Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programme Follow-Up Visit Report

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

Department of Business Administration

University College of Bahrain

Kingdom of Bahrain

Second Follow-up Visit Date: 16-18 June 2019
First Follow-up Visit Date: 6-7 February 2017
Review Date: 19–23 January 2014
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Acronyms

ARC	Academic Research Committee
BBA	Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
ESC	Examination and Scheduling Committee
HEC	Higher Education Council
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
IT	Information Technology
LITC	Library and IT Committee
LLC	Life-Long Learning Committee
MIS	Management Information System
NSS	National Student Survey
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
QA	Quality Assurance
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee
QMS	Quality Management System
SRC	Scientific Research Council
ToR	Terms of Reference
UCB	University College of Bahrain

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UEB	University Examination Board
VP	Vice President

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The Programme Follow- up Visit Overview

The follow-up visit for academic programmes conducted by the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR) of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA) in the Kingdom of Bahrain is part of a cycle of continuing quality assurance review, reporting and improvement.

The follow-up visit applies to all programmes that have been reviewed using the Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework, and received a judgement of 'limited confidence' or 'no confidence'.

This follow-up visit Report is a key component of this programme review follow-up process, whereby the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BBA), at the University College of Bahrain (UCB) was revisited on 16-18 June 2019 to assess its progress in line with the published Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework and the BQA regulations.

A.   Background

The review of the BBA programme, at UCB in the Kingdom of Bahrain was conducted by the DHR of the BQA on 19-23 January 2014. The overall judgement of the review panel for the BBA programme of UCB was that of **'Limited confidence'**, where the panel's judgement for each indicator was as follows:

Indicator 1: The learning programme; '**satisfied**'
Indicator 2: Efficiency of the programme; **'not satisfied'**
Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates**; 'satisfied'**
Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance **'not satisfied'**

A follow-up visit was conducted in February 2017 in which the overall progress of addressing the recommendations of the review report was judged 'Inadequate Progress'. Consequently, the DHR constituted a Panel consisting of two members to conduct a second follow-up visit, which incorporates the review of the progress report and the supporting materials submitted by UCB, in addition to the documents submitted during this follow-up visit and information extracted from the interview sessions, to assess the progress the institution achieved in addressing the recommendations judged 'partially addressed' or 'not addressed' in the first follow-up visit report and, as a result, reach an overall judgement about the institution's progress. In its judgement, the Panel adheres to the rubrics stated in Appendices 1 and 2.

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B.   Overview of the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

The BBA programme was first offered in the academic year 2002-2003, and graduated its first batch, comprising 47 students, in 2005-2006. In 2010-2011, the admission to the programme was suspended by the Higher Education Council (HEC), and hence, there was a continuous decrease in the number of students in the programme, until the HEC lifted the admission ban on the BBA programme in the academic year 2012-2013. According to the statistics provided by the institution, 964 students have graduated since the commencement of the programme. These statistics also indicate that the number of registered students in the BBA programme decreased from 259 in 2013-2014 to 165 in 2016-2017 and 101 in 2017-2018. The recent student enrolment statistics show that there are currently 71 students in Management, 12 in Accounting, ten in Finance, four in Islamic Finance and four in Marketing. During the second follow-up visit there were seven faculty members in the Department; six are full-time members and one is a part-time member.

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1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BBA programme of UCB, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of January 2014, under Indicator 1: The learning programme; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 1.1: *Reduce the number of concentrations offered by the programme.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

During the first follow-up visit, UCB did not opt to reduce the number of the offered concentrations, which the Panel did not find reasonable considering the number of students enrolled in the programme and available resources. There were unexecuted plans to increase the number of faculty members and during the first follow-up visit interviews with students, the Panel learned that 'they had to take equivalent courses when specific required courses where not offered', which was one of the major concerns raised by the Panel, as indicated in first follow-up report of 2017. The progress report indicates that 'equivalent courses' are no longer permitted based on the HEC recent instructions. Moreover, as per the progress report and the interviews with senior management during the second follow-up visit, the Panel learned that the Department had put forward a proposal in January 2018 to merge the Accounting Concentration with the Finance Concentration, and the Management Concentration with the Marketing Concentration. This proposal was approved internally on 2 May 2019 by the review and revalidation panel that was formed by UCB as part of the periodic review of the BBA programme. However, this proposal is not yet approved by the HEC and the Marketing concentration was recently dropped in 2018-2019 in order to reduce the number of the offered courses and concentrations. Hence, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 1.2: *revise the number of both programme and course ILOs to more manageable numbers to improve students' learning outcomes.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

As per the progress report and the provided evidence, the Business Department has reviewed and updated the number of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) at the programme and course levels, except for the Marketing Concentration which was recently dropped. The revised Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) are currently six instead of 21. However, while the PILOs were benchmarked, the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) were not. During the second follow-up visit interviews, faculty members explained that the information available online was

insufficient to benchmark the CILOs. They also confirmed that they had benefited to a large extent from the workshops and meetings that had been conducted by UCB in the 1st semester of the academic year 2018-2019, to train them on the use of PILOs and CILOs.

