



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

Directorate of Higher Education Reviews Institutional Follow-up Report

University College of Bahrain
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 22-26 September 2019

Review Report Publication Date: 16 September 2020

Follow-up Visit Date: 22-23 February 2022

HI010-C2-F001

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Acronyms

| | |
|------|---|
| BoT | Board of Trustees |
| BQA | Education & Training Quality Authority |
| CEC | Community Engagement Committee |
| CEU | Community Engagement Unit |
| DHR | Directorate of Higher Education Reviews |
| HEC | Higher Educational Council |
| HoD | Head of Department |
| HRFC | Human Resources and Finance Committee |
| KPI | Key Performance Indicator |
| LMS | Learning Management System |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| UCB | University College of Bahrain |
| UCC | University College Council |

I. Introduction

The follow-up visits of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) 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 continuous quality assurance review and reporting on improvement. The follow-up visit applies to all HEIs that have been reviewed using the Institutional Reviews Framework (Cycle 2) and received a judgement of '**Not Meeting Quality Assurance Requirements**'.

The output of each follow-up visit is a published report which indicates the level of progress achieved by the Institution. There are two types of judgements with regard to the follow-up visit. The first evaluates the progress made within each Standard. The second is an overall judgement on the progress made by the Institution.

The institutional review of the University College of Bahrain was conducted by the DHR of the BQA on **22–26 September 2019** and the Review Report was published on **16 September 2020**. The judgement on the University College of Bahrain for each Standard was as follows:

Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Management; **Partially Addressed**

Standard 2: Quality Assurance and Enhancement; **Not Addressed**

Standard 3: Learning Resources, ICT and Infrastructure; **Not Addressed**

Standard 4: The Quality of Teaching and Learning; **Partially Addressed**

Standard 5: Student Support Services; **Addressed**

Standard 6: Human Resources Management; **Partially Addressed**

Standard 7: Research; **Partially Addressed**

Standard 8: Community Engagement; **Not Addressed**

This Report provides an account of the follow-up process and findings of the follow-up panel's visit, whereby the University College of Bahrain was revisited on **21-23 February 2022** to assess its progress in line with the published Institutional Reviews Framework (Cycle 2) and the BQA regulations. The follow-up process incorporated the review of the evidence presented by the Institution to the DHR, the Improvement Plan submitted to BQA on **9 December 2020**, the progress report and its supporting materials, which were submitted in **October 2021**, and the documents submitted during the follow-up virtual visit and those extracted from the interview sessions.

The follow-up visit was conducted by a panel (the Panel) consisting of two members. The visit focused on assessing how the Institution addressed the recommendations within the Standards that have not been addressed. For each recommendation given under these standards, the Panel judged whether the recommendation is '**Successfully Addressed**', '**Adequately Addressed**' or '**Not Adequately Addressed**' using the Rubric in Appendix I. Based on this, a judgment of '**Sufficient Progress**', '**In Progress**', or '**Insufficient Progress**' is given to each standard using the rubric in Appendix II.

II. Standards and Indicators

Standard 1

Mission, Governance and Management

Sufficient progress

Recommendation 1.1:

Ensure that the updated vision and mission statements are displayed across all documents and media, and that displays of the old statements in the campus buildings are removed and replaced with the new ones.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

In the video of UCB facilities, the new vision and mission statements are displayed in the building. They are also on the website. The old statements in the campus buildings have been removed and replaced with the new ones.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 1.2:

Revise the Terms of Reference of the University College Council and ensure that the governing body and management have a clear separation of duties.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The Terms of Reference of the University College Council (UCC) have been revised to create a clear separation of duties between the management of the UCB by the College Council and its governance by the Board of Trustees (BoT). This is also reflected in the revised organization chart and sample minutes.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 1.3:

