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# Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

# Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

**Bachelor of Science in Marketing**

**College of Business Administration**

**University of Bahrain**

**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 1 – 3 December 2014**

HC044-C2-R044

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# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| AACSB | Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business |
| AIMS | Assessment Information Management System |
| BSMK | Bachelor of Science in Marketing |
| CILO | Course Intended Learning Outcomes |
| CoB | College of Business Administration |
| DAC | Departmental Accreditation Committee |
| DAR | Deanship of Admission and Registration |
| DHR | Directorate of Higher Education Reviews |
| ILO | Intended Learning Outcome |
| MCQs | Multiple Choice Questions |
| MIS | Management Information Systems |
| NQF | National Qualification Framework |
| OBE | Outcome Based Education |
| PAC | Programme Advisory Committee |
| PCAP | Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice |
| PEO | Programme Educational Objectives |
| PILO | Programme Intended Learning Outcomes |
| QAAC | Quality Assurance and Accreditation Center |
| QQA | National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training |

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| | |
|---|---|
| SAC | Students Advisory Committee |
| SER | Self-Evaluation Report |
| UILO | University Intended Learning Outcomes |
| UoB | University of Bahrain |

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# 1. The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process

## 1.1 The Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework

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

Programmes-within-College Reviews have three main objectives:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Table 1: Criteria for Judgements**

| Criteria | Judgement |
|---|---|
| All four Indicators satisfied | Confidence |
| Two or three Indicators satisfied, including Indicator 1 | Limited Confidence |
| One or no Indicator satisfied | No Confidence |
| All cases where **Indicator 1** is not satisfied | |

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

A Programmes-within-College review of the programmes offered by the College of Business Administration was conducted by the DHR of the QQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place on 1-3 December 2014 for the academic programmes offered by the College, these are: Bachelor of Science in Accounting (BSAC); Bachelor of Science in Banking and Finance (BSBF); Bachelor of Science in Marketing (BSM); Bachelor of Science in Business Management (BSBM) and Master in Business Management (MBA).

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

UoB was notified by the DHR/QQA in May 2014 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College review of the programmes offered by the College of Business Administration with the site visit taking place in 1-3 December 2014. In preparation for the review, UoB conducted its college self-evaluation of all its programmes and submitted the SERs with appendices on the agreed date in September 2014.

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

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

(i)    analysis of the Self-Evaluation Report and supporting materials submitted by the institution prior to the external peer-review visit

(ii)   analysis derived from discussions with various stakeholders (faculty members, students, graduates and employers)

(iii)  analysis based on additional documentation requested and presented to the Panel during the site visit.

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

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

## 1.3    Overview of the College of Business Administration

The College of Business Administration (CoB) was reconstituted in 1991 after the reorganization of the Gulf Polytechnic (founded in 1981) into a number of colleges and departments. Currently there are four departments within the College: Department of Accounting, Department of Economics and Finance, Department of Management and Marketing and the Department of Islamic Banking which was recently established in November 2014. The College offers six academic programmes; these are the Bachelor of Science in Accounting (BSAC), Bachelor of Science in Banking and Finance (BSBF), Bachelor of Science in Business Management (BSBM), Bachelor of Science in Marketing (BSMK), Bachelor of Science in Islamic Banking and Finance (BSIBF) and the Master in Business Administration (MBA). For the academic year 2014-2015, there are 88 academic staff members supported by and 26 administrative  staff members. The number of students enrolled in the College, in the first semester of the academic year 2014-2015, totaled 5,227 students. The College of Business Administration is currently in the final accreditation stage of Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Annual visits have taken place by

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the assigned mentor for evaluation purposes and advice since 2011. An evaluation visit by the AACSB is scheduled to take place in 2015-2016.

## 1.4　Overview of the Bachelor of Science in Marketing

The year 1981 marks the establishment of the Business and Management Department within the newly reconstituted Gulf Polytechnic. The year 1998 saw the addition of the Marketing programme and the establishment of the Management and Marketing Department. The BSMK is supported by seven full-time and one part-time academic staff, in addition to four administrative staff members. The number of students enrolled in the programme during the first semester of the academic year 2014-2015 totaled 218. To date, there are 323 graduates of the BSMK programme.

## 1.5　Summary of Review Judgements

**Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor of Science in Marketing**

| Indicator | Judgement |
|---|---|
| 1: The Learning Programme | Satisfies |
| 2: Efficiency of the Programme | Satisfies |
| 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates | Satisfies |
| 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance | Satisfies |
| **Overall Judgement** | **Confidence** |

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## 2.  Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

2.1    The University has well-defined processes for the development and assessment of academic programmes which are outlined in the university quality assurance handbook, entitled IDEAS: A University-Wide Outcome-Based Assessment Process. The academic plan for the Bachelor of Science in Marketing programme outlines the programme aims with close reference to the missions of the UoB, the College of Business and the Department of Management and Marketing. The programme has identified a set of four Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs) as well as a set of Programme Intended learning Outcomes (PILOs). The Panel notes that the PEOs are well-mapped to the mission of the Department of Management and Marketing, to the Strategic Goals of the UoB, as well as to the PILOs. The Panel appreciates that there is a sound academic planning framework for the BSMK programme with clear aims that are aligned to the college and institution mission and strategic goals.

2.2    The BSMK curriculum comprises 128 credit hours which are constructively divided amongst university requirements (11 credits), general education requirements (30), college requirements (42 credits) major requirements (30 credits) and minor requirements (15 credit hours). The curriculum represents a good balance between the discipline-specific courses and the necessary ancillary courses of Management, Economics, Accounting and Mathematics which speaks to the second PEO that refers to students being '…equipped with solid business foundations.' In addition, the university requirements, Human Rights Principles (LAW 107) and Modern History of Bahrain & Citizenship (HIST 122) are appreciated for equipping graduates with the language, as well as the social and legal awareness required to operate within Bahrain and the Gulf region. The curriculum is delivered over four years and progression within the framework of the curriculum is achieved by a logical system of course pre-requisites that is sound and well documented. During interviews with senior management, the Panel was informed that the curriculum was revised as per the requirement of the Association for Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and implemented in the academic year 2013-2014. The revised curriculum provides the opportunity for students to select either the single track major or opt for fewer management courses and a set of optional courses focussed in a separate disciplinary minor in either Accounting, Economics, Finance, Marketing or International Business. The introduction of major/minor options in the new curriculum is appreciated by the Panel as it provides students with an element of flexibility in enabling them to choose between depth (single track option) and breadth (major/minor option). As the global market becomes more complex, this is likely to enhance the students' employment prospects. Students interviewed by the

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Panel indicated that they are satisfied with their weekly workload. The Panel notes that almost all courses in the 300 and 400 levels require students to do individual or group assignments and projects which ensure that a balance between knowledge and skills on the one hand, and theory and practice on the other, is achieved. Moreover, the Internship course, MKT 299, also gives students the opportunity to apply theory and perform appropriate tasks related to Marketing in particular, and business in general. The Panel appreciates that the curriculum provides an appropriate academic progression and a sound balance between theory and practice.