During the second follow-up visit interviews with senior management, the Panel was informed that the revision considered the requirements of professional bodies such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, as well as the HEC and the BQA. The Panel was also informed that the revised PILOs, CILOs, and the alignment of CILOs with PILOs were checked by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee (QAAC). The Vice President (VP) of Academic Affairs, Quality Assurance and Accreditation, as well as members of the advisory board were also involved in the review and approval processes. The Panel notes that the revised programme specifications document includes a mapping of the six revised PILOs to four categories: A. Knowledge and Understanding, B. Subject-specific Skills, C. Thinking Skills, and D. Transferable Skills. As per the revised PILOs, students are expected to employ subject-specific knowledge and skills in their area of specialization (concentration). Critical thinking, effective communication using Information Communication Technology (ICT), problem-solving and teamwork are main skills that are also stated in the PILOs and students are expected to acquire. The Panel is of the view that the newly revised PILOs are well-written and appropriate to the level and aims of the programme.

The Curriculum Skills Map matrix shows that the CILOs have been satisfactorily mapped against the PILOs. The sample of course specifications provided indicates that the current number of CILOs ranges between four and eight in most courses, except for four courses where the number of CILOs ranges between 9 and 12 per course. The Panel advises the College to reduce the number of CILOs in these courses. The CILOs are well-written and mapped to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level descriptors. In addition, the Panel learned during the second follow-up visit interviews with faculty that the revision of the Marketing courses is still incomplete. Therefore, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 1.3: *revise course ILOs to ensure that these are stated as measurable statements and the links to PILOs are justified and complete.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report states that 'every instructor has reviewed the course ILOs and aligned them with the new Programme ILOs following internal and external stakeholder review'. The mapping of PILOs and CILOs specifies the PILOs and CILOs in each general knowledge or skill category. In addition, the course specifications were reviewed and approved by the QAAC following the process depicted in the

Course/Module review policies and procedures, as clarified during the second follow-up visit interviews with faculty and senior management. In addition, the alignment of CILOs to PILOs was reviewed by external moderators for all the courses that were offered in the 2nd semester of the academic year 2018-2019. However, during the second follow-up visit and examination of course files, the Panel noted that in most courses the CILOs start with a verb, and in few courses CILOs start with a phrase such as the 'students will' or 'students should have'. The Panel also found that in some courses the verb 'understand' is still excessively used and advises the Department to use other verbs that are more measurable and demonstrate comprehension such as compare, discuss, describe and explain. Moreover, as mentioned earlier in this Report, the Panel was informed during interviews with faculty and senior management that the revision of the Marketing courses is still incomplete. Hence, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 1.5: *develop and implement a policy on formative assessment ensuring that there is common understanding among staff of the term.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

UCB has recently taken a number of steps to address this recommendation. As per the progress report, several workshops on good academic practices, including assessment were conducted by the VP for Academic Affairs, Quality and Accreditation. The Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Policy was updated in October 2018 to include clear definitions of formative assessment, ILOs, and summative assessment. The Assessment and Moderation Policy was also reviewed and updated in October 2018. This Policy refers to assessment as 'a collection of evidence' that 'comes from different sources, including examinations, assignments, projects, case studies, portfolios, tests and quizzes'. It also places emphasis on both formative and summative assessment and lists various types of both formative and summative assessment. Furthermore, UCB has recently developed two documents entitled 'UCB Guidance - Assessment, Examination and Moderation' and 'UCB Guidance - Learning Outcomes'. These documents include clear guidelines and descriptions of both types of assessment. In addition, UCB has recently conducted a workshop on Formative Assessment. During the second follow-up visit interviews, faculty expressed their satisfaction with the workshops and stressed that the current approach to assessment places equal emphasis on both formative and summative evaluation. This approach to assessment is reflected in the variety of assessment methods listed in the revised course specifications and course files. Hence, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is fully addressed.

