in the courses that reference the programme aims regarding local/global design issues. Advertising skills and promotion-based assignments are also evident across the programme though this is not reflected in specific content descriptions/ recommended reading. For instance, the Typography III (GRD360) course outline includes 'Campaign Design' as a topic but does not include reading about campaign advertising and advertising strategies. Interviews with alumnae and employers revealed a need for the syllabus to include advertising/copywriting skills more directly. The Panel, therefore, recommends that the College should review and expand the elements of the syllabus related to advertising. The Panel also notes that there are several omissions in terms of Graphic Design history courses. For example, History of Visual Communications (GRD201) should include more recent historical figures such as McCoy at Cranbrook & Brody in the 1980s, David Carson in the 1990s, and Sagmeister, 2000s. This will help the students to discover a fuller range of visual languages. Generally, references in the form of reading lists in most courses seem quite small and often are technical books or basic textbooks. Furthermore, from interviews with faculty members and scrutiny of course content, it was difficult to locate how recent research is embedded in the syllabus. For instance, no papers from recent academic journals feature within reading lists in course material. Given the level of 'thinking' skills required, the Panel recommends that the College should regularly update reading materials to feature newer journal articles and more specialized books that are recognised as essential in the Graphic

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Design field. The Panel also advises that Wikipedia should be removed from any recommended reading unless it has been entirely validated by the faculty member and continually monitored for incorrect additions.

1.4   The BAGD programme has clearly stated Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) that are grouped in four broad categories as evident within the programme specification document. The Panel notes that these ILOs are appropriate for the type and level of degree awarded and in most cases are well linked to the aims of the programme. For instance, the programme Aim (1) to facilitate immediate employment is clearly reflected in PILOs (B1-B4). PILOs (A1-A4) are also well mapped onto Aim (2). The Panel recognizes that achieving many of the PILOs will also result in graduates who will contribute to the development of their countries and have cultural awareness both locally and internationally as reflected in programme Aim (4). In addition, there are two PILOs (A3 & C1) that clearly express the need to have research skills, which help to a certain extent in meeting Aim (3) of the programme to equip students for Masters Level study. The Panel also notes that whilst most of the PILOs are appropriately written, the A3 PILO ('Comprehend and implement design research, history, strategies and methodologies') is very large in scale and mixes knowledge and skills, and therefore is difficult to measure as one outcome. In addition, the Panel notes that the creation of concepts and innovative ideas is not, in itself a definition of 'Critical Thinking'. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should revise PILO A3, and reword PILOs C2 and C3 to better reflect critical thinking that is more visible and hence more measurable.

1.5   Overall, the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) are appropriate to the level of each course and to its content. The progression of CILOs reflects the National Qualifications framework (NQF) in terms of ensuring appropriate levels. The Panel notes the use of Bloom's taxonomy to ensure clarity of language. During interview session, the Panel was informed that the Head of Department (HoD) checks the course specification and evidence was presented of such a review, with actions requested. The Panel appreciates that the CILOs are clear and well-written using Bloom's taxonomy and there is a robust quality control in this regard. However, detailed mapping of CILOs to PILOs was not provided and the PILOs assessment matrix does not include the Final Project GRD497 or DES452 (Business Simulation & Marketing II). The Panel would expect these courses' CILOs, in particular, to be clearly mapped and to map against all advanced PILOs, such as critical thinking. Furthermore, the CILOs related to the Critical Thinking Skills Programme ILOs sometimes are described as the act of designing, rather than the act of writing about design or demonstrating analytic skills. The Panel recommends that the College should conduct detailed CILO to PILO mapping and re-define what critical thinking is at a course level and how they commonly describe it.

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1.6   There is a clear element of work-based learning within the Programme. Recently the internship became a compulsory course for the college's students and the number of training hours increased from 120 to 200 following the 2013-2014 major programme review. Since 2015-2016, all the college's internships are recorded as DES496, which is awarded an appropriate three-credit weighting and students are required to have completed at least 66 credit hours to be eligible to apply for it. The CILOs presented are clearly mapped to all four areas of the PILOs. However, the Panel advises that CILO A1 'Introducing students to useful professional experience' should be more precisely written in order to reflect what knowledge/understanding students need to have attained and hence be more measurable. However, from interviews with faculty members, alumnae, employers and students, the Panel notes that there is a consistent and informed response to questions about this course. There is also a clear system for assessing the work-based learning. It includes multiple assessment methods and the judgement of employers. This was corroborated by interviews with senior management, employers and alumnae. The compulsory internship is a particularly strong element of the BAGD programme. The topic of employability in the curriculum is highly valued since it bridges the gap between industry and education. The Panel also notes that there is a clear assessment policy for the work-based learning for the BAGD programme, which are well understood as evidenced by responses of faculty members, alumnae, employers and students. During interview sessions, the Panel received positive comments from alumnae, employers and the College Advisory Committee about the value of internships – the experience was highly valued on both sides of the exchange. The Panel appreciates that work-based learning is a definite strength of the programme, contributes to the achievement of the PILOs, and is clearly assessed and valued by employers, alumnae and current students.

1.7   The Teaching and Learning Policy is outlined clearly, and the programme specific methods are in line with the PILOs and overall programme aims. Although, teaching methods are included in each course specification, the methods are listed against all CILOs rather than specific CILOs. The Panel notes the use of reflective journals to help nurture students' continual engagement with learning and their sense of ownership and responsibility. The Panel also recognises the faculty efforts to engage students in showing their work (such as the exhibition at the Mall). There is a range of teaching methods used, as corroborated by interviews and course folders. Workshops are particularly valued by students. The Panel also notes that it is effective to have increased contact hours for workshop-based learning. There is evidence that academic staff are updating their course material and learning methods, with reference to recent practice, particularly in typography. From interviews with faculty members and the provided lists of external speakers, current professional practice is evident *via* guest lecturers/workshops and trips. Several guest lectures/workshops in areas such as photography, printmaking and calligraphy were particularly relevant. Alumnae and students reported satisfaction with the variety of teaching methods and they in

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particular value the hands-on workshop. Application of theory is also evident in particular course documentation including lecture material that deals with, for instance, semiotics. Overall, the Panel appreciates that students are exposed to professional practice *via* several appropriate methods and workshops are found to be particularly effective and valued as a teaching method by alumnae and students.