2.3     According to the SER, the BSMK programme was specifically aligned with the AACSB Criteria for Business Studies Programmes 2013-2014. The Panel explored the preparation and suitability of the syllabus with faculty members and learned that many faculty members periodically carry out their own informal benchmarking on their respective courses with colleagues at other reputable universities in order to review the content of their courses and to keep up to date with current trends in their subject areas. During the site visit, the Panel examined provided course portfolios and noted that the syllabus is overall accurately and fully documented. The Panel appreciates that the syllabus is appropriately documented and meets the norms and current trends within the Marketing discipline. The Panel notes, however, that in a discipline such as Marketing, some courses syllabi can overlap and, to a greater or lesser extent, topics can be duplicated. In interviews with students, the Panel learned that such overlap happens in some courses, for example the Marketing Channels (MKT 367) and Retailing (MKT 462). The Panel encourages the Department to ensure that, in such cases, individual faculty members liaise with one another to minimize duplication.

2.4     The BSMK has six PILOs that are clearly stated in terms of skills, knowledge and traits that students acquire in their progression through the programme. The Panel finds the PILOS to be appropriate to the level of an undergraduate degree in Marketing. The Panel was informed in different interviews that the PILOs were developed in light of benchmarking with AACSB-accredited universities in the Gulf, Australia, Canada, UK and USA. Evidence was provided of the clear mapping and alignment of PILOs to Outcome Domains, of PILOs to PEOs, and of PILOs to University Intended Learning Outcomes (UILOs). The courses in which the various PILOs were assessed are also clearly outlined in the SER. In its interviews with faculty members, the Panel noted that they are well aware of the PILOs and of their linkages to the programme's aims and objectives. The Panel appreciates that appropriate PILOs are in place for the BSMK programme and are clearly linked to the programme's aims and objectives.

2.5     The Panel reviewed the course specifications of various courses provided during the site visit and noted that the CILOs are generally appropriate to the level of courses.

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Clear evidence is provided of the mapping of each of the required courses, elective courses and college requirements to one or more of the PILOs. During interviews with faculty members, it was indicated to the Panel that the CILOs for individual courses are developed in light of the institutional quality assurance guidelines, and th**at** for multi-section courses, the CILOs are determined by the course instructors in conjunction with the course co-ordinators. The Panel was also informed that the programme courses are successfully mapped to the QQA National Qualification Framework based on the complexity in terms of the knowledge, skills, and competences achieved. The Panel appreciates that appropriate CILOs are in place and are mapped to the programme ILOs. However, in interviews with students, the Panel noted that some students are not adequately aware of the CILOs relating to their courses. The Panel encourages the Department to enhance the awareness of all students about the CILOs and their role in guiding the learning and assessment activities.

2.6     The BSMK programme includes a compulsory Internship course (MKT 299), in terms of which students are placed in a work environment in public or private establishments for 8-9 weeks with a minimum of 200 working hours. This requirement is important in that it contributes to achieving within the overall programme, a balance between theory and practice on the one hand, and knowledge and skills on the other. The internship contributes both directly and indirectly to the fulfillment of the 'readiness for workplace' element of the Department of Management and Marketing's mission *via* each one of the four PEOs. During interviews, students attested to the value they gained from MKT 299 in applying what they learned in a real work environment. The Panel appreciates that as part of the BSMK programme, there is a compulsory course that provides an element of work-based learning which contributes to achieving a balance between theory and practice, and knowledge and skills. The Panel notes, however, that the Internship is not awarded credit and is not formally assessed for the purpose of assigning a grade. On the basis of the three reports received (a Faculty Evaluation, an Industrial Supervisor Report and a Student Report), the performance of the students is evaluated in terms of being either 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'. In interviews, the Panel heard from a number of faculty members that the reason for this lies in the difficulties encountered in standardizing the employment experience for all students. The range of work experience between individual students, varied with the consequence is that the adoption of a standard assessment and the awarding of credits will not suggest a uniform process for all students and could disadvantage some for whom the experience was less fulfilling. The Panel believes that with a few changes, many more benefits can be derived from this valuable experience. The Panel recommends that the Department explore available options for overcoming current challenges so that the Internship be made credit-bearing to better reflect its key role in the curriculum.

2.7   The SER states that a good range of teaching methods is employed in the delivery of the programme which includes lectures, discussions, group activities, student presentations and assignments. During interviews, faculty members confirmed that the Department does not have a 'Teaching and Learning Policy'; however, the Panel was provided with a copy of the 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at the University of Bahrain'. The Panel was also informed that course coordinators are responsible for the development of course outlines which include the teaching methods that will be implemented for each course. The Panel also interviewed current students who confirmed that they have experienced various teaching methods as indicted in the SER and by the faculty members. From reviewing course portfolios, the Panel noted that the most common teaching methods are lectures, group assignments, discussion panels and case studies relevant to marketing and operations. The Panel is pleased to note that students in 300- and 400-level courses in particular, are given the opportunity to apply theory *via* course projects, as well as in Internship (MKT 299). However, there was insufficient evidence to show, that teaching methods were *explicitly* selected on the basis of what was most appropriate to best achieve specific CILOs. This perhaps is reflected in the fact that the teaching method which is predominantly used is the 'lecture and direct instruction method'. While the Panel acknowledges that faculty members are free to adopt teaching styles to suit the both the material delivered, and their personalities and abilities, the Panel is of the view that the Department needs to encourage more creativity and innovation in teaching methods explicitly linked to specific CILOs, and particularly in the area of e-learning. The Panel is encouraged that the Department has recognized the need to 'Revise Course contents to include diverse teaching methods (such as field trips, guest speakers, competition, project-based learning)' as part of its improvement plan. This transition needs to occur within the parameters of an Outcome Based Education (OBE) approach by its written inclusion into a teaching and learning policy for the College. The Panel recommends that the College develop and implement a teaching and learning policy, appropriate to the adopted philosophy and pedagogy of Outcomes Based Education and ensure that all staff are trained and assisted in the implementation of this policy.

2.8   The assessment practices of the Department of Management and Marketing are governed by the UoB's Regulations of Study and Examinations, as well as by the Assessment Strategy. In terms of the Assessment Strategy, a variety of formative and summative assessment methods should be employed to reflect the learning outcomes. The SER did not draw a very clear distinction between summative assessment (assessment *of* learning) and formative assessment (assessment *for* learning). From the interviews with faculty members, the Panel also noted that the distinction between these two forms of assessment is not clear in the faculty members' minds. Having examined a sample of course portfolios and student assessments, the Panel notes that  quizzes and short essay questions are an integral

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part of the 'formative assessments' which also include projects and assignments in some 300 and 400 level courses (for example MKT 362, MKT 367, MKT464). While students are given the key to multiple choice questions and given fairly superficial written feedback on their assignments and projects, the Panel is of the view that this could not be formative assessment in terms of which students are informed of their progress in learning, and informed as to how they can learn from it and improve in future. The SER states that 'Faculty should be encouraged through training and workshops to utilize varied and creative formative assessment methods in the classroom. Currently, there are faculty who depend only on the summative assessment method and ignore the formative and its role in the learning process'. The Panel is pleased to note that the Department recognizes the importance of formative assessment and has an initiative to 'Organize workshops for faculty on formative assessment techniques', as part of its programme improvement plan. The Panel concurs and recommends that the College provide faculty members with appropriate training in the implementation of formative assessment in order to facilitate student learning and understanding along with the attainment of CILOs.

