Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programme Review Summary

University of Bahrain
College of Law
PhD in Public Law
Kingdom of Bahrain

Site Visit Date: 7 – 9 June 2021

HA021-C3-R021

I. Introduction

In keeping with its mandate, the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), through the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR), carries out two types of reviews that are complementary. These are: Institutional Reviews, where the whole institution is assessed; and the Academic Programme Reviews (APRs), where the quality of teaching, learning and academic standards are assessed in academic programmes within various colleges according to specific standards and indicators as reflected in its Framework.

Following the revision of the APR Framework at the end of Cycle 1 in accordance with the BQA procedure, the revised APR Framework (Cycle 2) was endorsed as per the Council of Ministers' Resolution No.17 of 2019. Thereof, in the academic year (2019-2020), the DHR commenced its second cycle of programme reviews.

The Cycle 2 APR Review Framework is based on four main Standards and 21 Indicators, which form the basis of the APR Reports of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

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

Standard 1: **The Learning Programme**

Standard 2: **Efficiency of the Programme**

Standard 3: **Academic Standards of Students and Graduates**

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

The Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as 'the Panel') decides whether each indicator, within a standard, is 'addressed', 'partially addressed' or 'not addressed'. From these judgments on the indicators, the Panel additionally determines whether each of the four standards is 'Satisfied' or 'Not Satisfied', thus leading to the Programme's overall judgment, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Criteria for Judgements

Criteria	Judgement
All four Standards are satisfied	Confidence
Two or three Standards are satisfied, including Standard 1	Limited Confidence
One or no Standard is satisfied	No Confidence
All cases where **Standard 1** is not satisfied	

The APR Review Report begins with providing the profile of the Programme under review, followed by a brief outline of the judgment received for each indicator, standard, and the overall judgement.

The main section of the report is an analysis of the status of the programme, at the time of its actual review, in relation to the review standards, indicators and their underlying expectations.

The report ends with a Conclusion and a list of Appreciations and Recommendations.

II. The Programme's Profile

Institution Name*	University of Bahrain
College/ Department*	College of Law
Programme/ Qualification Title*	PhD in Public Law
Qualification Approval Number	
NQF Level	10
Validity Period on NQF	
Number of Units*	12 Units plus Dissertation
NQF Credit	
Programme Aims*	1. Providing the Bahraini community with graduates of distinguished competencies and expertise in scientific research and the utilization of its tools. 2. Employing the skills of rigorous scientific research, and the acquisition of its tools, for innovative problem-solving in the field of public law and for the development of society. 3. Developing researchers capable of innovative research in all branches of public law, which can contribute to increasing the chances of scientific publishing in the field. 4. Enabling researchers to acquire the skills of analysis and interpretation, evaluation, reasoning, and criticism, to enhance their ability to compete in the labor market. 5. Creating an environment for learners that is conducive for creativity and innovation, in terms of knowledge and skills, in various legislative and jurisprudence-related fields, thus, empowering them for group leadership in the field.

Programme Intended Learning Outcomes*	In the end of the program, the graduate will be able to: 1. Create an environment that is conducive for creativity and innovation in the field of legal sciences, which leads to the advancement of researchers scientifically and professionally, and the development of their legal knowledge. 2. Refine, develop, and guide the scientific and practical capabilities of researchers. 3. Empower the researcher to acquire the skills of analysis, data collection, interpretation, evaluation, extrapolation, and the knowledge of methodologies related to interpretation and criticism. 4. Empower the researcher to understand the laws and methods of scientific research in the field of law, the origins of thought formulation, and legal opinion formation. 5. Keep up to date with everything new in the field of legal sciences. 6. Promote deep scientific research at the University of Bahrain in the field of legal sciences. 7. Provide the Bahraini community with graduates of distinguished legal expertise needed for efficient legal practice.

*   Mandatory fields

III. Judgment Summary

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The Programme's Judgment:
Confidence

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Standard/ Indicator	Title	Judgement
Standard 1	**The Learning Programme**	Addressed
Indicator 1.1	The Academic Planning Framework	Addressed
Indicator 1.2	Graduate Attributes & Intended Learning Outcomes	Partially Addressed
Indicator 1.3	The Curriculum Content	Partially Addressed
Indicator 1.4	Teaching and Learning	Addressed
Indicator 1.5	Assessment Arrangements	Addressed
Standard 2	**Efficiency of the Programme**	Addressed
Indicator 2.1	Admitted Students	Addressed
Indicator 2.2	Academic Staff	Partially Addressed
Indicator 2.3	Physical and Material Resources	Addressed
Indicator 2.4	Management Information Systems	Addressed
Indicator 2.5	Student Support	Addressed
Standard 3	**Standard 3: Academic Standards of Students and Graduates**	Addressed
Indicator 3.1	Efficiency of the Assessment	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.2	Academic Integrity	Addressed
Indicator 3.3	Internal and External Moderation of Assessment	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.4	Work-based Learning	Not Applicable