Review the involvement of the Director of Administration and Finance on the different committees and consider sending a Departmental representative where appropriate.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The involvement of the Director of Administration and Finance on the different committees has been revised. Currently, he only serves on the UCC and its Executive Committee, the Human Resources and Finance Committee (HRFC) and Health and Safety Committee. The Panel is of the view that this is a manageable number of committees and that these are aligned with the administrative nature of the duties of the post. The job description for the Director of Administration and Finance sets out main duties and responsibilities that are consistent with the administrative roles that would be expected at a director's level. Furthermore, no academic duties are listed, and in interviews the Panel confirmed that the Director of Administration and Finance does not carry out any academic duties, including the awarding of research funds, where the responsibility is purely administrative in allocating the budget.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 1.4:

Draft a policy for the appointment and induction of members of the BoT.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

A policy for the appointment and induction of members of the BoT has been drafted and approved, with seven to 10 members appointed for a four-year period, and with an induction programme being provided in two meetings by the Chairman and the President, including providing members with key governance documents. The CVs of the BoT members indicate that they are senior and experienced, representing a range of industries.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 1.5:

Establish a procedure to document the resources that are allocated to programme offerings.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The revised Resource Allocation Procedure sets out clear budgeting procedures for allocating resources to programmes. Evidence was provided indicating that the budgeting procedures are being followed.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 1.6:

Expand the terms of reference of the University Finance Committee to include internal auditing, in support of the BoT Charter obligation of overseeing an 'external financial audit and transparent reporting'.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The University Finance Committee has been merged with the Human Resources Committee to create the 'HRFC' and its Terms of Reference (ToR) have been revised accordingly. The Panel notes that the ToR of the HRFC make no mention of any audit related activities. In interviews, it was clarified that the Internal Auditor now has a reporting line directly to the BoT, which is in turn responsible for appointing the External Auditor.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 1.7:

Revise the responsibility and reporting line of the Internal Auditor.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The job description of the Internal Auditor has been revised to emphasise audit and control functions. The Internal Auditor also has a reporting line directly to the BoT as clarified during interviews. Currently, the independent External Auditor is responsible to prepare the audited financial statements and present the results to the BoT.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 1.8:

Translate the Strategic Plan into an institution-wide operational plan with annual targets and tasks, identifying the people responsible for carrying these tasks and the due dates.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

Operational plans have been introduced with identified targets, actions, responsible persons, timelines, budget, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). In interviews, the Panel was informed that the operational planning process was a top-down and a bottom-up process, with the UCC providing strategic direction and departments and committees translating this into targets and actions for the operational plans, which are

collated by the Quality Assurance Office into a consolidated operational plan. Evidence was provided showing that the plans are monitored.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 1.9:

Coordinate the setting of annual targets for all KPIs; and develop mechanisms to systematically collect data and monitor progress towards attaining the annual targets.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The Quality Assurance Office has put an operational planning process in place to coordinate the setting of annual targets for all KPIs and monitoring progress in their attainment as clarified in interviews. Minutes of the UCC meeting record that the progress of operational plans was discussed, suggesting that regular monitoring and evaluation takes place at the highest level of UCB.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 1.10:

Ensure that responsibility for the functions of alumni relations, community engagement and maintenance & security is clearly assigned and delegated, and that the organogram and relevant job descriptions are to be revised where necessary.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

As reflected in the revised organization structure, separate units have been established for Community Engagement and Alumni and Professional Relations. The job descriptions for the Heads of these units list main duties and responsibilities that are consistent with their job titles. Maintenance and security are currently outsourced functions and therefore do not appear on the organogram.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 1.11:

Revise the structure of committees and reconsider the frequency of meetings in their composition; and develop mechanisms to monitor their effectiveness.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

UCB currently has 15 committees. The overall structure of the committees and their composition are appropriate. Most committees meet twice per semester, namely: the University College Council; Scientific Research Council; Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee; Community Engagement Committee; Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee; Programme Review and Development Committee; Examination Management Committee; Admission and Marketing Committee; Library and IT Committee; Health and Safety Committee; and HR and Finance Committee. For the rest, the Board of Trustees meets annually; the Industry Advisory Board and Executive Committee meet at least twice per year; and the Department Council meets every month. This means that over 60 committee meetings are held over the academic year. With the wide distribution of committee work, combined with Thursdays being set aside for meetings and workshops as clarified during interviews, and the schedule of meetings predetermined, the number of committee meetings that academic and support staff are required to attend, is far more manageable. Mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of each committee have been identified and utilised as reflected in the sample reports and minutes and are appropriate.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Standard 2 Quality