2.9     The Assessment Strategy also stipulates that assessment regulations should be applied consistently and fairly, with appropriate and prompt feedback to ensure the consistency and fairness of grading. The Panel explored the implementation of assessment arrangements in its interviews with students and learned that at the beginning of each semester, students are provided with Course Description, in which the types of assessment and their weighting are set out clearly, enabling students to gauge their own performance. Moreover, all assessment instruments include clear criteria for marking and each assessment is accompanied by a rubric. The University Council Decision mandates, all assessments should be returned to students with clear comments and a model answer. Moreover, in terms of the Assessment Strategy, all assessment results should be returned to students within two weeks from the date of the assessment activity. Students interviewed by the Panel confirmed that assessments were returned within the stated period, and that they can request a re-mark of the final examination. The students also indicated that they are informed about assessment and plagiarism policies during the induction day and through the of Students Affairs booklets. The Panel appreciates that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure the reliability and fairness of grading students' achievements.

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

- There is a sound academic planning framework for the programme with clear aims that are aligned to the College and Institution Mission and strategic goals.
- The introduction of major/minor options in the new curriculum provides students with an element of flexibility and enhances the their employment prospects.

- The university requirements, Human Rights Principles and Modern History of Bahrain & Citizenship equip graduates with the social and legal awareness required to operate within Bahrain and the Gulf region
- The curriculum provides an appropriate academic progression and a sound balance between theory and practice.
- The syllabus is appropriately documented and meets the norms and current trends within the Marketing discipline.
- Appropriate Programme Intended Learning Outcomes are in place for the programme and are clearly linked to the programme's aims and objective..
- Appropriate Course Intended Learning Outcomes are in place and are mapped to the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes.
- The curriculum includes a compulsory work-based course that contributes to the achievement of a balance between theory and practice and knowledge and skills.
- Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure the reliability and fairness of grading students' achievements.

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

- explore available options for overcoming current challenges so that the Internship be made credit-bearing to better reflect its key role in the curriculum
- develop and implement a teaching and learning policy, appropriate to the adopted philosophy and pedagogy of Outcomes Based Education and ensure that all staff are trained and assisted in the implementation of this policy
- provide faculty members with appropriate training in the implementation of formative assessment in order to facilitate student learning and understanding along with the attainment of learning outcomes.

2.12    **Judgement**

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

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# 3.    Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

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

3.1    As noted in the SER, the Department of Management and Marketing does not have particular admission requirements. Admission to the BSMK programme follows the university-wide admission policy for undergraduate studies. The admission policy is published on the university website and university catalogues. In terms of the policy, admission to BSMK requires a minimum score of 70% in high school. Students who have a secondary school grade of less than 90% in English are required to complete a one-semester English language orientation course before joining the programme. The Panel appreciates that a General Aptitude Test is conducted as part of admission requirement. This is particularly important since the university admits students from 11 different types of high school. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the university admission policy is periodically reviewed based on students' performance in the academic programmes. The Panel appreciates that appropriate admission policies and procedures are in place and are widely published and periodically revised.

3.2    The Panel notes from the SER, and from the extra evidence provided onsite and confirmed during interview sessions with the staff responsible for the BSMK programme, that the profile of students who are admitted matches the programme aims. The university requirements of a 70% or higher pass rate on the high school diploma, the language requirements, and an aptitude test are considered adequate by the Panel to recruit appropriate students for the BSMK programme. Evidence of the appropriateness of the students' profile to the BSMK programme was also obtained from the scheduled and random meetings with the students during which they confirmed that they have no specific problems with the programme. The Panel noted, however, that some students in the first year of the programme still have some difficulty with English texts. The Panel believes that the large diversity in the type of student accepted (type of school, language, education system, and student evaluation system), provides a sound reason for the adoption of a university basic education (preparation) year that includes Language, Mathematics, Computer skills, and other self-development courses for students who show weaknesses in the skills required for programmes presented by the College of Business. The Panel learned during interviews that the University, as part of its strategic planning initiatives, has established a committee to develop a foundation year programme to prepare students for university programmes. The Panel welcomes the implementation of this initiative.

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3.3     The BSMK programme has clear procedures and a distribution of responsibilities within the hierarchy of the department. The Department's Chairperson holds overall responsibility for the management of the programme and basically spearheads assigned responsibilities within the Department through nine different committees which meet on a regular basis. Major decisions are made by the Department Council, not the Department Chair, which are then forwarded to the College Council and finally to the University Council. The responsibility at each level is well defined and monitored by the higher level. This was confirmed during site visit interviews with faculty members. The Panel appreciates the clarity of the lines of accountability in the management of the programme. The Panel also notes the existence of coordinators for academic issues such as courses and load allocation, to enhance the management of the programme. However, the Panel finds that too great a number of departmental committees can involve individual faculty members in time that could be spent more productively. Nevertheless, recognizing the importance of some committees, the Panel suggests that the Department investigates as to whether the roles and duties of certain committees could be merged. The Panel also notes that the role of the Departmental Chairperson appears onerous for one individual to carry unaided, despite the level of delegation of responsibility to the chairpersons of the departmental committees. This is even more difficult to achieve in a department offering two academic programmes. The Panel recommends that the College lighten the managerial role of the Chairperson, for example through the appointment of an additional senior level administrator to assist the Departmental Chairperson in the coordination and management functions of the Department. This will free up time for the Chairperson to cope more effectively with strategic decision-making and the coordination and implementation of directives from the College and University, as well as those from the departmental committees. During interviews, faculty members expressed their preference for having a separate Marketing Department and reported that in the extant situation, 'Marketing is a Department within a Department with all the attendant difficulties.' The Panel encourages the College to explore the merit of establishing a separate Department of Marketing to enable a more focused approach to Marketing.

3.4     The Department of Management & Marketing is supported by 39 faculty members of whom 34 are full-time and five are part-time staff. From provided CVs and site visit interviews, the Panel notes with appreciation that the academic staff are suitably qualified and have an appropriate range of specializations to teach on the BSMK programme. The ratio of students to teaching staff is 21:1 which the Panel finds to be satisfactory. However, as many marketing courses are taken by students from other college departments as electives, this impacts negatively on the staff teaching load. The Panel recommends that the Department introduce the use of e-learning to lighten the teaching load of faculty members. The Panel also suggests that the Department invite PhD graduates from industry to participate in part-time teaching.

The list of faculty publications indicates that only two faculty members are actively publishing in regional and international journals. The Panel recommends that the Department introduce a supported research plan to motivate faculty members to continue their research effort and to encourage (through some type of recognition) the faculty members who publish their research in high impact international journals.