1.8   There is clear policy on assessment and procedures are appropriately adjusted to account for diverse learning such as internships and final projects. Policies are disseminated to students *via* the virtual learning environment and programme/course handbooks. In interviews, current students expressed awareness of policies through the Student Handbook and course specifications they receive. The Panel notes that there is both a balance of formative and summative functions in the assessment policy. There are clear assessment criteria for each course presented. The Panel also notes that the policy states that feedback is returned in 20 days, which was confirmed by students during the site visit. Furthermore, in many cases, students reported receiving feedback more promptly than the policy stated. Alumnae, too, report prompt feedback on their work. Feedback is delivered verbally for formative assessment and in written form for summative assessment. The Panel appreciates that the assessment policy is clear and includes summative and formative elements that both staff and students are well informed of the policy. Nonetheless, the Panel notes that the assessment policy did not include any statement related to visual plagiarism. Given its absence as verified during interviews with faculty members, the Panel recommends that the College should define and include visual plagiarism in the assessment/plagiarism policy document to help students and staff to understand the college's definition of visual plagiarism.

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

• The programme aims align well with the mission of the University in terms of immediate employment and producing highly skilled graduates.
• The inclusion of guest lectures and trips into courses helps to aid experience insights from the design industry.
• The syllabus includes all expected content of a varied Graphic Design degree and there are courses in the curriculum that reference the programme aims regarding local/global design issues.
• The course intended learning outcomes are clear and well-written using Bloom's taxonomy and there is a robust quality control in this regard.
• Work-based learning is a definite strength of the BAGD programme and it is clearly assessed and valued by employers, alumnae and current students.
• Students are exposed to professional practice *via* several appropriate methods and workshops are found to be particularly effective and valued as a teaching method by alumnae and students.

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- The assessment policy is clear and includes summative and formative elements that both staff and students are well informed of the policy.

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

- review the theory components of the advanced courses to ensure that it equips students more readily for further study and that the final year is significantly more academically challenging than the third year
- review and expand the elements of the syllabus related to advertising and regularly update the reading materials to feature newer journal articles and more specialized books that are recognised as essential in the Graphic Design field
- revise PILO A3, and reword PILOs C2 and C3 to better reflect critical thinking that is more visible and hence more measurable
- conduct detailed CILO to PILO mapping and re-define what critical thinking is at a course level and how it is commonly described
- define and include visual plagiarism in the assessment/plagiarism policy document to help students and staff to understand the college's definition of visual plagiarism.

1.11   **Judgement**

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

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2.   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.

2.1   There are clear general admission policy and entry requirements, based on academic merit, the applicant's grades of high school, and the number of spaces available in the programme. Information regarding the admissions, registration, application form, and fee structure is available on the RUW website and the Student Handbook. RUW also places a minimum level for English language proficiency (IELTS overall band score of 5.5, or TOEFL: paper-based 513; or Computer-based 183; or Internet-based 65, or RUW English Placement Test overall band score of 5.5) and offers an English preparatory programme, when needed, based on the applicant's proficiency level. The Panel appreciates that the entry requirements for all the programmes offered in the College of Art and Design are regularly reviewed. However, the Panel received conflicting feedback on the additional admission requirements for the College of Art and Design's BA programme; while the SER and several faculty stated that these additional requirements mandate a portfolio submission, evidence provided and final confirmation received during the site visit indicate that the portfolio component is optional. The Panel is of the view that both interview and portfolio review processes, mandatory or otherwise, must have clear guidelines made available to the applicant and the interviewer. While it is understood that this is at entry level and skills will vary, a general statement on expectations and judgement criteria will prove helpful for *all* parties involved. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should clearly identify and explain its specific admission requirements, including portfolio review, to faculty members and all parties involved and on the RUW website, handbook, application form and all other relevant platforms.

2.2   The statistics provided indicate that the number of students registered in the programme increased from 70 in 2012-2013 to 84 in 2015-2016. 67% of these students are Bahraini and 31% are from other member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The vast majority (94%) are enrolled as full-time students. The mean length of the study period increased from 4.3 in 2012-2013 to 4.6 in 2013-2014 and decreased to 4.2 in 2014-2015. Students' high school GPA ranged from 56.6% to 97.96%. As indicated above, English orientation courses are offered to students who do not meet the minimum English level entry requirements and there were five students admitted in the orientation in the last three academic years. The Panel appreciates that there are remedial measures placed, at entry level, for students with weaker English skills, where students are assigned English courses and assessed again before being allowed to proceed with the programme. However, the Panel notes that there has been a steady decrease in the retention rates in recent years and encourages the institution to address these issues.

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2.3   The College of Art and Design structure chart is clear in terms of department hierarchy. Roles and responsibilities of the Dean and HoD are also clearly identified. According to the SER, the Dean is responsible for the implementation of the decisions of the College Council, Deans' Council and the University Senate. The Deans' Council is chaired by the Academic Vice President and is responsible for the academic direction of the institution. The Panel notes that there are clear processes in decision-making that are put in place and were well explained by faculty members during interview sessions. Committees relevant to programme needs are also regularly formed. However, the Panel notes that, based on the SER and confirmed during interviews with faculty, the programme does not have a specialized programme coordinator. It was explained that one faculty member had informally assumed the overall responsibility for the curriculum as well as extracurricular activities. This faculty member has since left the University and, no programme coordinator or manager had ever been formally appointed. The Panel was also informed that that key responsibilities for HoD include curriculum development and design, evaluation of suitable assessment plans, analysis of assessed student work etc. Further, decisions regarding the programme are usually discussed among team members but eventually decided upon by the HoD, who is not a Graphic Design specialist. The Panel therefore recommends that the College should formally appoint a programme coordinator in order to oversee the daily operation of the programme and to lead changes to specialist Graphic Design content within the curriculum.