2.   Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BBA programme of UCB, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of January 2014, under Indicator 2: Efficiency of the programme; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 2.1: *ensure the profile of admitted students matches the programme aims.*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

As per the progress report, students with below a 60% average on their high school transcripts are not allowed to be admitted to the BBA programme. UCB has recently revised the admission criteria which are currently articulated in the BBA programme specifications. These criteria were reviewed by the QAAC and approved in November 2018. As per the revised criteria, applicants to the BBA programme are no longer required to sit for placement tests in Mathematics and computer literacy. They only need to submit a proof of English proficiency (i.e. a minimum score of 5.0 in IELTS). Applicants can be exempted from submitting a proof of English proficiency if they have graduated from a recognized secondary school or are transferring from universities where English is the medium of instruction.

During interviews with students and senior management, the Panel was informed that English foundation courses are still being offered to those students who do not meet UCB English requirements. The Panel was also informed that faculty members have provided extra teaching hours for students at risk of academic failure. However, as noted during the first follow-up visit and corroborated during interviews, data related to students' retention and progression was not considered during the last revisions of the admission criteria. Moreover, no evidence was provided to indicate that more support was provided at the entry level. In addition, the abolishment of placement tests in Mathematics and Computer Literacy, deprives UCB from having an early detection of students that require support in these areas and from taking the necessary remedial measures. Hence, The Panel is of the view that weaknesses still persist in relation to this recommendation and concludes that this recommendation remains not addressed.

Recommendation 2.3: *define and implement formal lines of accountability and responsibility for the co-ordination and quality enhancement.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

As per the progress report, 'a full overhaul of the academic governance arrangements was undertaken in September and October 2018', following the appointment of the VP for Academic Affairs, Quality and Accreditation in 2018. It has led to significant changes in the terms of reference of the standing committees, Quality Assurance (QA) lines of responsibility, and reporting arrangements. Furthermore, a QA Office was established, which is headed by a newly appointed QA Manager to fulfil the requirements of the HEC and the BQA. The VP for Academic Affairs, Quality and Accreditation chairs the QAAC, which oversees QA matters and monitors the College's compliance with the related policies and procedures. While the load of the Head of Department (HoD) was partially reduced, the role of the QAAC was significantly enhanced. UCB has also appointed qualified administrative and academic staff to carry out certain tasks, which addresses the main concern raised in the first follow-up report of 2017 and the BBA review report of 2014. Hence, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is addressed.

Recommendation 2.4: *expedite the implementation of a recruitment plan to appoint qualified and experienced faculty members.*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

UCB has clear Human Resources (HR) policies and procedures, in addition to the HR-policies & Procedures Handbook and UCB Recruitment and Professional Development Plan 2018-2019. The progress report indicates the alignment of UCB HR policies and procedures with the HEC requirements and explains that the implementation is monitored by the HR Department to ensure compliance with HEC rules and regulations. However, the progress report did not refer to any implemented plans to address the concern raised in the first follow-up report with regards to the small number of faculty (12 faculty members of whom three were part-time faculty). This concern had also been raised in the BBA review report of 2014 due to the number of concentrations offered in the BBA programme and the lack of senior academics for the Islamic finance, accounting and finance concentrations. Furthermore, during the first follow-up visit which was conducted in February 2017, the Panel noted that the ratio of part-time faculty to the total teaching staff was 30% and the percentage of Masters holders was about 56%. Before the second follow-up visit, the Panel was provided with the CVs of one part-time and six full-time academic staff members and during the second follow-up visit, the Panel learned that two of the full-time academic staff have recently resigned. The Panel also learned that no Marketing courses were offered in the 2nd semester of the academic year 2018-2019 due to the lack of staff

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specialized in this area and the College is in the process of hiring two additional staff members to replace the two staff members that have just resigned. The Panel urges UCB to expedite the implementation of its Recruitment Plan of 2018-2019 to appoint three qualified and experienced faculty members in Management, Marketing and Islamic Finance. The Panel also urges UCB to address the high staff attrition rate (33% in the academic year 2018-2019). Hence, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation remains not addressed.

Recommendation 2.5: *expedite the implementation of the appraisal procedure to evaluate academic staff performance, and investigate staff turnover rate to ensure continuum in terms of student experience.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

UCB has clear policies and procedures for faculty appraisal, which are documented in the Faculty Guidebook, and HR Policies & Procedures Handbook. These policies and procedures were recently reviewed and updated in 2018-2019. The HoD evaluates the performance of each faculty member annually to identify the professional development and training programmes needed. During the first follow-up visit, there was not enough evidence to support that faculty appraisal was being used in a systemic way to 'identify development needs, staff eligible for promotion and future leaders, in line with UCB policy and procedures', as indicated in the first follow-up report of 2017.