3.5    The Department of Management and Marketing has a well-established, systemic approach for recruitment, appointment and induction of new staff. The Department has two committees, a Faculty Selection (Recruitment) Committee and an Academic Promotions Committee, exclusively for taking care of these activities. During interviews, the Panel learned about the stringent short-listing process involved in the appointment of new faculty members and for the attainment of tenure. It is clear that the CoB maintains high standards in the appointment of its staff and expects a high level of commitment from them. There are comprehensive written and approved 'Academic Promotion Regulations' of the University Council Resolution, which make promotion in the University a structured process. The Panel has viewed sample meeting minutes of the Recruitment Committee, from which the Panel can safely conclude that the process is transparent. The promotion system, as explained in the SER starts with the College Promotion Committee and ends with the University Council and is appropriate and has built-in safeguards. For the academic year 2013-14 the College had five promotions from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor position. The Panel has seen a sample of the College Promotion Committee minutes and is satisfied with the process. The Panel appreciates that clear and transparent procedures for the recruitment, promotion and retention of academic staff are in place and are implemented consistently. The current staff appraisal system involves only student evaluations on a semester basis. The Panel learned in its interviews with faculty members that a comprehensive evaluation of academic staff performance is done only at the time promotion, and contract renewal of non-Bahraini academic staff. There is thus scope for the introduction of a system of annual appraisals of all faculty members. The Panel recommends that the Department develop and implement formal mechanisms for the annual appraisal of academic staff, including a system for peer-reviews. The feedback from this appraisal can be used to support an appeal for promotion, the development of a teaching portfolio as well as the identification of professional development needs.

3.6    The University has a functioning Management Information System (MIS) with components for Online Registration, Timetable Preparation, Online Advising, E-learning, Human Resources and Quality Assurance. The SER describes the online Registration System in detail, and during the on-site visit, staff in the Deanship of Admission and Registration Section described the registration process and the processes for maintaining student records with respect to admissions and

registrations, faculty time-tabling, examination marks entry and processing of results. During interviews, the Panel learned that, subject to password compliance, faculty members are able to extract the information needed to manage the learning process, including timetabling, the submission of marks and student advising. Students interviewed by the Panel confirmed that they have restricted access to the system *via* a secured login protocol and are able to register online. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel confirmed that the reports they receive from the system allow for effective communication and decision-making. The Panel appreciates that the Management Information System is effective for the purpose of informed decision-making and is subject to appropriate controls to ensure the security of the system.

3.7 The University has appropriate policies and procedures to ensure the security of records. The Panel notes that both hard-copy and electronic copies of all critical records are maintained at different levels – by the Deanship of Admission and Registration and in the Department. This was also confirmed during site visit interviews and the campus tour. In its interviews with the Information Technology (IT) Centre staff, the Panel was assured that records are password-protected and access to the records and the authority to add to or alter records is strictly limited to appropriate parties. There are prescribed retention periods for records and back-ups are done automatically on a monthly basis. Moreover, the University has a Disaster Recovery System. In addition, the Information Technology Centre executes an electronic back-up every semester. The Panel is satisfied that, on the basis of the written evidence, a review of relevant files and the on-site visit, learner records are secure and results are accurate.

3.8 UoB has a purpose-built campus that meets the needs of staff and students and support their academic activities. The facilities available to the College include classrooms, computer laboratories, staff offices and multipurpose halls. The university library is adequately resourced with reading spaces, computers, books, online catalogue and digital library. During the tour of the facilities the Panel visited two lecture venues and noted that the equipment required for lectures is adequate. The Panel also visited a computer laboratory and noted that the College of Business has four computer laboratories, with 145 computing stations equipped with suitable hardware and software. The Panel finds the computer requirements of students to be adequately addressed. The visit to the library also confirmed that there are adequate textbook, journals and e-resources to meet the needs of the programme. The Panel appreciates that the UoB campus and the College of Business Administration building provide an excellent learning environment. However, from the information provided, and during the campus tour, it was clear that there is a need to expand the available lecture venues. The problems relating to the ability to expand capacity due to the limited budget were explained to the Panel during different interviews. Given

the current constraints facing the College where funding for infrastructural expansion and the employment of additional faculty, gives an added incentive in the view of the Panel for a serious shift and engagement with e-learning (see recommendation in section 3.4).

3.9    The SER documents the tracking system for the usage of laboratories, e-learning and e-resources. During interviews with administrative staff it was confirmed that detailed tracking records are available and reports are generated relating to the usage of these facilities. The Panel found evidence of an effective monitoring system that provides data on the usage of laboratories; the College keeps a daily schedule of every laboratory's usage as they are normally used for computing sessions for most of the courses. The e-learning centre is responsible for tracking the use of e-resources and reports are provided for departments upon request. The Panel acknowledges that the tracking system is adequate for the evaluation of the utilization of the Department's resources.

3.10   The range of support services available to students are detailed in the SER. Student guidance and support is provided through the Deanship of Student Affairs including training and development workshops in diverse areas such as leadership, computer literacy scientific report writing and peer learning. The Student Advice and Guidance Department provides a number of services through its 28 staff members, including social, psychological and career counselling, disciplinary matters and character building. The UoB Library has 59 staff members (14 are professional librarians) of which 31 staff members are located at the Central Library. The computer laboratories also have dedicated technicians who are assigned to support students with the use of the web portal where essential e-resources are housed. This was confirmed during the site visit by the Panel. Laboratory support is appropriate to the needs of staff and students, including a help-desk, as documented in the SER and confirmed in interviews with administrative staff. The Panel learned during interviews that students are generally complimentary about the support systems in place. The Panel appreciates that appropriate student support is in place to provide extensive support to students and enhance their learning experience.

3.11   The Deanship of Student Affairs, organizes an induction day for the newly-admitted students at the beginning of each academic year. The induction programme includes an overview of the academic programmes, rules and regulations and the social and educational services, as well as the location of buildings and facilities. This was confirmed during onsite interviews with staff and students. Students interviewed by the Panel reported favourably on the value of the induction day, and that it was very helpful in preparing them for their studies. The Panel notes that a survey conducted by the Deanship to evaluate the effectiveness of the 2012-2013 induction day revealed overall satisfaction with the orientation programme. The Panel also notes that

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students made several recommendations to improve the induction day, many of which were implemented in the 2013-2014 academic year. The Panel appreciates that a well-developed induction programme is provided for newly admitted students.

3.12    The Department implements the institutional 'Academic Advising Framework' that details the responsibilities of academic advisors and the processes for tracking the students' academic progress. During interviews with academic advisors, the Panel was informed that all students are assigned an academic advisor at the beginning of their studies, and are required to meet with their advisors at least once every semester. The tracking of students' progress is done by the Department in collaboration with the Deanship of Admission and Registration, to timely identify and provide support for at-risk students. Students with a GPA lower than 2.0 are identified and requested to meet with their advisors who recommend a number of intervention measures such as help sessions, peer-tutoring sessions and extra-tutorial classes. In addition, the Counselling and Guidance Unit (under the Deanship of Student Affairs) offers several programmes to support the students' academic progress and social welfare. The Department has recently set up a committee in September 2014 to follow-up and recommend solutions for at-risk students. The Panel acknowledges that the Department has an adequate system and processes in place to identify and support at risk students.

