



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

# Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

## Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

**Bachelor in Sociology  
College of Arts  
University of Bahrain  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of the Review: 5 - 9 November 2017  
HC114-C2-R114**

## Table of Contents

---

Acronyms.....	2
The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process.....	3
1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme.....	7
2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme.....	13
3. Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates.....	23
4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance.....	32
5. Conclusion.....	40

## Acronyms

BQA	Education and Training Quality Authority
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CILOs	Course Intended Learning Outcomes
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
HEC	Higher Education Council
HoD	Head of Department
ITC	Information Technology Centre
MIS	Management Information System
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PAB	Programme Advisory Board
PEOs	Programme Educational Objectives
PCAP	Post-Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice
PILOs	Programme Intended Learning Outcomes
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre
QAO	Quality Assurance Office
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
UILOs	University Intended Learning Outcomes
UoB	University of Bahrain

## **The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process**

### **A. The Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework**

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

Programmes-within-College Reviews have three main objectives:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 <b>Indicator 1</b> is not satisfied	

## **B. The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process at the University of Bahrain**

A Programmes-within-College review of the University of Bahrain (UoB) was conducted by the DHR of the BQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place on 5-9 November 2017 for the academic programmes offered by the College of Arts, these are: Bachelor in Sociology, Bachelor in History, Bachelor in Mass Communication, Bachelor in Tourism, Master in Mass Communication, Master in Psychological Counselling, and Master in Measurement and Evaluation.

This Report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Bachelor in Sociology based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and appendices submitted by UoB and 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/BQA on 6 March 2017 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College review of its College of Arts with site visit taking place in November 2017. 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 on 8 June 2017.

The DHR constituted three review panels consisting of experts in the academic fields of the programmes and in higher education who have experience in external programme quality reviews. The Panels were comprised of 12 reviewers.

This Report records the evidence-based conclusions reached by the Panel of the Bachelor in Sociology programme based on:

- (i) analysis of the Self-Evaluation Report and supporting materials submitted by the institution prior to the external peer-review visit
- (ii) analysis derived from discussions with various stakeholders (faculty members, students, graduates and employers)
- (iii) analysis based on additional documentation requested and presented to the Panel during the site visit.

It is expected that the UoB will use the findings presented in this Report to strengthen its Bachelor in Sociology 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 and administrative staff of the Bachelor in Sociology programme.

## **C. Overview of the College of Arts**

The College of Arts was originally established as a part of the University College of Arts, Science, and Education, which was founded by the Amiri Decree number 11 in 1978. In 1986, Amiri Decree No. (12) was issued to establish the UoB by a merger of the Gulf Polytechnic and the University College of Arts, Science and Education. The UoB included at that time: the College of Arts and Science, College of Education, College of Business Administration, and the College of Engineering. In 1990, the Board of Trustees of UoB issued a decision to divide the College of Arts & Science into two separate colleges: The College of Arts and the College of Sciences. Currently, the University of Bahrain includes 10 colleges and the College of Arts includes five departments, which are: Department of English Language and Literature, Department of Social Sciences, Department of Psychology, Department of Mass Communication, Tourism and Fine Arts, and the Department of Arabic Language Islamic Studies. The College offers Bachelor degree programmes across its five departments alongside

postgraduate programmes at the masters' level. The college's mission is focused on preparing intellectual and enlightened leaders, equipped with cognitive and critical competences that enhance their Arabic and Islamic identity, the climate of freedom, multiculturalism, and respect for citizenship, and assist in building knowledge, technology, culture and practical skills, as well as supporting scientific research and community services. At the time of the site visit, the College was employing (128) full-time faculty members, (69) part-time members, supported by (29) administrative staff. The total number of enrolled students was (5719) students.

#### **D. Overview of the Bachelor in Sociology Programme**

The Department of Social Sciences was established on May 10, 1999, based on the decision of the UoB Board of Trustees related to the reorganization of the College of Arts and on the basis of which the Department started offering the Bachelor in Sociology programme. The Department also delivers courses to students from other programmes through offering a minor in sociology. In the second semester of the academic year 2016-2017, the number of students enrolled in the Bachelor in Sociology programme was four students in the foundational semester, (569) students with sociology as a major, and (443) students with sociology as a minor specialization. The Bachelor in Sociology programme is offered by ten academic members, two of whom (one full professor and one associate professor) work only part-time. The remaining faculty members, who are full timers, include two associate professors, five assistant professors, and one lecturer, and are supported by three administrative staff.