Furthermore, staff attrition rate was high in the academic years 2012-2015. The progress report indicates that UCB has developed an exit survey 'to establish reasons for high turnover rates and attrition of staff'. The evidence provided includes a sample of exist surveys, which indicates a generally high level of satisfaction with the level of support provided by UCB for its faculty to perform their role. Identified areas for improvement include induction, ICT support and financial management. However, as per the provided evidence, staff attrition rate was 33% in the academic year 2018-2019, which is considerably high. Hence, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 2.6: *integrate and use the reporting capabilities of MIS system to enable informed decision-making.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

During the first follow-up visit, the Panel was provided statistical reports related to admission, registration, course offerings, students' Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) that were submitted to HoDs for review and use. However, the Panel was not provided with sufficient evidence in relation to implementation, such as: action plans based on the Management Information System (MIS) reports and follow-up of these

actions plans. The progress report asserts that the MIS has been further extended and provides better tracking of students at risk of academic failure. It also indicates that student progression and achievement data are currently scrutinised and approved each semester by the newly-established University Examination Board (UEB). During the second follow-up visit interviews, the Panel was informed that the MIS reports are regularly circulated to the Director of Admission and Finance, the VP for Academic Affairs, Quality and Accreditation, and the HoDs to inform decisions related to resourcing and employing part-time staff. The evidence provided includes action plans based on the MIS generated reports and follow-up on implementation. Hence the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 2.7: *establish a mechanism to monitor and analyse usage of resources for strategic planning purposes.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The ICT Learning Resources Policy was revised and updated in December 2018 to ensure that all aspects of ICT provision are included. The Policy includes a set of minimum expectations in terms of infrastructure and services provided for students and staff. The evidence provided includes ICT Learning Resources audits that were conducted by UCB in January and February 2019. The progress report, states that a Library and IT Committee (LITC) was established in 2018-2019 by merging the former Library Committee and IT Committee. The Committee is responsible for overseeing the ICT infrastructure and resourcing. As per the progress report, the VP for Academic Affairs, Quality and Accreditation meets regularly with the Director of Administration and Finance to discuss resource needs and resolve resources gaps. However, the Panel noted during the second follow-up visit that currently the Library online resources are not being tracked. The Panel also noted that the physical library resources are very limited. Hence, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 2.8: *develop and implement a mechanism to support at-risk students.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

During the first follow-up visit, there was a concern that 81 out of the 200 students enrolled in the BBA programme were at risk of academic failure in the academic year 2014-2015, which was considerably high. Furthermore, no measures were taken to investigate and address this matter during that period. The evidence provided during the second follow-up visit includes a list of ten students whose CGPA is below 1.70 and some of the them were on their sixth probation. The Panel was also provided with a list of 26 students, whose CGPA was between 1.70 and 1.99. The Panel is of the view

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that the number of at-risk students is still significantly high, considering the number of the current enrolled students in the BBA programme, which is 101.

The progress report indicates that the process and procedures for detecting at-risk students was updated in 2017-2018 and that the Academic Advising Forms and templates were updated and circulated to all academic staff. These forms and templates are currently published on the University OneDrive Quality Management System. The Academic Advising Policy was also updated in October 2018, as well as the process and procedures for detecting at-risk students. As per the progress report and provided evidence, the Academic Department tracks and discusses the latest status of students at risk of academic failure in its formal Department Meetings. The MIS also generates a 'Semester Statistical Guide' which is circulated to the newly established UEB to look at students' performance and take the necessary actions. However, since the actions taken to address this recommendation are recent, their impact is still not evident. Hence, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is partially addressed.

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3. Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates

This section evaluates the extent to which the BBA programme of UCB, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of January 2014, under Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 3.1: *develop and implement a mechanism to ensure graduate attributes are embedded in the construction of the programme.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

As per the first follow-up report of 2017, the Panel was of the view that graduate attributes were not ensured through assessment due to the lack of a proper mapping between PILOs and CILOs, which were not specific and measurable in most courses. During the second follow-up visit interviews with senior management and faculty, the Panel was informed that the graduate attributes are set at the institutional level and these are: 'Knowledgeable', Socially Responsible', Professional', Life-long Learner' and 'Collaborative'. Furthermore, the BBA programme aims and PILOs were revised at the Department level based on the feedback received from the External Advisory Board. This was corroborated during the interview conducted with an advisory board member, as well as the provided evidence.