Assurance and Enhancement

Sufficient progress

Recommendation 2.1:

Establish formal mechanisms and implement them consistently to monitor and evaluate UCB's Quality Management System for effectiveness, in order to ensure it is fit for purpose and to allow for improvements to be identified and introduced systematically.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

In the revised organization structure, the strategic planning, accreditation, and quality assurance functions have been merged. Furthermore, the job description for the Director (Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Strategic Planning) clearly demonstrates responsibility for this expanded range of activities, including establishing formal mechanisms, ensuring that they are implemented, and assuming responsibility for monitoring and evaluation. From interviews and evidence provided, it was evident to the Panel that these new structures and arrangements have been implemented already.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 2.2:

Expand the scope of benchmarking practices beyond courses to ensure that benchmarking covers other aspects such as administrative and support services, research and community engagement.

Judgement: Adequately Addressed

A formal benchmarking agreement has been signed with a local private university and covers a wide range of aspects such as admission criteria, programme structure, administrative support, student support services, research, and community engagement. This agreement was to begin in September 2021 but it is awaiting HEC approval before it can be implemented.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is adequately addressed.

Recommendation 2.3:

Develop a survey for employers and expedite the administration of its Graduate Destination Survey, disseminate them regularly and use the collated information to improve the delivery of its programmes and resources.

Judgement: Adequately Addressed

The newly established Alumni and Professional Relations Unit is responsible for developing surveys for employers and graduates. A Graduate Destination Survey has been conducted, and various alumni events have been held. Survey information has been used to improve the delivery of programmes and resources, as reflected in Programme Improvement Plans. One example is upgrading the current Learning Management System (LMS) with Moodle or an equivalent LMS. From interviews, the Panel was informed that it is currently in process. The Panel urges UCB to speed up the selection and utilization of the new/updated LMS.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is adequately addressed.

Recommendation 2.4:

Revise the Student Evaluation Feedback Questionnaire and seek students' feedback on learning resources and support services in a detailed manner in order to ensure that the delivery of courses is appropriately supported.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

From virtual interviews, the Panel was informed that the Student Course Evaluation Survey has been revised and administered and an action plan has been formulated to address student needs that were identified.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 2.5:

Ensure the security of UCB's physical student records by developing procedures for strict access to them.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The policy on Security of Learner Records and Certificates Issuance has been revised to ensure the security of UCB's physical student records, keep electronic back-ups and ensure that there are procedures related to managing access to them. During interviews, the Panel confirmed that this policy had been implemented, and that access to the student files was adequately controlled and monitored, and that these files were stored securely and safely.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 2.6:

Formalize practice in relation to electronic backup of records by keeping an additional secure backup copy outside the premises; and develop guidelines to regulate aspects related to its safekeeping, updating frequency and accessibility.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The ICT Learning Resources Policy has been revised to address topics such as disaster recovery, backups, auditing and reporting requirements. The implementation and monitoring of ICT resources has been included in the operational plan. A Head for the IT Department has been appointed and an external support agreement has been signed to improve ICT support provided to students and staff. Backing up records on-site makes use of a backup server with physical drives, while off site backups are made to the cloud, as clarified during virtual interviews.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Standard 3

Learning Resources, ICT and Infrastructure

Sufficient progress

Recommendation 3.1:

Reconsider the opening hours of the library to allow postgraduate students to easily access UCB's services.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The working hours at the library have been extended to cater for MBA students after normal office hours as clarified during virtual interviews. In addition, an agreement has been signed with another local university for students to access their online library resources and allows for 'unlimited simultaneous authorised user access'. Evidence of usage of library resources was provided.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 3.2:

Identify the learning resource requirements of the offered programmes, and then update and expand learning resources, whether printed or online/electronic databases to ensure that the library resources meet programme and research needs.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

Academic departments conducted a desktop analysis and identified additional textbooks for the library that would support the teaching and learning activities of their programmes. The expenditure on these items was approved. In addition, to address research needs, an agreement has been signed with a local university to make use of their online library resources.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 3.3:

Benchmark physical and electronic learning resources with those provided by similar institutions.