2.4   Ten faculty members contribute to the delivery of the BAGD programme. At the time of the site visit, there were three associate professors, one assistant professor, one lecturer, three teaching assistants and two part-time faculty members. The Panel recognises the professionalism of the College teaching assistants for their thorough understanding of the College, the course structure, and procedures and notes that the staff to student ratio is suitable. The Panel is however, concerned with the low number of specialist faculty teaching within the programme. This concern is also supported by comments made during two different interviews: employers and graduates where specific recommendations were made for the recruitment of specialized professors. The Panel was also informed, during alumnae interviews, of professors teaching outside their area of specialization at different academic levels, including senior level. The Panel received conflicting feedback from HR where it was assured that professors are teaching within their area of specialization. The Panel advises that instructors should only teach their areas of expertise. The Panel also observed a weakness in English skills at faculty members' level in some cases, which is a concern since English is the medium of instruction. Furthermore, although some faculty members assured the Panel of enough time allocated for their own development during interviews, the Panel was not provided with evidence of concrete research achievements by faculty members. The Panel is of the view that senior management should meet regularly with staff to monitor and evaluate their professional development in line with their

workload and their career trajectory. The Panel recommends that the College should hire more Graphic Design specialists and encourage the faculty members to conduct their own research projects in order to maintain and update their own academic knowledge and skills.

2.5   There are clear policies and procedures for recruitment, appraisal and promotion of staff. Applications for recruitment and promotion are reviewed by the Department and approved by the College Council. The latter forwards its recommendations to the Appointment and the Promotion Committee, which is chaired by the President of RUW. The Committee takes the decision to reject or approve the colleges' recommendations and in general, newly recruited staff are given a contract for two years. The annual appraisal of faculty members is carried out by the Dean and the HoD. To ensure parity and consistency across colleges, RUW established an academic appraisal committee in the academic year 2013-2014 and the Panel was informed during the interview sessions that recently one faculty member was promoted from assistant to associate professor. There are also acceptable induction activities for newly appointed staff, and this was corroborated with senior management, and academic staff interviewed during the site visit. The Panel acknowledges that the policies and procedures related to recruitment, appraisal, promotion and induction are clear and well disseminated. Nevertheless, the Panel has a concern with the staff retention rate. Although the SER states that staff retention rate is 91% for the last three academic years and that financial incentive and longer contracts of 3-5 years are offered for deserving and valued staff, the Panel notes that the retention rate of specialized staff is low. Meetings with senior management, staff, students and alumnae verified that several academic staff resigned and the maximum duration of employment ranged from two months to maximum four years. The Panel has a concern regarding the implementation of the above procedures and advises that the College should show increased awareness of recruitment challenges when attempting to attract quality staff on a two-year tenure.

2.6   All RUW's policies, procedures, handbooks, manuals and administrative templates are located on the Document Management System. The PowerCampus consisting of a Student Information System (SIS) and the Self-Service system has been used for online registration and for teaching and learning since 2012-2013 and these systems prove to be comprehensive with evidence of their functionality and usage, from registration, attendance, academic instructional material, grading, communication, academic performance monitoring etc. This was also collaborated during the site visit tour and interviews with senior managers, academic staff and students. The Panel appreciates that there are extensive information systems that allow informed decision-making and for monitoring at-risk students for early intervention.

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2.7   RUW has a clear policy for security of learner records, which stipulates the steps taken to safeguard students' records. These steps include maintaining hard and soft copies of these records in secure locations on- and off-campus. RUW's Disaster Recovery Policy also aims to protect essential data at RUW in case there is a damage to its central IT environment in the event of fire or other major incidents. Furthermore, RUW has a Grade Approval Policy, which defines clearly the responsibilities of the instructors, the HoD, the Dean, the Academic Vice President and the Registrar. The Panel acknowledges that there are appropriate policies and procedures that are consistently implemented to ensure the security of learner records and accuracy of results. The Panel also acknowledges that there is an adequate risk-management plan where backup is stored on multiple platforms including the Cloud as indicated during the interviews and the site visit tour.

2.8   During the site visit, the Panel conducted a comprehensive tour of the physical premises of RUW, with a focus on those utilized by the BAGD programme. The Panel notes that there are adequate numbers of classrooms, computer laboratories, studios and non-formal study areas. There is also an exhibition room, a casting room and a photography room. Classrooms and computer laboratories including the Graphic Design laboratory are well equipped with LCD projectors, screens for display and the latest versions of licensed software. The offices of administrative and academic staff are also well positioned. Both staff and students expressed their satisfaction with the facilities and the services provided. On-campus accommodations are provided for students who also have access to a gym, a swimming pool and other on-campus amenities. The Panel also notes that there are good printing facilities and sufficient work areas assigned to students within each studio. The Panel appreciates that RUW offers an excellent set up in terms of physical and material resources with state of the art equipment, suitable studio spaces and good printing facilities. Furthermore, students have access to more than 112,000 e-book and 19000 e-journals through RUW subscription in a springer link. RUW also subscribes to ProQuest database and E-brary. The Panel visited the library and was informed that each course has a list of textbooks and recommended readings that are available in the library. However, the Panel advises to keep updating the library resources and references to remain current and adequate and to include more on design theory and history.

2.9   There are robust systems in place for tracking usage of resources and facilities. The Self-Service is used for tracking registration, attendance, grades, financial hold and other functions. To ensure the implementation of eLearning, each college submits a report on its usage on a semester basis and the teaching and Learning Committee has recently developed Guidelines for Blended Learning. The Librarian also issues monthly reports to monitor the usage of the library, electronic databases and 'Turnitin'. Outcomes of such reports are used to inform decision-making. For example, the Deans Council and the College of Art and Design faculty members are to improve

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the usage of electronic databases by setting assignments that require research and usage of RUW databases. The Panel appreciates that the tracking system is effectively employed to maximise efficiency on different levels, from registration, academic performance, library resource usage to students' attendance.