Indicator 3.5	Capstone Project or Thesis/Dissertation Component	Addressed
Indicator 3.6	Achievements of the Graduates	Addressed
Standard 4	**Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance**	Addressed
Indicator 4.1	Quality Assurance Management	Addressed
Indicator 4.2	Programme Management and Leadership	Addressed
Indicator 4.3	Annual and Periodic Review of the Programme	Addressed
Indicator 4.4	Benchmarking and Surveys	Partially Addressed
Indicator 4.5	Relevance to Labour Market and Societal Needs	Addressed

IV. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own self-evaluation report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the virtual site visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/BQA *Academic Programme Reviews (Cycle 2) Handbook, 2020*:

There is (Confidence) in the PhD in Public Law of the College of Law offered by the University of Bahrain.

In coming to its conclusion regarding the four Standards, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

1. The comprehensive and detailed thesis writing handbook that outlines the rules governing dissertation writing at the University.

2. The role of the Department, the College, and the University in the transformation to online learning.

3. The study system that encourages participation and research whether in the specialized courses or as part of the requirements of the seminar and dissertation course.

4. The cyber security procedures followed by the University.

5. The active role of the advisory committee in improving the programme to meet labor market and local community needs.

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

1. Review the current programme intended learning outcomes so that they reflect the programme's specialization, are measurable, and clearly align with international standards and NQF requirements.

2. Consistently implement the course specifications, as a mechanism to ensure the adequate alignment of intended learning outcomes to the level of the courses, their content, and the nature of the programme.

3. Review and modify the current programme study plan by decreasing the number of credit hours and focusing more on the specialized courses related to the labor market, while ensuring that the topics of the courses on offer are specific enough to the field of Public Law and well-balanced, with minimal overlap or repetition between courses.

4. Consider offering an intensive General Finance course and a Financial Law course as part of the PhD in Public Law program.

5. Ensure that all course specifications include a variety of current and relevant references that comply with good practices at the PhD level and meet the programme's academic standards.

6. Re-consider the grades distribution, taking into account the importance of research and participation.

7. Regularly review the admission policy and modify it based on feedback from a variety of sources, including the programme advisory committee, stakeholders, and benchmarking results with distinguished regional and international colleges which offer a similar programme to the PhD in Public Law.

8. Review the faculty's administrative and teaching load and the maximum number of dissertations they can supervise.

9. Work on ensuring a better balance in specializations when recruiting new faculty members.

10. Subscribe to international electronic databases in the field of law, such as Westlaw and Lexisnexis, due to their importance for both PhD students as well as faculty members doing research.

11. Regularly assess the support services provided to students, including academic advising, and improve them based on students' needs, with implementing a rigorous follow-up process on the implementation of students' suggestions regarding the support services.

12. Use a variety of questions within the same assessment tool and ensure that final assessments are at a suitable level of complexity and measure students' critical thinking skills.

13. Devise a clear mechanism for directly and precisely measuring the intended learning outcomes of the PhD in Public Law programme.

14. Implement a follow-up process of the assessment procedures and improve and document them in a more systemic and detailed manner.

15. Expand the scope of implementation of the plagiarism-detection procedures, to include all written assignments and not just the dissertations.

16. Conduct internal reviews and more rigorous evaluations to measure the effectiveness of internal moderation.

17. Expedite having measures in place for implementing external moderation of assessments, with identifying set criteria for the selection of external moderators who are experienced professionals from reputed universities and developing a suitable mechanism for assessing the effectiveness of external moderation.

18. Hold an online seminar for students and instructors, to take the place of the regular dissertation proposal discussion that usually includes two examiners.

19. Improve the alumni tracking process and the collection of their relevant data, as well as the enrolled students' data, to clearly and accurately ensure that they meet the academic standards.

20. Evaluate the mechanisms used to ensure the consistent implementation of quality assurance-related policies and procedures at the college, department, and programme level.

21. Improve the documentation of evidence in the self-evaluation reports and ensure a systematic follow-up process of the implementation and evaluation of the improvement plans.

22. Implement the university's quality assurance policy in relation to carrying out comprehensive periodic reviews of the PhD in Public Law programme, and develop and implement relevant improvement plans based on the review results.

23. Conduct, through direct contact with universities offering programmes similar to the PhD in Public Law, a more comprehensive benchmarking exercise of the programme, covering different aspects and components of the academic and administrative activities and services it provides.

24. Evaluate the mechanism used to distribute surveys, to ensure that they reach the greatest number of targeted stakeholders and evaluate the mechanism of communicating survey results and decisions made on their basis to the relevant survey participants.

25. Review the mechanisms that are systematically implemented to ensure that the programme meets the needs of the labor market and the local community.