As per the progress report and the programme specifications, the revised graduate attributes are mapped with the revised PILOs and programme aims. According to the revised programme aims, students are expected to 'become effective business professionals', 'operate in global business environments', 'work in teams', and 'understand ethical and professional responsibilities'. Students are also expected to develop problem solving skills, leadership capabilities and life-long learning and collaboration skills. The Panel is of the view that UCB graduate attributes are well-reflected in the revised PILOs and programme aims. Moreover, as indicated earlier in this Report, CILOs have been satisfactorily mapped against the PILOs. Hence, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.2: *develop and implement a benchmarking policy that allows effective benchmarking and the findings used to improve the programme.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

During the first follow-up visit, the Panel was presented with a newly developed Benchmarking Policy that was revised in 2016. However, the Panel was not provided with evidence referring to any benchmarking activities from 2014-2017. As per the

progress report, UCB's Benchmarking Policy was revised and updated again in November 2018. The Panel notes that it includes clear criteria for the selection of universities for benchmarking purposes. It also states that the main purpose of benchmarking is to ensure that UCB's programmes meet national and international standards including professional body and industry standards. The evidence provided during the second follow-up visit includes a benchmarking report based on a desktop analysis against one local university and two international universities, which highlights the similarities and differences in terms of credit hours, PILOs, courses available and the percentage of core and elective courses. It does not cover the CILOs and the course contents. However, as explained during the second site visit interviews with senior management, this benchmarking study aimed to support UCB's proposal to merge some of the BBA concentrations. The Panel was also informed that benchmarking is conducted as part of the periodic review of the programme and for the approval of new programmes and courses. Furthermore, senior management pointed out that the BBA has formed a programme review and revalidation Panel, which included an external local reviewer for benchmarking purposes. This was corroborated during the interview with the external reviewer who confirmed to the Panel that sufficient documents were provided prior to the panel meeting that took place on the 2nd of May 2019 to discuss the proposed changes in the BBA programme. These documents included the programme and course specifications and the results of the benchmarking study.

As per the Benchmarking Policy, the Department submits its benchmarking proposals to QAAC for approval and once the proposals are approved, formal requests are sent to the selected universities to take part in the benchmarking process and submit the data requested by UCB benchmarking teams. The evidence provided includes one recent benchmarking proposal that was submitted and approved by the Chair of the QAAC in February 2019. The Panel is of the view that the submitted evidence is still insufficient to demonstrate full implementation of the recently revised benchmarking policy and to assess its impact on the programme's academic standards. Hence, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 3.3: *develop and implement a formal mechanism to ensure the alignment of assessment to learning outcomes is harmonized across all courses.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

According to the progress report, the alignment of assessment to ILOs is ensured through the internal and external pre-moderation processes. During the second follow-up visit interviews with senior management, the Panel was informed that UCB's moderation process had been identified as one of the main areas that required improvement and accordingly, the Assessment and Moderation Policy was revised and updated. The QAAC also developed new moderation forms for the pre-and-post

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moderation processes. Furthermore, the Panel was informed that end-of-semester course reporting is conducted 'to discuss the outcomes of the assessment and make adjustments where necessary for future delivery of the course/module', as stated in the progress report. In addition, the evidence provided includes a newly-developed UCB Guidance for Assessment, Examination and Moderation Policy and an External Moderators Policy, which aims to 'ensure that assessment and student work is in line with, and comparable in standard to, institutions of higher education in Bahrain and abroad'. UCB has also recently established the UEB, which receives and considers the moderation reports as part of its task in ensuring the academic standards of UCB graduates.

During the second follow-up visit, the Panel examined the provided pre-assessment and post-assessment moderation filled forms for the BBA programme and noted the changes made based on the recommendations of external moderators. The Panel was also informed during the interviews with external moderators that they have checked all the offered courses to ensure the alignment of assessment with the ILOs and that UCB staff have implemented their recommendations. Hence, the Panel is of the view that the recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.4: *develop and implement an external moderation mechanism such that moderation of the final year courses becomes more rigorous.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

As indicated in the progress report, the external moderation process that has been in operation since 2016, was limited to final examinations. The scope of external moderation was extended to include coursework during the academic year 2018-2019. In the first follow-up visit, the Panel noted that UCB policies and procedures did not include a clear description of the external moderation process and criteria for the selection of external moderators. UCB addressed the Panel's concerns by revising and updating the Assessment and Moderation Policy. The QAAC has also developed new moderation forms for the external pre- and post-assessment moderation. Furthermore, as indicated earlier in this Report a newly-developed UCB Guidance for Assessment, Examination and Moderation and an External Moderators Policy, have been developed.