#### **E. Summary of Review Judgements**

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

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
1: The Learning Programme	Satisfies
2: Efficiency of the Programme	Satisfies
3: Academic Standards of the Graduates	Does not satisfy
4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance	Satisfies
<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Limited Confidence</b>

## 1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

- 1.1 The Bachelor in Sociology programme has clear objectives related to the college mission and vision, which are clearly documented in the programme's specification. Through these objectives, the programme seeks to provide students with knowledge and skills related to their major, as well as critical thinking, and to help them acquire competencies in information technology and communication, in addition to developing their sense of responsibility and integrity and their awareness of the importance of life-long learning. The linking of the programme objectives with the university strategic goals and the mission of the Department of Social Sciences is clearly documented in the submitted SER and supporting documents. Furthermore, from interviews with academic and administrative staff, the Panel found that there is a general awareness of the programme objectives and of their role in achieving the university mission, the general aims of the College, and the department mission as well. As a result, the Panel appreciates that the programme objectives are clearly linked to the mission and vision of the College of Arts and the Department of Social Sciences, and that they contribute to achievement of the strategic goals of the University.
- 1.2 The curriculum of the Bachelor in Sociology programme consists of (128) credit hours, allocated as follows: (11 credit hours) university requirements; (18 credit hours) college requirements; (33 credit hours) sociology major requirements; (33 credit hours) major electives; (three credit hours) major supportive requirements; and (30 credit hours) minor requirements. The Panel found that the programme is divided into three areas of specialization or tracks, which are: Social Theory and its Applications; Social Development; Anthropology and Heritage. The Panel views the availability of the three tracks within the programme as a necessity for matching graduates' attributes with the existing labour market needs, as these tracks provide graduates with opportunities to work in a number of institutions, such as: higher education institutions and research centres; production and service institutions in the public and private sectors and in civil society; and international organizations. The Panel also notes, with appreciation, that the curriculum and its courses are organized to provide academic progression year-on-year and course-by-course; generally, balance between theory and practice; and include pre-requisites that are clearly identified and well-known by the students. Nevertheless, the Panel found overlap among the three tracks of the programme, as most courses offered are common among them. This issue had been noticed and pointed out by the College in its improvement plan of the programme. In addition, the allocation of credit hours between both the required major compulsory and elective courses does not reflect the weight of the elective



courses within the study plan, nor does it support the provision of sufficient course options for the student. Furthermore, the Panel noted the limited number of the offered elective courses, which makes them closer to being compulsory rather than elective, as was also confirmed by the interviewed students during the site visit. The programme team justified to the Panel during interviews that this condition was imposed due to a disparity between the number of faculty members available and the number of courses that ought to be offered every semester. Thus, the Panel advises that in the next periodic review of the programme, the College should review the allocation of credit hours in the study plan according to what is permitted by the regulations of the University. Hence, the Panel recommends that the college should increase the number of elective courses offered to students. In addition, the Panel noticed the unavailability of work-based learning courses, which can contribute to enhancing students' knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, the Panel noticed that the programme management and relevant stakeholders are aware of the importance of incorporating an internship course within the curriculum, as indicated in the improvement plan and the SER. This was supported during the Panel's interviews with the students, alumni, and employees, who all expressed their desire to incorporate an internship component within the curriculum as a compulsory course, to be studied over an entire semester at least. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should expedite applying the improvement plan of the programme and incorporating the internship course within the curriculum, to better prepare students for the field.

- 1.3 The course specifications are documented within a standard template generated by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre (QAAC), which includes for each course: the syllabus, objectives, outcomes, weekly outline of topics, the teaching methods, and the marking scheme and grade distribution of the different assessment tools utilized in the course. The Panel examined the provided course files during the site visit, from all the different study levels, and found that the syllabi of different courses are suitable for achieving the graduate attributes identified by the University, while reflecting the Courses' Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs), and generally enabling the achievement of the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs). During interviews, the Panel learned that the course specifications are periodically moderated by the quality assurance committee of the Department, to ensure their completion in terms of required information, such as the weekly topics, their mapping to the CILOs, as well as to the utilized teaching, learning, and assessment methods. However, upon examination of a number of course files, the Panel noticed, in some cases, missing information that still needs to be documented, such as details related to topics covered in the course as well as the weekly required readings. Thus, the Panel advises the College to exert more effort in the development of course specifications, to ensure its incorporation of all the necessary information.

- 1.4 There are intended learning outcomes for the programme, which are documented in its specification, and available on the university website. The Panel studied the PILOs and noticed their mapping to the intended learning outcomes at the university level (UILOs), and to the Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs), in addition to their alignment with the level of a Bachelor degree in Sociology. The Panel was also informed during interviews with faculty members during the site visit, and from the SER and supportive materials that in the attempt to make the intended learning outcomes more measurable, they have been converted into performance indicators, which are evaluated through the utilization of a variety of direct and indirect methods. The Panel also reviewed the minutes of meetings of the Programme Advisory Board (PAB) and found that the Board's feedback during the meetings had been taken into consideration during the development of the PILOs. The Panel appreciates that there are intended learning outcomes for the programme, which are appropriate for its type and level and are well-aligned with the graduate attributes identified by the University, and that stakeholders' feedback was considered during the development of these outcomes.
- 1.5 There is a group of intended learning outcomes for the courses of the Bachelor in Sociology programme, as documented in the courses' specifications. The SER states that these outcomes are subjected to reviews by the quality assurance committee in the Social Sciences Department, the Quality Assurance Office (QAO) at the College of Arts, and the QAAC at UoB. The latest review was implemented by the QAAC in the first semester of the academic year 2016-2017, in preparation for the BQA site visit, to ensure that these outcomes are appropriately aligned with the courses' contents and levels and effectively contribute to the PILOs. Recently, the levels of the Bachelor in Sociology courses have been identified through the mapping of these courses with the appropriate descriptors of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels. The Panel finds that the mapping between the PILOs and the courses is explicitly detailed and clear, as it reveals how the courses contribute to the achievement of the PILOs. Nevertheless, the Panel noticed that the ILOs of some courses can be improved by incorporating some skills that are more in line with "Bloom's Taxonomy", which was referred to in the SER as a reference. These skills include: higher-order thinking skills such as analysis and case studies' evaluations; constructive criticism of a case or a system; preparation of a system to solve a demographic issue; in addition to practical and applied skills that are related to social ethics and the application of social and ethical values, beside social and affectional skills, skills related to citizenship and civic education, and the acceptance of others. These skills have to also be reflected in the assessment tools. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should review the intended learning outcomes of some courses, to enhance their alignment with the intended learning outcomes of the programme.