Judgement: Adequately Addressed

UCB has signed a cooperation agreement with one local university and has more recently signed a formal benchmarking agreement with another local higher education institution and is waiting for HEC approval before implementing it. As a result, benchmarking activities with the latter have been limited to course content that is available online. At a high level, the type and number of items in the collection of the library in the former university versus that of the UCB library have been compared. Following this comparison, several new books have been purchased. The Panel suggests that more detailed, subject-specific comparisons can still be done of the library collections.

The Panel notes that the cooperation agreement with this university makes provision for benchmarking of physical and electronic learning resources, and that an inter-library loan agreement is in place. The Panel encourages UCB to fully utilize this agreement for the benefit of its students and staff.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is adequately addressed.

Recommendation 3.4:

Conduct more regular satisfaction surveys to its enrolled students to be able to identify any potential shortages in its learning resources and address them in a timely manner.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

UCB ensures that a Student Course Evaluation Survey is conducted every semester as noted in interviews; and it has been revised and administered to cover all services and facilities. Furthermore, there is evidence that the UCB has responded to suggestions given by students in these evaluations. For example, the BSc (IT) programme has been revised to include more practical computer laboratory work. Furthermore, a final year survey is conducted amongst students about their overall experience at the University, as clarified during interviews. The Panel was informed that feedback from this survey has prompted the introduction of an upgraded Learning Management System (LMS) and the signing of an agreement with one local university for use of its online library resources.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 3.5:

Ensure a reliable back up is available for all UCB's ICT activities including sufficient support Personnel.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The implementation and monitoring of ICT resources have been included in the operational plan. Backing up records on-site makes use of a backup server with physical drives, while off site backups are made to the cloud as clarified previously in (2.6). From virtual interviews, the Panel learned that an external support agreement has been signed to provide up to 40 days on-site ICT support to students and staff, particularly when the ICT staff are on leave, and to support off-site backups.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 3.6:

Develop and implement an ICT operational plan, including active disaster recovery plan, and monitor the implementation of this plan to ensure the effectiveness and safety of UCB's ICT resources and services.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

ICT implementation and monitoring is incorporated into the operational plan. The Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Strategic Planning Directorate monitors the implementation of this plan and the UCC ultimately has oversight of it. During interviews, the Panel confirmed that backups were being done on a regular basis.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 3.7:

Establish a systematic approach for addressing students and staff feedback on its ICT resources; and utilise the collated data to inform improvements in order to maintain user satisfaction.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

An ICT satisfaction survey was recently conducted among students and staff as clarified during interviews. Based on the feedback received, additional online resources have been secured. Lists of physical and electronic resources have been documented per programme. The Panel was also provided with evidence that UCB had taken steps to respond to student feedback on the need to upgrade the ICT services and LMS, as mentioned previously in (3.4).

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 3.8:

Ensure that the facilities are accessible for students and staff with injuries or physical special needs.

Judgement: Adequately Addressed

The Student Counselor is responsible for identifying special needs and making appropriate arrangements. Ramps for wheelchairs have been built and the library has been relocated to the ground floor to enable access for those who have special needs. Dedicated parking bays have also been assigned to improve access for students with special needs. However, most of the teaching facilities are on the second and third floors of the Saar building. As there are no lifts in the building, in accordance with the revised 'Enabling Learners with Special Needs Policy', students and staff with injuries or physical special needs can request that their classes be relocated to the ground floor. The Panel was informed during interviews that currently it is hard to install lifts; however, other buildings could be utilized in the future if the number of students increase.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is adequately addressed.