The Panel notes that the provided policies and procedures are detailed and comprehensive and that the external pre-and-post assessment moderation forms require external moderators to write their comments on these forms. Additionally, during the second follow-up visit interviews with faculty and senior management, they confirmed that the coursework and final examinations of all the courses that were offered in the 2nd semester of the academic year 2018-2019 were externally moderated. This was corroborated during the interviews with the two external moderators who

were appointed in the 2nd semester of the academic year 2018-2019 and through the provided evidence. The two moderators also confirmed that they reviewed a sample of examination scripts and coursework and both were satisfied with the students' achievement level. Additionally, they clarified that UCB has clear criteria for the size of the selected sample, which varies based on the number of students and that all examination scripts are moderated when the number is small. Therefore, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.5: *institute a regular system of cohort analysis for the BBA programme.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

During the first follow-up visit, the Panel was of the view that the statistics provided were 'not sufficiently detailed to provide a holistic progression picture of the students' status' and 'to prepare a solid cohort analysis for decision-making related to student performance such as retention, concentration selection, student characteristics' as indicated in the first follow-up report of 2017. The progress report indicates that limited cohort analyses are conducted as part of the annual and periodic monitoring and reviews of UCB programmes as well as for the HEC annual reporting. It also clarifies that UEB is currently responsible for conducting complete cohort analyses in relation to student access, retention, attainment and progression. Moreover, the progress report indicates that UEB is also responsible for 'ensuring academic standards, by verification and approval of student achievement in line with the Qualifications Framework for credit volume at each NQF level of attainment'. The evidence provided includes minutes of meetings, UEB Policy, which states that student retention, attainment and progression are tracked and approved by UEB each semester. However, this Policy has been in operation only from the academic year 2018-2019. Hence, it is too early to assess the impact of the steps taken on the programme academic standards. Therefore, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is partially addressed.

4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance

This section evaluates the extent to which the BBA programme of UCB, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of January 2014, under Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance; and, as a consequence, provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 4.1: *develop, approve and implement effective policies, procedures and regulations in the management of the BBA programme.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

As noted in the first follow-up report of 2017, UCB developed and revised a number of policies in 2013 and 2016. The Panel notes that most of these policies were revised and updated again in 2018 and 2019. The Terms of Reference (ToRs) of UCB standing committees were also recently revised and updated in 2018-2019. The progress report clarifies that UCB 'has overhauled its quality assurance infrastructure and policy framework', following the appointment of the current VP for Academic Affairs, Quality and Accreditation in 2018. It also states that 'the overhaul of the policy framework and academic infrastructure has been supported by further staffing realignment to ensure more targeted academic leadership'. The Panel notes with appreciation the improvement in the quality of the provided QA Policies and Framework Documentation.

During the first follow-up visit, the Panel noted the inconsistent implementation and monitoring of QA policies and procedures. The Panel also noted that the role of QAAC was very limited and had little impact on the quality enhancement of the BBA programmes and related services. There was also a very limited number of qualified administrative staff to provide support for faculty members in carrying out their different tasks. During the second follow-up visit, however, the Panel noticed that the role of the QAAC was significantly enhanced, as discussed in other parts in this Report. This addresses the main concerns raised in the first follow-up report and the BBA review report of 2014 in relation to the implementation of QA policies, procedures and regulations in the management of the BBA programme. Hence, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is fully addressed. The Panel also encourages UCB to sustain the achieved progress in these regards.

Recommendation 4.2: *review and revise its bylaws and regulations to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the administrative positions, councils and committees for an effective decision making and management of UCB.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

During the first follow-up visit, the Panel was concerned that several key positions were held by one person and some of the assigned responsibilities were not carried out in an efficient and consistent manner. Furthermore, the Panel was not provided with sufficient evidence to demonstrate that there were marked changes or improvements in the programme quality and academic standards based on the action taken. As per the progress report, a QA Office headed by a newly appointed QA Manager was established and a QA officer was appointed to assist the QA manager and act as a clerk to all standing committees. The progress report also indicates that the standing committee structures were revised to give the QAAC a central role in QA management; and to ensure better monitoring of QA policies and procedures, as well as improvement plans and actions. Furthermore, the roles and responsibilities of the President and VP for Academic Affairs, Quality and Accreditation were revised to ensure that they have full oversight of QA and academic standards. Two external academic consultants participated in the revision process to ensure alignment with BQA/NQF requirements. Based on the provided Governance Policies and Framework Documentation and QA Policies and Framework Documentation, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 4.3: *establish an effective and formal quality assurance management system in order to monitor and evaluate the programmes periodically.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

During the first follow-up visit, the Panel noted that no comprehensive periodic review for the BBA programme was conducted. The Panel also noted that the policy related to the reviews of programmes did not include detailed procedures for the periodic review and urged UCB to 'develop clear criteria for the periodic review of the programmes and conduct these reviews on a regular basis', as indicated in the first follow-up report. According to the progress report and evidence provided, UCB revised its QA and Management Policies and Procedures. The progress report also states that the Annual and Periodic Programme Review Policy was revised and updated in October 2018, to be in line with the requirements of the HEC and the BQA.