2.10   There is an evident student support system throughout the institution, including library induction, academic advising as well as career advising. According to interviews with students and alumnae, faculty members are regularly providing academic advice and supervision to guide their student advisees throughout their academic journey, which keeps students on track with their studies and programme aims in general. The Panel appreciates that academic advising is well integrated at each level, which offers significant support for student academic progress. The SER reports that there has been an overall improvement in the advising process in terms of its frequency and lists several proposed initiatives to improve this process. Further, the Panel finds that adequate support is provided through e-library, e-resources, events and the office of student affairs. First aid and counselling are offered through RUW clinic and the social worker. The Panel acknowledges that there is a good student support system that includes a range of options in terms of financial aid and provides students with a great opportunity. In addition, the Panel notes that there is a clear policy for students with special needs but advises adding a statement on protecting the privacy of students' medical records and conditions.

2.11   There are clear, thorough induction arrangements for newly admitted and transferred students. The Office of Student Affairs arranges the induction programme, which is conducted twice a year at the university level. The induction programme includes a tour of the library and other facilities in addition to information about the use of Self-Service and RUW regulations. These regulations are clearly stipulated in the Student Handbook, which is distributed during the induction. The College of Art and Design also arranges induction sessions for its students to inform them about its specific requirements and give them the opportunity to meet with faculty members and their advisors. It remains unclear, however, if the induction programme has been recently evaluated or improved, but the Panel finds the programme adequate with plans in place for students who miss induction. This was also confirmed during interviews with faculty members and students. The Panel appreciates that the induction programme is thorough and there are adequate alternative arrangements in place for students who miss the induction.

2.12   RUW has an Academic Advising Policy and a Procedure for academic advising that deal with students at risk of academic failure. Online and offline support systems are also in place to track students' progress and offer support with a close monitoring from registration to graduation. These systems clearly allow for a timely intervention mechanism that signals when the performance of a student drops below the required

standards. The student is placed under probation and is not allowed to register for more than 12 credits per semester until the status of probation is removed. During interview sessions, faculty members confirmed that they meet more often with students on probation in order to identify the problem and propose solutions. Mid-term results are also discussed at the College Council to identify students that need academic support. The Panel acknowledges that there is a well-implemented academic advising policy and there is a clear course of action for students at risk of academic failure.

2.13   The College of Art and Design 2014-2015 Annual Report and the 2015-2016 Event Report list a number of activities that have been conducted to expand the learning environment such as, conferences, guest speakers, site visits, educational trips and exhibitions. An extensive set of evidence was also provided to demonstrate the commitment of the College to expand the learning experiences of its students. Workshops by artists and designers in particular help to enrich the students' learning experience, as students and alumnae affirmed during the interviews. Furthermore, as noted in Paragraph 2.8, RUW also provides several informal study areas. The Panel appreciates that the College environment is conducive to expanding the student experiences and knowledge through informal learning by allocating several informal study areas and by conducting a range of extracurricular activities.

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

- The entry requirements for all the programmes offered in the College of Art and Design are regularly reviewed.
- There are remedial measures placed, at entry level, for students with weaker English skills, where students are assigned English courses and assessed again before being allowed to proceed with the programme.
- There are extensive information systems that allow informed decision-making and for monitoring at-risk students for early intervention.
- RUW offers an excellent setup in terms of physical and material resources with state of the art equipment, suitable studio spaces and good printing facilities.
- The tracking system has been effectively employed to maximise efficiency on different levels, from registration, academic performance, library resource usage to attendance.
- Academic advising is well integrated at each level, which offers significant support for student academic progress.
- The induction programme is thorough and there are adequate alternative arrangements in place for students who miss the induction.
- The College environment is conducive to expanding the student experiences and knowledge through informal learning by allocating several informal study areas and by conducting a range of extracurricular activities.

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

- clearly identify and explain the programme specific admission requirements (including portfolio review) to faculty members and all parties involved and on the RUW website, handbook, application form and all other relevant platforms
- formally appoint a programme coordinator in order to oversee the daily operation of the programme and to lead changes to specialist Graphic Design content within the curriculum
- hire more Graphic Design specialists and encourage the faculty members to conduct their own research projects in order to maintain and update their own academic knowledge and skills.

2.16   **Judgement**

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

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3.   Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

3.1   Graduate attributes are discussed within the RUW Strategy Document as part of its overall vision. The Panel notes their detailed identification in the Student Experience Strategy. A number of activities in the document are listed against graduate attributes and this is considered good practice. The learning outcomes of the programme and courses also frequently refer to transferable skills that directly map onto graduate attributes. The inclusion of keywords such as leadership shows a clear evidence of alignment with the vision of the programme and RUW. However, 'Social Consciousness' is not as evident in the programme specification or learning outcomes as some other attributes and thus the Panel advises the inclusion of debate about ethical issues in Graphic Design, such as sustainability issues or client selection. The Panel also notes that a variety of reliable assessment tools are used which facilitate the acquiring of the graduate attributes. Overall, the Panel appreciates that graduate attributes are clearly stated in terms of aims and achieved learning outcomes for the programme and for each course and are ensured using assessments, which are valid and reliable.

3.2   RUW has developed a Benchmarking Policy in 2013-2014. The college programmes were initially designed by Middlesex University in 2005, and revised by WVU in 2012-2013. Benchmarking of the syllabus has occurred, largely against the BAGD programme at the WVU, and by the staff at WVU. The Panel notes the documentation is well managed and there is a clear record of recommendations from WVU. There is also evidence that external suggestions are acted upon. Since the WVU review, a compulsory internship course and a Graphic Design history course have been included. The Panel notes that currently only informal benchmarking occurs within the programme. However, in the interview with faculty, it was found the same re-occurring institutions were being used for comparative purposes. From faculty member interviews, the Panel also notes that some staff are members of external design bodies (for example ico-d), and this should also help with informal benchmarking activities. The Panel advises that such membership should be encouraged, not only as professional development but also as a means to collaborate and benchmark. The benchmarking activities are also limited to the curriculum although the newly developed Benchmarking Policy lists several areas that benchmarking may take place. The Panel recommends that the College should benchmark against a larger range of Graphic Design programmes and expand the benchmarking activities, which should be led by a specialist member of Graphic Design faculty as part of an internal regular academic programme review.