3.13    The Panel notes the extensive array of informal out-of-class activities that the university has in place to expand student experiences and knowledge, including the many student societies, the career day and the regular workshops on a wide range of topics. The student societies and clubs, cultural and social activities, sports and art fall under the auspices of the Student Activities Department (within the Deanship of Student Affairs) , while the Training and Development Department conducts a wide range of workshops on Saturday mornings. Students interviewed by the Panel indicated their satisfaction with the opportunities provided to them to engage in informal learning experiences beyond the classroom. The Panel appreciates that a wide range of activities and resources for informal learning are provided to the programme students to expand their knowledge and experiences.

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

- The admission policy and procedures are comprehensive, clear, widely published and periodically revised.
- A General Aptitude Test is conducted as part of admission requirement.
- There are clear lines of accountability and wide participation of faculty members in the programme management.

- The academic staff are suitably qualified and have an appropriate range of specializations to teach on the programme.
- Clear and transparent procedures for the recruitment, promotion and retention of academic staff are in place and are implemented consistently.
- The Management Information System is effective for the purpose of informed decision-making and is subject to appropriate controls to ensure the security of the system.
- The University provides excellent and sufficient facilities to fulfil the teaching and learning needs of the faculty and students.
- Appropriate student support is in place to provide extensive support to students and enhance their learning experience.
- A well-developed induction programme is provided for newly admitted students.
- A wide range of activities and resources for informal learning are provided to the students to expand their knowledge and experiences

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

- lighten the managerial role of the Departmental Chairperson to ensure effective programme management
- introduce the use of e-learning to lighten the teaching load of faculty members
- introduce a supported research plan to motivate faculty members to continue their research effort and to encourage those who publish their research in high impact international journals
- develop and implement formal mechanisms for the annual appraisal of academic staff.

3.16   **Judgement**

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

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# 4.    Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

4.1    Graduate attributes are identified as a set of PEOs and associated PILOs and CILOs, which are assessed and *via* which, the aims of the programme are to be achieved. The SER details the assessment tools and instruments employed by the Department for the assessment of programme outcomes. In its interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that a set of Performance Indicators (PIs) was developed for each programme outcome, and that each measure is assessed using suitable assessment methods. Faculty members confirmed that they employ both direct tools such as examinations, quizzes, assignments; and indirect tools, such as surveys and evaluations for the assessment of graduate attributes. From the review of provided evidence and interview sessions, the Panel finds the assessment methods currently in place to be appropriate. The Panel appreciates that graduate attributes are clearly stated in terms of achieved learning outcomes and are reliably  assessed.

4.2    In benchmarking its BSMK programme, the Department of Management and Marketing uses external reference points such as the AACSB criteria for programme accreditation and the QQA National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level descriptors. During interviews with senior management, the Panel noted that the main motivation behind recent benchmarking is closely related to the pursuit by the CoB for accreditation from the AACSB. As a result, the Department conducted informal benchmarking against similar AACSB-accredited programmes in the Gulf Region and internationally. The Panel acknowledges the way in which these developments were carefully thought through to ensure that the programme meets international standards. The Panel is also encouraged that the Department identified the need for formal benchmarking as an area for improvement… 'Although informal benchmarking is used, a need to establish a policy and procedure for formal benchmarking will help improve the academic standards of the graduates'. The Panel concurs and recommends that the Department develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures for the formal benchmarking to determine the equivalence of BSMK programme academic standards with reputable regional and international programmes.

4.3    The 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at the University of Bahrain' as well as the 'Assessment, Grading and Moderation Strategy' outline the procedures in place for the implementation, monitoring and return of assessment results to students. At the beginning of each semester, course outlines are distributed to students. These course outlines include, amongst other items, information on the course assessment tools to be used in the course such as quizzes, mid-terms exams, final exams, projects

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or reports, as well as the weighting of each in the overall assessment. To ensure the consistent implementation of the college assessment policies and regulations, an 'Examination Moderation' and 'Grade Distribution' committees, with clearly stated responsibilities, are established annually by the Department. In addition, the departmental Quality assurance Committee conducts regular reviews of the course files, at the end of each semester, to ensure that faculty members are adhering to the assessment guidelines. The Panel acknowledges, from the review of course files and interview sessions, that generally assessment policies are implemented and monitored. Having examined a sample of course portfolios and student assessments, however, the Panel noted the over reliance on multiple-choice, true/false and short essay questions carrying no more than 4 or 5 marks each. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel confirmed that the Assessment Strategy stipulates that the multiple choice questions should not exceed the 20% of the overall marks in any test; however, the Panel is of the view that this method of assessment cannot effectively test students' analytical thinking or written communication skills. Faculty members emphasized that whilst they use MCQs, they ensure they are designed to assess higher-order thinking such as application, analysis and evaluation. The Panel acknowledges the College's recent efforts to improve the assessment practices in light of AACSB feedback, such as the development of an Assessment Handbook to promote best practice in assessment, which is regularly reviewed. The Panel concurs and recommends that the Department supplement the current Assessment Strategy with appropriate policies, and ensure their implementation, to bring it into line to reflect the changed philosophy and pedagogy implicit within the adoption of Outcomes Based Education by the College.

4.4     Guidelines for the alignment of assessment with learning outcomes stipulate that assessment methods should assess the extent to which the students are meeting the CILOs, and that they should be suitable to the level of the assessed learning outcomes. According to the SER, the main mechanisms adopted by the Department to ensure the alignment of assessment with the learning outcomes are the 'Course Assessment Matrix' whereby CILOs are mapped utilizing the assessments tools prescribed in the course outlines and final results, the mapping of CILOs to the PILOs, and the use of the Articulation Matrix to map PILOs to PEOs. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel indicated that at the beginning of each semester, specific assessments such as an examination, case study or presentation, are specified for the attainment of each Course ILO and are included in the course specifications provided to students. During the site visit, the Panel examined a sample of course portfolios (MKT 264, MKT 362, MKT 463, MKT 367, MKT 464, MKT 465) and noted that, with the exception of MKT 465 which showed excellent mapping of assessment tasks to CILOs, assessment tasks were not mapped to CILOs in the other courses. During interviews, however, faculty members pointed out that the form requiring the specific mapping of assessment tasks to CILOs was only introduced in the second

semester of 2013-2014, and hence has not yet been implemented for all courses. This may indeed be a mitigating factor. The Panel acknowledges that this alignment requires considerable thought, imagination, creativity and effort on the part of the instructor. The Panel also notes that the current system of MCQs, True/False questions is not optimal for testing communication or reflective thinking skills. The Panel encourages the Department to ensure that specific knowledge and skills are tested to demonstrate the attainment of particular outcomes (see recommendation in section 4.3).

4.5     As indicated in the SER, the CoB has a well-established internal moderation system for setting assessment instruments and grading student achievement whereby each major assessment instrument is carefully moderated from the initial design to the submission of students' results. Guidelines for moderation are detailed in the recently approved Regulation of Study and Examinations at the University of Bahrain. During interviews, the Panel learned that course coordinators are responsible for allocating the course moderation tasks among the course instructors. In addition, course coordinators schedule several moderation meetings with the course instructors to ensure that effective assessment instruments are selected and developed against the stated criteria. At the end of each semester, the course coordinator (or instructor in single section courses) prepares an Internal Moderation Report that provides feedback on the examinations-setting and marking process, in line with university regulations. Upon reviewing course files, the Panel confirmed that a Moderation Report is included confirming the moderation of both the setting of the final examination paper and the marking. Whilst there was no evidence of moderation of formative assessment tasks whether by quizzes, presentations or projects, the Panel was assured that this was done informally amongst colleagues teaching on multi-section courses. The Panel appreciates that a rigorous examination-setting and internal moderation processes are implemented in the Department.