As per the revised Annual and Periodic Programme Review Policy, the periodic review of each programme is expected to be carried out every four years and to include benchmarking studies, market needs analysis, and the feedback collected from internal and external stakeholders. This Policy also includes a detailed process of the

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selection of an external reviewer for each programme undergoing a periodic review. The evidence provided includes a filled report form submitted by one external reviewer. However, the Panel notes that the external reviewer report was in the form of questions and answers, which are very brief and general, and it covers all the four programmes and concentrations offered by UCB.

During the interviews conducted in the second follow-up visit, the Panel learned that the review and revalidation panel that was formed by UCB included senior management, faculty and one external reviewer to discuss the rationale for proposed changes to the BBA programme, entry requirements, the programme structure and year-on-year progression, PILOs, the mapping of CILOs to PILOs, teaching and learning, research projects, assessment, and student support. As per the provided evidence, this review and revalidation was a half-day event that was conducted on the 2nd of May 2019. The provided evidence also includes a report on this event, which includes a list of recommendations and conditions, as well as commentary for each condition and recommendation.

The Panel learned during the second follow-up visit interviews, that the programme team is currently working on addressing the recommendations raised from the periodic review, which had been based on the benchmarking study, and the feedback collected from the programme advisory board. The periodic review's action plan provided to the Panel was incomplete and did not include the responses of the HoD and the Chair of the QAAC, which is understandable since this event was only recently conducted. Hence, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 4.5: *develop and implement formal mechanisms for annual internal programme evaluation and implementation of recommendations for improvement.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

As per the progress report, the main purpose of the annual programme review is to ensure the currency of the BBA programme, the appropriateness of the ILOs, and the effectiveness of the teaching, learning and assessment processes. It also states that the revision of the Annual and Periodic Programme Review Policy was conducted to 'create a continuous cycle of programme review, with annual monitoring'. The Policy specifies the purpose of annual reviews, roles and responsibilities of parties involved, and expected outcomes in terms of annual review reports, and the follow-up and implementation improvement plans.

As per the second follow-up visit interviews with senior management and provided evidence, HoDs are responsible for the annual monitoring and the completion of the annual review reports, which are expected to include end-of-semester course reviews,

internal and external moderation reports, and the recommendations of the advisory boards. The QAAC is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the action plans based on the annual reviews and for assessing the progress achieved.

The evidence provided includes the annual review reports of 2017 and 2018, which were incomplete and not signed by the VP for Academic Affairs. Some important parts of the report were also listed as not applicable, such as: student completion rates and difficulties encountered in the management of the programme and the achievement of the programme objectives. Related reports and documentation were not attached and provided. Similar comments were raised by the Panel in the first follow-up report of 2017. During the second follow-up visit, the Panel was informed that these reports were part of the annual reporting documents submitted to the HEC. The Panel was also informed that the QAAC has developed a new template for the annual reviews in line with the revised Annual and Periodic Programme Review Policy. The revised template includes sections related to benchmarking exercises and the feedback received from students, advisory boards and moderators, as well as, a commentary on the progress achieved with the programme improvement plan. Hence, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 4.6: *develop and implement formal processes that incorporate the internal and external stakeholders' views in the annual programme review.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

During the first follow-up visit, the Panel noted that surveys were not conducted for two consecutive years due to the shortage of administrative staff. To address this matter, the responsibility for analysing UCB surveys was assigned to the newly established QA Office. During the second follow-up visit interviews, the Panel was informed that the newly-appointed QA manager revised all the administered surveys in line with the National Student Survey (NSS) in the United Kingdom, which are available online. These revisions were based on the recommendation of the VP for Academic Affairs, Quality and Accreditation. The provided evidence indicates that the Student Evaluation Questionnaire and UCB Graduate Exit Survey were distributed in the 1st semester of the academic year 2018-2019 and the feedback of employers is gathered through the internship questionnaires and during the advisory board meetings.