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3.3   RUW has a very thorough Assessment Policy that includes elements such as internal/external moderation, modes of feedback, second marking and external verification. There is evidence of additions made to the policy since its first draft in 2012-2013 and revision in 2013-2014. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Assessment Policy. The SER also indicates that changes in the assessment must be approved by the College Council and sent to the Teaching and Learning Committee for notification. Examination regulations are also included in the Student Handbook and introduced to students during induction. Faculty members interviewed pointed out that the Assessment Policy was introduced during their induction and that this policy is consistently implemented and revised. Overall, the Panel appreciates that the assessment policy is regularly revised and consistently implemented.

3.4   There are clear mechanisms to ensure the alignment of assessment with learning outcomes, which include review by the HoD of the course specifications. The Panel advises that such quality assurance be maintained more broadly through the Teaching and Learning Committee to embed ownership of standards across the teaching team. The Panel notes the design of the course specifications that include the mapping of CILOs with teaching methods and assessments. This ensures that both students and staff can see exactly how ILOs are being assessed. External moderation/verification is an additional method of ensuring proper alignment. The Panel acknowledges that there is a thorough approach to transparent communication of assessment suitability and that the alignments between assessment and the ILOs are generally good. For example, in the Final Project (GRD 497) there are seven points of assessment, each of which aligns clearly with the CILOs. In the Course 'Drawing II: Story Board /Sequential Art' (GRD 226), the skills ILOs very clearly map onto the detailed assessments given. The Panel also notes that there are few examples (GRD333) where assessment mapping is carried out incorrectly. Table 16 in GRD333 course specification is incorrect as C1 (Critical Thinking) is actually not present in table 15 for later assessments, but is present in table 16. The Panel advises that these be all reviewed for accuracy.

3.5   Moderation is governed by the RUW's Assessment Policy. According to it, pre-assessment moderation of written examinations is carried out by the HoD and faculty members should ensure that all assessment tasks are checked preferably with academic colleagues prior to being distributed to students. Interviews with faculty evidenced that group moderation often occurred which is likely to lead to informal discussion and informal change. The Panel is of the view that whilst this is a valid form of quality control, it would benefit from formal recording. The Panel also notes that there are clear internal post-assessment moderation processes. Interviews with the senior management team and faculty confirmed a consistent approach to both the

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sample of work moderated and who moderated the work. The Panel was informed during faculty interviews that moderators are selected within the specialist graphic team and new faculty are supported through the internal moderation process by second markers as part of their induction. Moreover, there is a system for variance in second marking, where the HoD and Dean are called upon to resolve the issue and the matter is further discussed at the College Council. Staff are clear on the systems that are in place and there was evidence of rigour when distributing grade details to students. The Panel appreciates that there is an effective system for variance in second marking and that new faculty members are supported by second markers as part of their induction. However, the sample provided of the second marking report contains only adjusted marks and no written reflection. Such a process is unlikely to lead to systematic study, transparency and change. The Panel recommends that the College should revise the policy and procedures related to pre-assessment moderation and maintain a systematic recording of important pre and post moderation comments, particularly accounting for adjustment of marks and overall impression of grades achieved.

3.6   The Panel notes, from interviews with the senior management team, that there is a clear procedure for the external moderation, which covers second marking and external verification. While Edexcel externally verifies all courses at the foundation level, external examiners carry out the verification and second marking of 30% of the courses at other levels. The Panel notes that there is a robust system for evaluating choice of external examiners and that the external examiners interviewed were qualified in terms of being either practitioners or academics. The Panel also acknowledges that the sample of external examiners' reports were thorough in detail. The feedback of changes/responses to external examiners comments however does not occur and this was confirmed during the interviews with senior management team and external examiners. Moreover, external examiners do not see the written feedback from internal assessors/moderators. The Panel is of the view that the examiners (both internal and external) should have access to written rationale to understand how the mark was arrived at. The Panel was also informed that neither external examiner interviewed saw the same course twice, and thus were unable to see consistency applied or progression/development of the course. The Panel recommends that the College should ensure that written feedback is given in response to the external examiners' reports and extend the period of service where possible, to enable external examiners to see the same course repeatedly, year-on-year.

3.7   During the site visit, the Panel was provided with ample samples of assessed students work made available in the course files. The Panel studied these samples and notes that there is a range of assessments with some challenging briefs (particularly in GRD231 (Fundamental of Graphic and Typographic Design)) where typography is applied in a range of imaginative solutions such as 'fold-out' formats. The assessments

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themselves are appropriately challenging and some contemporary visual languages were evident in the student work. GRD360 (Layout & Editorial Design) included some sophisticated Ambigram work also as evidenced in the course folder. During interviews, employers also expressed a satisfaction with the quality of work produced both during internship and during following employment. Furthermore, the Panel notes that in general, the final year project work (GRD497) represented a good range of project types and research is evident in them all. Hence, the Panel acknowledges that the quality of student work as presented in the samples provided is suitable to the type and level of the programme.

3.8   The student work as a whole evidences graduate-appropriate levels of technical skill, good research skills for design practice, evaluative skills and understanding of key design issues. The alumnae interviewed were satisfied with the quality of graduate skills. However, the Panel notes that the exit survey report evidences dissatisfaction (only half of the students thought the programme had improved over the years). Less than 60% of students seemed satisfied with the programme and this indicates some difficulties that are not especially highlighted in the SER nor evident in student/alumnae interviews. The Panel also notes that the achievements of the top graduates are high and fulfil the programme aims and PILOs. The last set of final project course average grades were high (averages of B and –A) and reflect the level of work presented, signalling that students are achieving well. According to interviews with alumnae and employers, students are ready for immediate employment (key programme aim 1). In addition, a number of graduates are self-employed as designers, which signals that leadership and organisation skills are taught and understood. The Panel appreciates that graduates' achievements meet the programme aims and intended learning outcomes.