4.6     There is no system in place for the external moderation of summative or formative assessment tasks on the one hand, or of student responses to those assessment tasks in the form of examination scripts or individual student work, on the other. The SER states that the University of Bahrain uses an American educational system and has not implemented formal external moderation in undergraduate programmes. During different interviews, the arguments that were presented for not using external moderation, were not found to be valid by the Panel. It does not, for example, have to be an extremely costly exercise as examination papers and a representative sample of students' examination scripts can be couriered to other reputable universities. Moreover, to argue that there are enough highly qualified faculty members to provide valid internal moderation is to miss the point about the importance of having a second opinion and an external endorsement. External moderation can also

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play an important role in the process of continuous improvement of what is taught and how it is taught. The Panel notes that the Assessment Strategy acknowledges the importance of external moderation 'It is highly recommended that external examiners should be involved especially in the assessment project work and summer training'. The Panel concurs and recommends that the Department develop and implement effective processes for the external moderation of assessments to build further confidence in the  programme's academic standards and the quality of the students it graduates.

4.7     Internal and external reference points for the Marketing programme include academic standards such as NQF mapping, and AACSB standards, clearly reflected in terms of aims and intended learning outcomes for the whole programme and for each course in the programme. Scrutiny of course files and different types of assessment provided evidence to the Panel that, in general, the level of students' achievement is satisfactory and corresponds to other institutions offering a similar qualification in the region. During interviews, faculty members indicated that at the end of each course, the average results of the students on the course in respect of each assessment is calculated and presented in a Course Assessment Form & Report. A target level is set for at least 70% or more students meeting the course outcomes, and remedial measures are recommended for the outcomes that have not been met. The Panel was also informed that the processes of the attainment of AACSB accreditation in particular, ensures that the level of student work is competitive with similar programmes in Bahrain, as well as in the Gulf region. The Panel appreciates that the Department implements appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the level of students' achievement is appropriate to the level of similar reputable programmes.

4.8     The Panel acknowledges that he Department implements appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the programme graduates meet standards that have been set. The careful and systematic mapping of CILOs to PILOs, to PEOs, to the Programme Mission, to the  CoB mission and ultimately to the UoB mission is clearly designed to turn out graduates who are worthy of the qualification. The Panel notes that the level of achievement of graduates meets the programme aims and learning outcomes  as demonstrated in the final results and grade distribution. Moreover, the use of external reference points such as NQF mapping and seeking accreditation from the AACSB provide a further benchmark the BSMK qualification to those of other accredited institutions. From discussions with members of the Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), and employer surveys, it was evident to the Panel that the standard of the BSMK programme is found to be very acceptable in the labour market in Bahrain. It is also clear that a considerable number of graduates have/are pursuing post-graduate studies. The Panel appreciates that the level of programme graduates meet the programme aims and learning outcomes.

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4.9     The SER provides data on the students' retention, dropout rates as well as the average length of study in the programme over the past three academic years. The Panel notes with appreciation that there is a significant improvement in the drop-out rate of students between 2011-2012 and 2013-2014 namely from 37.2% to 10.8%, as well as a significant improvement in retention rate from 62.8% in 2011-2012 to 89.2% in 2013-2014. In addition, the average number of years taken to complete the degree declined from 5.8 years to 4.38 years between 2011-2012 and 2013-2014, respectively. These trends are in the right direction and are in line with Panel's views above in that an improvement in the teaching and assessment processes will result in increased throughput rates, enhanced skills and enhancement of the general quality of graduates of the programme.

4.10    The BSMK curriculum includes a work-based course – MKT 299 – that provides students with some work-based experience before graduating.  This provides many potential benefits for students and potential employers. The course is very well monitored *via* a combination of student self-evaluation, a visit by the instructor and an industrial supervisor's report. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to manage the process, including guidelines for written reports by the workplace supervisor, the faculty member and the student. The Practical Training Office at the CoB is responsible for the allocation of students to various private and government organizations in the Kingdom, and the Head of the Practical Training Office in the College assists students with a list of possible contacts for potential business training placements. At the meeting of external stakeholders, employers confirmed that they put considerable effort into providing students with meaningful training so that the students get acquainted with real business problems and experiences. The current system of monitoring through a system of reports serves its current purpose, namely to provide feedback to the College and the business concerned on the performance of the student. The Panel notes with appreciation, from the results of Student Training Evaluations for the third semester 2012-2013, that 90% of students scored 4.5 out of 5 on the overall performance. The Panel also notes that over 83% of students achieved 4.3 to 4.6 out of 5 in English and Arabic communications, respectively (Learning Goal D) while over 92.5% of students scored 4.5 out of 5 in team work and interpersonal relationships (Learning Goal E). The Panel appreciates that the work-based learning programme, in bringing theory and practice closer together, contributes to improved graduate attributes.

4.11    There is an active Programme Advisory Committees (PACs) in place for the College and the Department, both of which are important sources of advice on the educational needs of the industrial community. The PACs comprise appropriate representatives from both government and private sectors and have clear terms of reference. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel learned that the College and Department PACs meet regularly to discuss academic and professional

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issues, such as the review of programme outcomes and the new curriculum plan. The Panel notes with appreciation that that suggestions arising from the PACs meetings are discussed in the Department Council and, where deemed appropriate, are then implemented. The Panel had a very informative meeting with PACs representatives who reported positively on the PACs and on the Department of Management and Marketing. The constructive role of the PAC was reflected in the feedback provided by the PACs with regard to ongoing discussions with the Department on improving the Internship (MKT 299). In addition, the Department has established a Students Advisory Committee (SAC) so that students' feedback can be formally incorporated into the BSMK programme improvements. The Panel examined the SAC meeting minutes over the past three years and noted that various issues are discussed including, curriculum, assessments, teaching faculty as well as physical resources. The Panel notes that the students' suggestions were recorded as 'Recommendations' which are then discussed in the Department Council. The Panel appreciates that well-functioning advisory committees are in place and that their feedback is considered and implemented, where deemed appropriate, as part of the programme improvement plans.

4.12    The Department conducts regular Alumni and Employer surveys to obtain feedback from these key external stakeholders on their satisfaction with the standards of the graduate profile. The Panel notes that both surveys contain a section to evaluate the graduates' achievement of the programme outcomes. The latest evaluation of the PILOs by Alumni revealed that they are fairly satisfied with the programme outcomes, with the average rating meeting the metric goal of 3.5 out of 5. The results of alumni satisfaction with the BSMK programme indicate  a high level of satisfaction with the written and oral communication skills (score average of 5.0 out of 5.0) as well as critical thinking and analysis, and interpretation of information (score average of 4.0 out of 5.0). In addition, the evaluation of the PILOs by employers revealed that the highest score (4.58 out of 5) was obtained for Programme Outcome (d) 'Communicate effectively orally and in writing using appropriate technologies' whereas the lowest score (3.83 out of 5) was for Programme Outcome (e) 'Operate effectively in a variety of team roles and take leadership roles, where appropriate'. Moreover, during meetings with employers and alumni, the Panel noted their overall satisfaction with the standards of graduates. The Panel appreciates that there is evidence of graduate and employer satisfaction with the standards of the BSMK graduate profile.