As per the revised Annual and Periodic Programme Review Policy and the progress report, the data scrutinised for the annual review purpose includes student feedback, internal and external moderation reports and the recommendations of the advisory boards. However, as noted earlier in this Report, the revised annual review template, which incorporates an analysis and action plans based on internal and external

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stakeholders' feedback, has not been yet used. Hence, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 4.7: *conduct student, alumni and employer's surveys, analyse and develop formal mechanisms for feedbacks from internal and external stakeholders and ensure that their results are used for programme improvements.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

As per the first follow-up report of 2017, 'no evidence was provided on holistic analysis of the students and alumni surveys' or 'to indicate that employers' surveys have been conducted in the last 3-5 years'. During the second follow-up visit interviews, the Panel learned that the process for gathering evidence and analysing student feedback has been changed to address this recommendation. Student surveys are currently distributed and collected by the Registrar, and the QA Office analyses the surveys and sends the results to HoDs and QAAC. These results are incorporated into the end-of-semester course reports and are discussed at Department Meetings. The evidence provided includes thorough analyses of the Student Evaluation Questionnaires and UCB Graduate Exit Surveys that were distributed in the 1st semester of the academic year 2018-2019. The action plans based on the recently distributed and analysed surveys were not provided; however, the Panel learned during the second follow-up visit interviews that these plans will be incorporated in the newly developed template of the annual review reports.

The progress report indicates that regular meetings are currently held with the Student Council President to allow student participation in the decision-making process and that 'every Academic Department has held an External Advisory Board, providing complete institutional coverage'. The progress report also indicates that the feedback of the advisory boards has led to significant changes in programme specifications and its learning, teaching and assessment approach. The Panel notes that the provided minutes of the BBA advisory board are thorough and include several proposed actions to be taken by the programme team, such as the incorporation of a two-semesters graduation project and topics related to Taxation in the curriculum. The Panel also learned during the second follow-up visit interviews that the QA Office is currently developing an alumni first destination survey, in line with NSS surveys. Hence, overall, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is partially addressed.

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Recommendation 4.8: *establish a mechanism to identify the professional development needs of all staff and to design, implement, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of a continuing professional development programme.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The University's HR Policies and Procedures were revised and updated in 2018. The revised HR Handbook clearly describes the appraisal process, which includes 'identifying personal development needs and providing internal workshops on a range of academic matters to enable overall staff development'. As per the progress report, 'all academic staff are appraised before the start of the new academic year, and a reflection on past achievement, including research output and conference attendance, is reviewed, with a discussion and plan for future development'. This was corroborated during the second follow-up visit interviews and through the provided evidence. During the second follow-up visit interviews with senior management, the Panel was also informed that in the academic year 2017-2018, the Academic Research Committee (ARC) was replaced by a new Scientific Research Council (SRC), whose ToRs include research development and faculty professional development. The evidence provided includes a list of workshops that were conducted in the last two academic years, workshop materials and a sample of filled workshop event feedback forms. This addresses the Panel's main concerns that were raised in the first follow-up report of 2017 in relation to the lack of evidence related to the implementation of the newly-developed mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of workshops/seminars. Moreover, faculty members expressed their high level of satisfaction with the workshops conducted by the QAAC and SRC, which included workshops on the NQF and research informed teaching. Hence, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is fully addressed.

5. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own progress report, programme first follow-up visit report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the second follow-up visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/BQA Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework and Follow-up Visits of Academic Programme Reviews Procedure:

The Bachelor of Science in Business Administration programme offered by the University College of Bahrain has made 'Adequate Progress'.

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Appendix 1:   Judgement per recommendation.

Judgement	Standard
Fully Addressed	The institution has demonstrated marked progress in addressing the recommendation. The actions taken by the programme team have led to significant improvements in the identified aspect and, as a consequence, in meeting the Indicator's requirements.
Partially Addressed	The institution has taken positive actions to address the recommendation. There is evidence that these actions have produced improvements and that these improvements are sustainable. The actions taken are having a positive, yet limited impact on the ability of the programme to meet the Indicator's requirements.
Not Addressed	The institution has not taken appropriate actions to address the recommendation and/or actions taken have little or no impact on the quality of the programme delivery and the academic standards. Weaknesses persist in relation to this recommendation.

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Appendix 2: Overall Judgement.

Overall Judgement	Standard
Good progress	The institution has fully addressed the majority of the recommendations contained in the review report, and/or previous follow-up report, these include recommendations that have most impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. The remaining recommendations are partially addressed. **No further follow-up visit is required.**
Adequate progress	The institution has at least partially addressed most of the recommendations contained in the review report and/or previous follow-up report, including those that have major impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. There is a number of recommendations that have been fully addressed and there is evidence that the institution can maintain the progress achieved. **No further follow-up visit is required.**
Inadequate progress	The institution has made little or no progress in addressing a significant number of the recommendations contained in the review report and/or previous follow-up report, especially those that have main impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. For first follow-up visits, a second follow-up visit is required,