3.9   Cohort analysis is collated consistently across the College and the figures that were presented since 2005 show a steady increase of cohort. However, the Panel notes that the retention rate of BAGD students seems quite low. In 2005, the retention rate was good though and this has steadily been dropping. It is unclear why this is the case given the positive experience of student/alumnae's interviewed. Beyond situations caused by personal circumstances, ways could be sought to improve attrition and to ensure that students are not leaving as a result of the course quality. The RUW recognises the need to improve the collection of year-on-year progression. The SER also indicates that 48% of graduates could not be traced. Different figures of employment were presented in the site visit evidence than the SER. Employment rates are at least 29% for BAGD students joining the industry. 12% entering higher education signals a successful programme aim in that a significant number are pursuing further study. The Panel appreciates that 11% of graduates start their own business, demonstrating entrepreneurship, and this reflects well the institution's ethos of empowering women and valuing leadership. However, the Panel recommends that

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the College should investigate ways to improve consistent quality control of data and the tracking of the programme graduates' destinations.

3.10 The Internship course is compulsory as noted in paragraph 1.6. Graphic Design is a vocational subject and requires work-based learning for all students. The Panel notes that there is a clear and detailed assessment policy for work-based learning and this was clearly articulated during faculty interview. Employers who took students on internship were also able to refer directly to the assessment policy. Issues raised in interviews with faculty members about the potential difficulty of consistency of marking by employers were clearly anticipated and dealt with. There is also an appropriate range of methods used in the assessment of work-based learning including presentations, report writing and employer evaluation. From interviews with employers, technical skills were highlighted as a particular strength of students on internship. The ability to take criticism and resilience was raised as an area for improvement. The Panel appreciates the rigour evident in the assessment of work-based learning and the multi-component elements of this assessment.

3.11 The BAGD curriculum includes a course for the final year project (Final Year Project in Graphic Design (497)). The supervision procedures are outlined in the Final Project Handbook. The method of supervision was also clearly explained during interview sessions with faculty members. The Panel notes that the implementation of the policy is very visible within a student-focused document and any improvements/monitoring are carried out *via* a student course-review. Interviews with faculty members corroborated how final year supervision was implemented every week in class *via* class-based learning. The Panel appreciates that group-focused final year supervision allows and facilitates sharing of good practice amongst the class where appropriate. However, the Panel advises that if graduates are going to become leaders in their fields then they will require more ambitious approaches to Graphic Design problems. The Panel notes that in some cases the number of deliverables involved a lot of re-use (ref: 'The Little Stars' project) and thus whilst the logo design was successful, the overall sophistication of the concepts behind the main deliverables should have been stronger (e.g. a business card featuring the logo is not expanding the concept). Generally, the Panel found an issue with scale and problem-solving sophistication in comparison to other Graphic Design Programmes though technical skills are strong in the final year projects. The Panel suggests the College should show examples of award-winning international work (such as D&AD entries and Dubai Lynx) to students, which should aid the quality and complexity of final projects. In addition, the Panel also notes that there is a formal process to moderate final project for Graphic Design and there is a formal selection process. According to meetings with senior management, the external moderators submit their curriculum vitae; their credentials are discussed at the College Council. Once a semester the Dean is responsible for the selection of the external moderators as per suggestions from senior management and staff. As per

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evidence and per meeting with staff and senior management and with external moderators, the moderation panel consists of 2-3 members, one external and two internal. Senior management and external moderators verified that the external moderators receive information of what is expected before the moderation date; then, they attend the students' presentation and submit their grades and reports at the end of the session. The Panel advises the College to revise the ratio of external examiner to internal examiner to be 2:1 to ensure equity of grading and expand the scope of feedback and external engagement.

3.12   The College of Art and Design has a formal Advisory Committee that was first established in 2012-2013. The Advisory Committee meetings are well documented and evidences fruitful discussion. Terms of reference and membership are clear based on the documentation provided. The Advisory Committee is also functioning well from the perspective of faculty members. Three representations of faculty members from each major are represented on the board and the Panel was informed during the interviews with the senior management team that they meet once a semester. Members of the Advisory Committee interviewed reported satisfaction that this helps the College to keep up to date with market changes. They felt included in discussion and that they were making a difference to the development of the curriculum. Minutes demonstrate that the board meets regularly and members interviewed reported being able to openly contribute to the forum. However, from the interview with the management team, it seemed unclear how the board was selected in the case of duplicate skills. The Panel recommends that the College should revise its current policy and procedures to include clear selection criteria of candidates for the College Advisory Committee.

3.13   The Panel notes that the method for capturing graduate satisfaction is consistently conducted electronically. Interviews with alumnae confirmed that all former-students filled out the survey. The alumnae questioned during interviews seemed positive overall with their experience. The Panel recognised that employers interviewed gave positive responses to questions of satisfaction. The Panel notes however that in the interviews, employers were not aware of ways they could provide feedback to the University about their satisfaction and no survey was systematically carried out. The Panel advises that, where possible, employers, within three months of employing a graduate, are requested to give feedback. The Panel also notes that the Graphic Design student survey results are quite low (mostly below 60% for positive views). Since there is no institutional benchmark level of satisfaction as indicated during interviews, it is difficult to understand what exactly is classed as a low outcome. Nonetheless, less than 60% reveals some underlying problems with graduate satisfaction that requires further investigation though the SER reported the results positively. The Panel is of the view that the College should transparently analyse the comments collated during

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the student survey results to feed into the annual programme review, as indicated in paragraph 4.8.

3.14   In coming to its conclusion regarding the Academic Standards of the Graduates, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- Graduate attributes are clearly stated in terms of aims and achieved learning outcomes for the programme and for each course and are ensured using assessment.
- The assessment policy is regularly revised and consistently implemented.
- There is an effective system for variance in second marking and new faculty members are supported by second markers as part of their induction.
- Graduates' achievements meet the programme aims and intended learning outcomes.
- A considerable number of graduates (11%) start their own business, demonstrating entrepreneurship, and this reflects well the institution's ethos of empowering women and valuing leadership.
- There is an evident rigour of the assessment of work-based learning and the multi-component elements of this assessment.
- Group-focused final year supervision allows and facilitates sharing of good practice amongst the class where appropriate.