Recommendation 3.9:

Seek specific and detailed feedback from staff and students about each aspect of the infrastructure and respond systematically to survey findings to ensure that services and facilities are fit for purpose.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

As per the provided evidence, staff surveys have been conducted, and actions taken in response to the feedback have been submitted. The Student Course Evaluation Survey has been revised and administered to cover all services and facilities, and an action plan has been formulated to address student needs that were identified.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Standard 4

The Quality of Teaching and Learning

Sufficient progress

Recommendation 4.1

Revise and update its current programme structures and course content to be in line with scientific and technological standards, and its Market Needs Analysis Report.

Judgement: Adequately Addressed

The UCB programmes have been compared to those of other institutions through a desktop analysis. Furthermore, a more detailed comparison was done through a formal benchmarking exercise. In the light of these comparisons, some revisions have been made to the programmes offered. Through a survey, the Communication and Multimedia Department has obtained feedback from 12 current employers of UCB graduates to gauge the market needs of their programme. The Panel was also presented with evidence of a feasibility study that has been conducted for a Master of Science in Cyber Security Management Programme. The Panel is of the view that more comprehensive market needs analysis should be conducted. However, the Panel was informed during interviews that a data base of approximately 500 stakeholders had been compiled and would be used for this purpose in the near future.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is adequately addressed.

Recommendation 4.2

Review and clarify the management responsibilities for its academic programmes and in particular the interplay of the HoDs' roles/functions in committees.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The job descriptions of the Head of Department (HoD) versus that of a programme coordinator have been revised to set out differentiated duties and responsibilities. In interviews, the Panel was informed that the number of committees that the HoDs and programme coordinators either chaired or were members of, has been reduced, with monthly Departmental Council meetings being more effectively used to provide feedback from the various committees.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 4.3

Enhance the quality of its teaching and learning and ensure adequate depth and breadth of its programme offerings.

Judgement: Adequately Addressed

Several structures and mechanisms have been put in place to review UCB's programme offerings. These include the revised structure creating the Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Strategic Planning Unit; the development of a course file checklist; and professional development workshops. Programme Improvement Plans serve as evidence of how the programmes are being revised to improve their quality. As mentioned earlier in (3.3), a benchmarking agreement with one local institution is awaiting HEC approval.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is adequately addressed.

Recommendation 4.4

Implement programme specific admission requirements and benchmark all of UCB's entry requirements to international standards to ensure the appropriateness and accuracy of its entry requirements.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

After a desktop comparative analysis of equivalent programmes, the programme specific admissions criteria have been revised and approved by the HEC. The Panel is satisfied with the revised admission criteria.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 4.5

Ensure that the curricula of all UCB programmes reflect relevant scientific knowledge and research trends and are closely adapted to labour market and societal needs.

Judgement: Adequately Addressed

As indicated in Recommendation 4.1, surveys conducted on employers of UCB graduates and the External Advisory Board have provided feedback on programme content. In the light of this feedback, the importance of critical thinking and communication skills were identified, and various changes to the programmes have been planned to be implemented.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is adequately addressed.

Recommendation 4.6

Prioritise External Reviewers input and show more flexibility and agility in up-dating programme structures and content.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The Panel was provided with detailed External Reviewer reports, which have been a comprehensive source of information for the annual programme reviews as per UCB's policy. These reviews have been utilized to lead to updating the programmes' structures and contents.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 4.7

Strictly implement the mechanisms for achieving learning outcomes—outlined in the Policies for Learning, Teaching and Enhancement and for Benchmarking—and verify the equivalence of learning outcomes and their linkage to professional requirements.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

An excel spreadsheet consisting of several interlinked worksheets has been created to calculate the scores attained in assessment tasks, against each of the course intended learning outcomes. These are aggregated to calculate an attainment score for the programme intended learning outcomes. This mechanism is used to identify areas of concern, which require action. There has been some desktop research comparing the UCB programmes against other institutions' programmes. These are also used as an indicator of professional requirements and to inform the programme improvement plans. During interviews, the Panel was informed that informal comparisons had been made with professional bodies such as the ACMI, IAAA security principles and CFA standards; and that these had also informed the setting of some of the examination questions.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 4.8