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

- Graduate attributes are clearly stated in terms of programme educational objectives and achieved learning outcomes and are reliably  assessed**.**
- A rigorous examination-setting and internal moderation processes are implemented in the Department**.**
- Appropriate mechanisms are implemented to ensure that the level of students' achievement is appropriate to the level of similar reputable programmes.
- The level of programme graduates meet the programme aims and learning outcomes**.**
- There is a significant improvement in the students' drop-out and retention rates over the past three academic years.
- The work-based learning programme, in bringing theory and practice closer together, contributes to improved graduate attributes
- Well-functioning advisory committees are in place and that their feedback is considered and implemented, where deemed appropriate, as part of the programme improvement plans**.**
- There is evidence of graduate and employer satisfaction with the standards of the graduate profile.

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

- develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures for the formal benchmarking to determine the equivalence of the programme academic standards with reputable regional and international programmes
- supplement the current Assessment Strategy with appropriate policies, and ensure their implementation, to bring it into line to reflect the changed philosophy and pedagogy implicit within the adoption of Outcomes Based Education by the College
- develop and  implement effective processes for the external moderation of assessments to build further confidence in the  programme's academic standards and the quality of the students it graduates.

4.15    **Judgement**

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

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

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

5.1   The policies, procedures and regulations, and particularly the academic policies regarding students' admission, progression and transfer, are published on the university website and made known to the different constituencies. This is appreciated since the first step in the effective application of policies, is their availability to concerned parties: faculty, students and parents. The interviews with the students and faculty members revealed that these policies and procedures are applied effectively and consistently within the BSMK programme and across the College of Business. Many of the academic regulations and their application are discussed in the College and Department councils. Students interviewed by the Panel also confirmed that they are informed about the institution's policies and procedures during the induction day, and that their inquiries are adequately addressed. Additionally the Internal Audit Office plays an important role in monitoring the effectiveness and consistent application of institutional procedures. The Panel appreciates the effective implementation and dissemination of the University and College policies, procedures and regulations.

5.2   Overall the hierarchy of management at the university, at the college and at the department levels is appropriate and adequate to ensure an effective management. The Department Chairperson has appropriate qualifications and experience to ensure that the programme is managed in an effective and responsible manner. The faculty members in the Department are involved in decision-making through the departmental committees that consider almost every academic and administrative matter, from class timetables, textbooks, the curriculum, recruitment and promotion, to the Examinations committee and the Programme Advisory Committee. The Panel appreciates that faculty members participate in the management of the Department, which reflects positively on the sharing of leadership responsibilities by Faculty.

5.3   There is a quality assurance structure at all levels of the university: a QA committee at the department level, the QA office at the college level, and a Center for Quality Assurance exists at the university level. This structure communicates the information and monitors the implementation of the quality assurance measures set by the University. The assessment cycle is clear and can be easily followed. There is an assessment management information system to house all the data of evaluation reports and feedback. The internal audit function is also a component of the quality assurance management system and it plays an important role in quality assurance monitoring. During interviews with senior management, the Panel was informed

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that the last change in the programme of study in the College was initiated by the Internal Audit Department. The Panel reviewed the internal audit report that was available for the BSMK programme and found it to be very informative and useful. The Panel believes that greater importance should be attached to the findings of such reports and duly acted upon. The Panel appreciates that a clear quality assurance management system is in place and is consistently implemented and monitored. The Panel also encourages the Department to gain buy-in and support from faculty members for the adoption and implementation of the outcomes mapping process, which the Panel acknowledges is of itself a difficult task for any institution embarking upon the adoption of an OBE approach to education. In the view of the Panel, this can only be achieved through unstinting support and encouragement – at the level of QA it means less emphasis on ensuring documents are filled in (important as this might be, but for faculty to understand why this is so) and more encouragement of faculty training and assistance for faculty to recognize their critical role in the attainment of quality enhancement through their students (see section 5.4).

5.4     The SER indicate that a number of seminars and workshops have been held to explain the quality assurance system and concepts to academic and administrative staff members. In addition, some faculty members have participated in QA seminars abroad, conducted by the AACSB. The Panel commends this practice. Meetings with the faculty and staff revealed that they have a reasonable understanding of the quality assurance system in place, and they understand their role in applying this system. This was deduced from the capacity to 'speak' the language of OBE by everyone interviewed by the Panel, such as the vocabulary of CILOs, PILOs and PEOs in explaining and answering the Panel inquiries and pointing out the importance of their alignment. The Panel is pleased to note that the Department has an ongoing initiative in its Improvement Plan to 'Organize training workshops regularly for academics and support staff for better understanding of quality assurance and their role in ensuring effectiveness of ongoing provision' and 'Promote a culture of accountability to ensure that all faculty members take ownership of the curriculum development process for high level of student learning and achievement.' The Panel appreciates that the Department provides capacity-building opportunities for faculty members to enhance their understanding of quality assurance concepts. The Panel suggests that the Department encourage faculty members to attend these training workshops to establish a greater understanding of QA's importance and practices at the department and college levels. The Panel also encourages the Department to implement the principles of Change Management, from seeking college and departmental 'champions' to the regular showcasing of the examples of those who have made the transition.

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5.5    An institutional policy for the development of new programmes has been approved by the University Council in October 2013. The Panel notes the comprehensive requirements and procedures to permit carefully considered and effective development of new programmes. These include formal labor market studies, study plans, benchmarking studies, assessment and teaching policies, as well as feedback from internal and external stakeholders. The Panel acknowledges that robust procedures are in place for the development of new programmes and encourages the College to monitor its implementation to ensure that the new programme is relevant, fit for purpose, and comply with existing institutional regulations.

5.6    Arrangements are in place for internal programme evaluation, the QAC Director's 'Quality Manual for DAC Committees' outlines the preparation of an internal SER for each Department (QF-23-rev.a.1) and the preparation of the QAAC Self Evaluation Improvement Plan (QF-25-rev.a.2). A departmental quality assurance assessment is conducted annually and a self-evaluation report along with an improvement plan is submitted to the university quality assurance center. This practice is commended. The SER generally refers to the refinement of the process initiated in the 2012-2013 academic year under the supervision of the College's Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee which set out to refine the PILOs of the College's various programmes, along with the development of an Assessment of Learning (AoL) plan in compliance with the accreditation requirements of the AACSB. In essence this has seen the refinement of the 'mapping system' of CILOs to PILOs and PEOs as currently exists. The value of the process is clearly visible in the generally tight integration of this process already commented upon elsewhere in this report. The Panel appreciates that quality assurance assessment is conducted annually and a self-evaluation report, together with an improvement plan, is submitted to the University Quality Assurance Center.