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

- benchmark against a larger range of Graphic Design programmes and expand benchmarking activities
- revise the policy and procedures related to pre-assessment moderation and maintain a systematic recording of important pre and post moderation comments
- ensure that written feedback is given in response to the external examiners' reports and extend the period of service where possible, to enable external examiners to see the same course repeatedly, year-on-year
- investigate ways to improve consistent quality control of data and the tracking the programme graduates' destinations
- revise its current policy and procedures to include clear selection criteria of candidates for the College Advisory Committee.

3.16   **Judgement**

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

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4.   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.

4.1   There are clear institutional policies and regulations pertaining to the programme and its delivery, which are available to staff and students through various online and offline platforms, such as student and programmes handbooks, and university guidelines. The Panel notes the continuous improvement of these policies recognising that many are effectively and consistently implemented across the College as per evidence. Nevertheless, interviews with senior management, staff and external stakeholders showed a misalignment in the consistent, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of plagiarism and grievance within the programme, as per policies and evidence provided. The Panel recommends that the College should ensure that policies and procedures relevant to plagiarism and grievance are properly disseminated and consistently implemented at the programme level.

4.2   The organizational chart shows a clear management system at the University and at the College level. The managerial structure includes the Dean and the HoD; however, as indicated in paragraph 4.1, there is a deficiency in the effective and consistent implementation and monitoring of several policies due to the absence of a programme coordinator. During interviews with faculty members there seems to be 'informal programme coordinators' for the BAGD programme. However, this does not provide a platform for programme leadership. The Panel is of the view that the College should formally appoint a programme coordinator in order to be responsible for the academic direction of the programme and lead curriculum changes within the Graphic Design programme (see recommendation in paragraph 2.3).

4.3   There is a clear quality assurance management system, which includes student and staff surveys, internship, annual reviews of courses, audit course folders, examiners' reports and minuted meetings. These arrangements were developed by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Unit and there are clear guidelines for quality management. Furthermore, the SER indicates that RUW has a 'Framework for Academic Quality' to streamline the monitoring of academic quality, which has been implemented since 2014-2015. Evidence also verifies that there is a detailed policy on the quality assurance management system on the final year capstone project, which is the graduation project of BAGD students, and combines research and design practice skills and knowledge. The Panel appreciates that there is an implemented quality assurance management system, which provides valuable input into the programme.

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4.4   The Panel notes that staff were encouraged to participate in Report Capacity Building Workshops and NQF Mapping in order to build onto their quality assurance skills, as minuted in College Council meetings and listed in personal development annual reports. The interviews and evidence also show that many faculty members have international experience. During the interviews with staff and senior management and according to policies and procedures outlined in evidence, each explained their roles and responsibilities, which include ensuring that students have the appropriate pre-requisites, the alignment of the CILOs to PILOs, assessment criteria and adhering to syllabus requirements. In general, the Panel appreciates that academics and support staff have a detailed understanding of quality assurance and their role in ensuring effectiveness of provision.

4.5   RUW has a Programme Proposal and Modification Policy, which clearly outlines the followed procedures for modifying existing programmes or introducing a new one. According to the SER, this policy is based on the HEC's regulatory guidelines and the HEC's prescribed templates are used in proposing new programmes. The evidence provided includes the letter of approval and the proposal of the Architecture programme, Master's programme in Design Management and Masters in Fine Arts to HEC, which indicates the college's adherence to the related policy and procedures. Such procedures ensure the programmes are relevant, fit for purpose, and comply with existing regulations. Nonetheless, in meetings, senior management and staff could not describe effectively the ethos of the University and the programme. The Panel advises that understanding and aligning the ethos of the new programmes to the University and to the college's mission is important for programmes' development. The meeting with senior management also verified that the Masters and the Architecture programmes that were recently offered are based on market needs. The Panel acknowledges that there are suitable arrangements for introducing new programmes in the University.

4.6   There are arrangements for annual internal programme evaluation, which include a review of the course specifications, Programme Handbook, textbooks, references, needed software and human resources. There are also annual students and alumnae surveys, external examiners' reports, evaluation surveys for internship, courses and staff. The Panel notes that the information gathered from the different sources feeds into the annual operational plan of the College, which is aligned with the University strategic objectives and includes key performance indicators. The Panel appreciates that there are arrangements available for the internal evaluation of the programme that inform the decision taken to improve the programme and feed into the annual operational plan. As per meetings with students and alumnae, the Panel also notes that there is an improvement of facilities that was carried out in response to the last feedback received from students and alumnae surveys. Nevertheless, during interviews with senior management and staff and through evidence provided the

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Panel noted inconsistencies in the evaluation and the implementation of the feedback gathered from several sources. For example, in a meeting, senior management verified that they share the feedback that they receive from external examiners with specialist staff; in another meeting specialist staff believed that, they never received the report. The meeting minutes indicate discussion of exit surveys programme review, and teacher evaluation during a course review meeting, but there is no evidence on how this information is discussed, evaluated, monitored and implemented by the specialist programme staff. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should ensure that the annual operational plan is discussed with all the relevant stakeholders and there is a follow up report to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented improvements.