Ensure that Course Intended Learning Outcomes and Programme Intended Learning Outcomes of UCB's programmes put more emphasis on methodology, critical thinking skills and on the transferability of knowledge.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

Programme specifications have been updated, following a review and revision of the mapping of the programme intended learning outcomes, classifying them as Knowledge and Understanding, Subject Specific Skills, Thinking Skills, and General and Transferable Skills. The Panel is satisfied with UCB's efforts in this regard.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 4.9

Follow students' destinations beyond their duration of study on a regular and formal basis.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The newly established Alumni and Professional Relations Unit is responsible for the Graduate Destination Survey that has been conducted to track student destinations after graduating. Alumni events have also been held, which provide an informal mechanism to keep track of student destinations.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Standard 6

Human Resources Management

Sufficient progress

Recommendation 6.1

Develop an operational plan for Human Resources Department to ensure that the HR relevant goals of the strategic plan and their associated KPIs are actioned upon, and that progress made towards meeting these KPIs is effectively monitored.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

One of the goals of the newly developed operational plan of the HR Department is dedicated to staffing and staff engagement. It was clarified from virtual interviews that the Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Strategic Planning Directorate monitors the implementation of this plan, with the UCC overseeing its progress in meeting annual targets.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 6.2

Revise the staff turnover by considering the total number of staff terminations, resignations and retirements that occur in the course of a year; and take the necessary actions to improve the staff retention rates.

Judgement: Adequately Addressed

Current staff turnover is 20% as per the provided evidence, and in interviews the Panel was informed that this was at least in part attributed to foreign staff leaving due to covid19, to be with their families. However, exit interviews are also being done more consistently to identify the reasons for staff leaving, with the goal of improving staff retention.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is adequately addressed.

Recommendation 6.3

Revise its workload model to encompass all the duties and responsibilities of faculty members in order to promote all the three core functions of the University.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The provided evidence includes a detailed workload policy that has been developed and implemented to account for the full range of duties and responsibilities of faculty members, as clarified during interviews.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Standard 7

Research

Sufficient progress

Recommendation 7.1

Formulate suitable policy guidelines for the ethical and safe conduct of research or integrate comprehensive information on ethical research into the Faculty Handbook.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

UCB has revised its research policy and included a set of guidelines for conducting ethical research. Furthermore, the ethical considerations related to research proposals are reviewed at the Departmental level and by the Scientific Research Council as part of the approval process in granting funding. Any cases of misconduct identified lead to the rejection of the funding application.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 7.2

Put more emphasis on Research Informed Teaching.

Judgement: Adequately Addressed

The Learning, Teaching and Enhancement revised policy includes in its statement of purpose the intention to provide a 'teaching environment ... informed by research and scholarship' and noting as one of its principles that 'Theory and practice are equally important aspects and whenever possible should be intertwined'. The policy also states that 'UCB is committed to improve the utilization of Research Informed Teaching in the third- and fourth-year level courses.' In implementing this policy, a workshop has been held to expose faculty to research informed teaching. It was clarified during interviews that upper level and postgraduate courses have a higher proportion of research-related content and assessment. It was noted from the UCB Research Report that some of the faculty are publishing research that is relevant to their field of specialisation and they are active in publishing, which is appreciated by the Panel. However, this will affect the Institution if these faculty members for any reason decided to leave. The Panel is concerned that this will affect the research output of the Institution. Consequently, the Panel suggests that UCB encourages all its staff to conduct more research. Also, the Panel was informed in interviews of initiatives to promote research amongst students, such as securing access to the ProQuest database and holding workshops on writing a scientific/research paper.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is adequately addressed.