5.7    The College has a policy of reviewing the programmes every 5 years. The review system is illustrated in the SER. The latest review of College programmes was approved in June 2013 and implemented at the commencement of the new academic year in September 2013. Adopting this new policy in 2013 resulted in a revised programme. The new programme reflects the influence of the AACSB as the proposed accreditation body for the College's programmes, as well as the demand from students, as concluded from the students' meeting and SAC meeting minutes. To assess the relevance of the programme changes, the suggested changes and modifications were discussed with the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) in June 2013. In the meetings with employers and external stakeholders, the Panel determined that they approve of the changes. The procedure, in terms of which changes in the programme were benchmarked against a wide range of international programmes, as well as taking into account local inputs, is commended by the Panel. To ensure that the new programme complies with existing regulations, it was

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reviewed at several management levels up to the University council. The Panel appreciates that effective policies and procedures are implemented for the periodic review of programmes to ensure their relevance and stability.

5.8    The SER distinguishes between internal and external feedback on the basis that 'internal' relates to the stakeholders involved in the immediacy of the departmental functions, such as the PAC, Alumni and Student Council surveys, while 'external' is interpreted to the wider benchmarking activities of the AACSB. There is value in the distinction made along these lines. In preparing for the Fall 2015 visit of the accreditation committee of the AACSB, and the advice of its mentor, it is clear that the influence of this body is recognized as important and regularly acted upon. At the same time, the senior management informed the Panel that the CoB has no intention of sacrificing its autonomy and individuality in pursuit of AACSB accreditation, which the Panel found reassuring. The involvement and recommendations provided by the AACSB through an improvement plan (a copy was given to Panel) indicate a similar line of thought to the Panel. The Panel appreciates the Department's on-going AACSB processes and the beneficial impact this has had on the programme review outcomes. What was less evident to the Panel was the extent to which the internal stakeholder feedback is acted upon. Although less 'high-profile' this feedback is likely to have a greater bearing of the day-to-day operations of departments within the College and hence on the immediate quality of its functions. The Panel was not able to determine just how the data gathered from all these internal sources (such as students course evaluations) is discussed and, where considered important, acted upon. The Panel recommends that the Department regularly involve the feedback from all key stakeholders, including information from the internal stakeholders, in the review and updating of programme content and development.  The Panel notes that both the internal and external review processes undertaken since 2011-2012 are now drawing towards conclusion. The progress already made is significant and appreciated by the Panel. The Panel is of the view that the adoption of outcomes-based education by both the QQA and AACSB has prompted dramatic changes in the thinking and actions of for both faculty and management. The Panel encourages the Department to gain more buy-in from every individual faculty member into the admirable vision and mission statements already in place and the role of the adoption of OBE in attaining them (see section 5.4).

5.9    The Department conducts a number of surveys to collect stakeholders' feedback; these include: an Employer Survey, a Senior Exit Survey and an Alumni Survey. There is evidence in the SER that the results of these surveys are analyzed. The SER indicates that major changes, namely the addition of the major/minor option to the current major single track, and the revision of the contents of several courses, were introduced to the BSMK programme after taking into account the comments received

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from faculty members, as well as the results of the PAC, student, and Alumni surveys and meetings. This was confirmed during interviews with senior management and faculty members. The Panel notes that the Senior Exit Survey Results from 2011-2013 showed that 'Advising' was below average while all the other sections were 'satisfactory'. The Alumni Survey results showed that the highest satisfaction score was for written and oral communication skills (score average of 5.0 out of 5.0), critical thinking and analysis, analysis and interpretation of information, and overall quality of education (score average 4.0 out of 5.0). However, the Panel notes that the 'availability of study space' and the 'overall quality of instruction by faculty' received a below average score of 2.5 out of 5. The Panel acknowledges that the Department has addressed the issues, with low scores, arising from these surveys in its programme improvement plan.

5.10    The SER states that 'The College believes that academic members are one of the main keys to the attainment of this commitment and this could be achieved through ongoing professional development process.' The Panel acknowledges that the CoB provides encouragement for the personal development of faculty members in the pursuit of their academic careers. This was confirmed by faculty members during site visit interviews. However, there was no evidence that these activities are linked to formal training needs analysis or staff appraisal. The Panel recommends that the Department develop and implement a strategy for staff development, linked to staff appraisal, to evaluate and enhance the professional capabilities of faculty members. The lists of conference and workshops attended by individual staff are included in the SER and the CV's of the faculty members. The Panel acknowledges that faculty members have the opportunity to attend discipline specific as well as general quality assurance conferences and workshops. This as a healthy trend but, in keeping with recommendations made elsewhere in the report (see section 5.4), the Panel wishes to stress the need for faculty members to become sufficiently familiar with teaching and assessment methods as well as soft skills. The Panel was informed that  all Bahraini Ph.D. faculty members returning from scholarship are required to undergo the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP) upon joining the programme. This is welcomed by the Panel; however, the meetings with the students revealed that some students postpone registration in a course rather than being allocated to a particular instructor with poor presentation and communication skills. Recognizing the individual differences between instructors, the Panel recommends that the Department conduct training programmes in teaching and assessment methods as well as soft skills. The Panel also suggests that the Department encourage all academic staff to attend the PCAP programme.

5.11    There is a Programme Advisory Committee in place which is intended to fulfil the function of keeping the Department abreast of labour market needs and trends, as well as to keep the Department informed about the professional needs of industry.

The PAC is seen as an industry contacts or conduits through which the departments can access collaborative agreements in areas such as research projects for faculty and senior students. The Department has also included an initiative in its improvement plan to 'Conduct regularly studies of the labor market to ensure that program are up-to-date'. The Panel welcomes this initiative. These are all healthy developments. The Panel suggests that as the practice becomes more entrenched in the culture of the Departments, it might be further expanded to embrace a wider range of participants from appropriate industries in a bid to further widen the benefits for both the Department and industry.

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

- The university and college policies, procedures and regulations are effectively disseminated and consistently implemented.
- Faculty members participate in the management of the Department, which reflects positively on the sharing of leadership responsibilities.
- Comprehensive quality assurance processes, with clear responsibilities for Quality Assurance, are in place at the department and college level as well as the at University level;
- The Department provides capacity-building opportunities for academic and administrative staff to enhance their understanding of quality assurance concepts.
- A robust system is implemented for the periodic review of programmes to ensure their relevance and stability.
- Quality assurance assessment is conducted annually and a self-evaluation report, together with an improvement plan, is submitted to the University Quality Assurance Center.
- The involvement of, and the recommendations provided by the AACSB contribute to the programme improvement plans.

5.13 In terms of improvements the Panel **recommends** that the College should:

- develop and implement a strategy for staff development, linked to staff appraisal, to evaluate and enhance the professional capabilities of faculty members
- conduct training programmes for all faculty members in teaching and assessment methods as well as soft skills
- regularly involve the feedback from all key stakeholders, including information from the internal stakeholders, in the periodic review of the programme.

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## 5.14 Judgment

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

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# 6.  Conclusion

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

**There is confidence in the Bachelor of Science in Marketing of College of Business Administration offered by the University of Bahrain.**

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