4.7   RUW has a Periodic Programme Review Policy that was developed and approved in 2015 in order to formalize the internal periodic review process. It indicates that both the internal and the external periodic review of all programmes will be carried at a minimum once every four years according to a rolling schedule, that is approved by the Deans Council. Evidence provided includes the self-evaluation report submitted by the College of Art and Design for the Fashion Design Programme to an internal panel chaired by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the suggestions made for improvements. The SER refers to the periodic reviews of the programmes in consultation with HEC and WVU. The Panel notes the informal documentation of the regular input from the WVU, which led to an increase in the programme credit hours from 120 to 132. The Panel appreciates that the periodic review conducted by the College with an external element that led to many improvements in the programme such as making the internship compulsory and changing the capstone from a 1-hour supervision project to a full-year scheduled subject with a research component in the first semester and an application in the second semester. The Panel also acknowledges that there is now a formal process to moderate the final project for Graphic Design and there is a formal selection process. In interviews with senior management staff, it was unclear however how the internal curriculum review occurred. This, together with benchmarking, is a vital process to ensure correct balance in the curriculum. The Panel advises the College to ensure that the periodic programme review process is more transparent and that it allows the Graphic Design specialist team to reflect on the balance of subjects and skills across the whole curriculum. The Panel also notes the diversity of employment opportunities for graduates and students. The Panel advises the programme to reflect this diversity in their curriculum during their periodic reviews, in order to expose students to new skills and increase the scope for students' employment opportunities as well as industry and community engagement.

4.8   Interviews with senior management and with staff verified that there are formal mechanisms for collecting structured comments from stakeholders such as surveys, Advisory Committee's minutes and the reports of external moderators. The student

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meeting verified that evaluation surveys were received for every single course at the end of the semester and the Panel was informed that once a semester students go to a question & answer session with the President. The Panel notes the analysis of the alumnae and student surveys and acknowledges the college's response to the alumnae and employers' comments. However, it is unclear how the collected comments are holistically analyzed and implemented and how the outcomes are shared with stakeholders. For example, external stakeholders verified that they have shared their concerns about students' skills and the complexity of the project work but there was no follow up meeting or response from the University on their feedback. The members of the College Advisory Committee also raised their concern that they are passionate about recommending improvements to the programme but there is no opportunity to share their input during the College Advisory Committee meetings due to the limited time of the meeting and the pre-set agenda. Furthermore, they were also unaware how their input is evaluated and contributes to improvement in the programme. The Panel recommends that the College should implement formal mechanisms to ensure that the structured comments collected from meetings and surveys are analysed effectively, and that the outcomes are used to inform decisions and are made available to the stakeholders.

4.9   RUW has a clear Professional Development Policy, which aims to encourage the career progression of its faculty members and enhance their capabilities. The Panel notes the current arrangements to identify continuing professional development needs for all staff through allocated funds and a list of activities, workshops, conferences, seminars, and guest speakers. The Panel appreciates that there are various professional development arrangements organized by RUW, including the international conference, where five staff presented their research and contributed to their professional development. In addition, the Panel notes that if one faculty member wishes to plan their career trajectory, it is communicated at the College Council, and then an approval of the staff's personal development is based on research themes. These themes are selected at a college level and as per collaboration with external stakeholders. Senior management and staff also verified that the approval of staff's professional development is made through various committees in line with the general themes selected by the College Council. The Panel suggests that the subject of research approval according to themes could be an added clause to the policy to inform staff about this condition and ensure equity during assessment of conference applications.

4.10   With regard to improving teaching performance of faculty members, evidence provided indicates the use of in-class observation methods. The Panel advises that more effective and productive teaching and learning practices are implemented to improve staff's teaching and learning performance, such as design teaching workshops/seminars and short courses or other supportive methods. This was identified by RUW in its Annual Plan for Capacity Building. Furthermore, the Panel

suggests that staff be enabled to practice within their domain; participate in design exhibitions/competitions and offer consultancy services, where appropriate, in order to maintain and develop practical and critical experience and in return, to fold this into the student experience. During meetings with staff, the Panel noted that staff viewed professional development opportunities provided to them positively. Furthermore, the Panel notes that there is an implemented process to monitor the staff professional development and assigned KPIs in the College operational plan. The Panel appreciates that there is an implemented professional development policy for academic staff and the process is monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.

4.11   According to the SER, the Advisory Committee, the internship reports and alumnae provide the College with valuable feedback on labour market needs. It also refers to the College effort to embed employability skills in its courses to ensure that the BAGD programme is up to date as per market requirements. The Panel notes that the minuted agenda from the College Advisory Committee and comments from external stakeholders and alumnae provide written feedback. As per meetings with external stakeholders and Advisory Committee minutes, the Panel also acknowledges that there are currently plans in order to organize events outside of the University such as pop-up exhibitions, which will keep the staff, and the programme up-to-date of local design practices. However, the SER does not demonstrate clearly how labour market needs are reported; some of the graphs are inconsistent and the information does not provide clear indicators of the graduating students and the supply/demand of Graphic Design students. Furthermore, evidence could not be found to support a follow-up report or documentation during the internship with the employer. The Panel advises that the internship report be revised to be used to make recommendations on the improvement of the students' employability skills. The Panel is also of the view that the programme should discuss and implement a planned community and industry engagement to inform programme development. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should formally scope the market needs and intensify its industry engagement through a systematic plan and clear indicators.

4.12   In coming to its conclusion regarding the Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- There is an implemented quality assurance management system, which provides valuable input into the programme.
- Academics and support staff have a good understanding of quality assurance and their role in the process.
- There are arrangements available for the internal evaluation of the programme that inform the decision taken to improve the programme and feed into the annual operational plan.
- The periodic review conducted by the College with an external element led to many improvements in the programme.

BQA

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- There are various professional development arrangements organized by RUW, including the international conference, where five staff presented their research and contributed to their professional development.
- There is an implemented professional development policy for academic staff and the process is monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.

4.13   In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the Department should:

- ensure that policies and procedures relevant to plagiarism and grievance are properly disseminated and consistently implemented at the programme level
- ensure that the annual operational plan is discussed with all the relevant stakeholders and there is a follow up report to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented improvements.
- implement formal mechanisms to ensure that the structured comments collected from meetings and surveys are analysed effectively and that the outcomes are used to inform decisions and are made available to the stakeholders
- formally scope the market needs and intensify its industry engagement through a systematic plan and clear indicators.

4.14   **Judgement**

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

BQA

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5.   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/BQA *Programmes-within-College Reviews Handbook, 2014*:

There is Confidence in the Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design of College of Art and Design offered by the Royal University for Women.

BQA

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