Recommendation 7.3

Ensure that sufficient resources are available for students to carry out their research programmes.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

A formal agreement with a local university provides student access to their online databases, and provides access for multiple users, simultaneously. UCB reports that 28% of the annual research fund is dedicated to research infrastructure and activities. The Guidelines and Procedures on Research Grant & Budget provide guidelines and procedures for managing research grants and expenses and include a list of the type of eligible research expenses that can be claimed. Furthermore, the scope of the policy covers both faculty/staff and students.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 7.4

Formally co-operate with HEIs either in Bahrain or abroad, who have renowned research expertise in order to guarantee the commitment of highly qualified external examiners, and, furthermore, to develop unique areas of research expertise.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

A formal cooperation agreement has been signed with a HEI in Bahrain to develop research expertise. Furthermore, UCB has identified five main fields as unique areas of research for the years 2022-2024. Several faculty members are research active with 33 research publications reported.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 7.5

Strengthen UCB's staff development activities with either internal or external workshops focusing on capacities as supervisors for graduate thesis projects.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

Over 60 staff development workshops were reported to have taken place in 2020/2021, including topics related to research and supervision. In interviews, the Panel was informed that the induction of supervisors took place through workshops, as well as through providing them with a set of guiding documents.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Standard 8

Community Engagement

Sufficient progress

Recommendation 8.1

Establish a common understanding of the concept of community engagement, and then review the strategy and structure for planning and implementing community engagement activities.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

A Community Engagement Policy has been formulated for UCB along with ToR for the Community Engagement Committee (CEC), which establish a common understanding of the concept of community engagement. The operational plan incorporates a goal related to community engagement, which is monitored by the Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Strategic Planning Directorate, with the UCC ultimately having oversight of it.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 8.2

Clearly identify an entity responsible for community engagement.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

As reflected in the revised organization structure, a separate unit has been established for Community Engagement that reports to the Acting President. Its roles are clearly specified and include conducting events and administering surveys. The CEC which also reports to the Acting President supports the Community Engagement Unit (CEU), by discussing and deciding on community engagement related activities, by supporting Strategic Goal Five and its operational plan as clarified during interviews. The diagram explaining community engagement indicates that the CEC primarily generates various types of inputs, which the CEU is responsible for carrying out. The role and ToR of the CEC have been documented. In interviews, the Panel also learned that, in their individual capacity, the members of the Committee often assisted with implementing community engagement activities under the guidance of the unit, by for example delivering workshops that the unit had planned. In addition to staff/faculty, various student clubs assisted with community-based activities (e.g. reading), or were present on site of community engagement activities (e.g. entrepreneurship) as clarified during interviews.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

Recommendation 8.3

Develop a mechanism to get formal feedback from different stakeholders after conducting any community engagement activity.

Judgement: Adequately Addressed

Surveys are conducted to get feedback from people attending community engagement events. This data is analysed by the CEU and forwarded to the CEC for decision making and further planning. Surveys are, therefore, mainly used by the CEC to monitor activities.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is adequately addressed.

Recommendation 8.4

Develop a mechanism to monitor the effectiveness of community engagement activities.

Judgement: Successfully Addressed

The CEU is responsible for implementing the strategic goal related to community engagement, and that is incorporated into the annual operational plan. The outputs of this work are various plans, activities, events, and reports, which are reported according to the KPIs of the strategic plan, as clarified during interviews. The report is first reviewed by the CEC before being tabled at the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee, followed by the UCC. The Panel suggests that this monitoring of activities could be further extended to evaluating the effectiveness of community engagement by, after some time, following up on the outcomes and impacts of these activities.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is successfully addressed.

III. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own progress report, the evidence gathered from the virtual interviews and documentation made available during the follow-up virtual visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/BQA:

The overall judgement is 'Sufficient Progress'.

Appendix I: Judgements per Standard

| Criteria for Judgements by Standard | Judgement |
|---|-----------------------|
| Recommendations are successfully addressed within each Standard | Sufficient Progress |
| Most of the recommendations are adequately addressed within each Standard | In Progress |
| Most of the recommendations are not adequately addressed within each Standard | Insufficient Progress |

Appendix II: Overall Judgement

| Criteria for Overall Judgement for Follow-up Visit Report | Overall Judgement |
|---|--------------------------|
| All Standards reviewed receive 'Sufficient Progress' judgement | Sufficient Progress |
| Majority Standards reviewed receive 'In progress' judgement | In Progress |
| Most Standards reviewed receive 'Insufficient Progress' judgement | Insufficient Progress |