- 1.6 The University adopts a student-centred philosophy with respect to its teaching and learning strategy, which ensures the achievement of PILOs and PEOs through a teaching and learning process that relies on a variety of methods. These methods include: traditional lectures that tend to be interactive; practical activities involving problem-solving; learning through group activities; presentations of projects; discussions and debates; and guest lecturers' sessions. When examining the course files, the Panel noticed that the teaching and learning mechanisms are aligned with the CILOs, as confirmed during interviews with faculty members and students. Moreover, during the site visit, the Panel was provided with presentations about e-learning opportunities available through the use of the electronic platform "Blackboard", which students are interested in and which is taken advantage of in some courses, to manage the teaching and learning resources related to course delivery, so that students can electronically access the course objectives, performance indicators, presentation slides, relevant resources and references, study materials, and other supporting materials. The Panel notes that the UoB gives special attention to the development of teaching methods, as it has established the e-learning centre to support and encourage faculty members toward more appropriate and more effective use of e-learning. Nonetheless, during the site visit, it became clear to the Panel that only (120) courses of the bachelor programmes delivered by the College of Arts were using the e-learning platform, among which was only a small number of courses from the Bachelor in Sociology programme. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should implement procedures that contribute to proper and effective utilization of e-learning.
- 1.7 There are clear policies at the university level covering the different aspects of the assessment process, and they are known by the students and the faculty members. The SER states that UoB has a general policy ensuring fairness and consistency when applying the assessments regulations. Furthermore, the assessment guidelines cover all the aspects related to the use of various assessment methods, their alignment with the learning outcomes, and the provision of feedback to students, in addition to grades distribution and moderation, as documented in the university's system of study and examinations. While examining a sample of assessment tools during the site visit, the Panel found that the Sociology programme uses various methods of formative and summative assessments, including in particular: classroom tests, practical activities, projects, quizzes and final examinations. The assessment system requires the establishment of an examinations' committee at the departmental level, to be responsible among other things for the moderation and consistency of the assessment process. Moreover, the University has a general policy for the provision of student feedback, through which the student is continuously provided throughout a course of study with detailed information about the assessment activities that he/she implemented in it, based on the assessment tools adopted by the Department for that particular course. According to this policy, a student is to be provided with feedback about an assessment activity within a maximum period of three weeks from the date

of its completion, while simultaneously taking into account that the student receives adequate feedback before the end of the permitted withdrawal period from the course. During interviews, the students confirmed that they receive adequate feedback about their assessed works, as well as direct feedback about their practical assignments during their practical lessons. The course instructor also reports students' grades of their assessed works before the beginning of the final examinations period. Moreover, there is a system in place for appealing assessment grades, through which the student's answers are reviewed by a committee consisting of two faculty members other than the original examination corrector/marker, as confirmed by the students during site visit interviews. Thus, the Panel appreciates that there are suitable policies and systems for assessing students' achievements, providing students with feedback, and ensuring fairness and transparency of their grades, and that these policies are well-known to the student. Furthermore, the UoB assessment policies confirm that internal committees, such as the quality assurance committee in the Department and the QAO of the College, conduct reviews of samples of performance tests and assessment files. This is in addition to the availability of policies related to moderation, the detection and addressing of academic plagiarism cases, and copyright issues. However, the Panel found from an examination of course files and during interviews, that these policies are not applied consistently in the programme; consequently, the Panel urges the College to apply all mechanisms related to assessment (see paragraphs 3.3, 3.5, 3.6).

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

- The programme objectives are clearly linked with the mission and vision of the College of Arts and the Department of Social Sciences, and contribute to achieving the university strategic goals.
- The curriculum and its courses are organized to provide academic progression year-on-year or course-by-course, generally balance between theory and practice, and include pre-requisites that are clearly identified and well-known by the students.
- The intended learning outcomes of the programme are suitable for the programme type and level, and are well-aligned with the graduate attributes identified by the University, in addition to being well-informed by stakeholders' feedback.
- There are suitable policies and systems for assessing students' achievements, providing students with feedback, and ensuring fairness and transparency of their grades, and they are well-known to the students.

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

- increase the number of elective courses offered to the students
- expedite applying the improvement plan of the programme and incorporating the internship course within the curriculum, to better prepare students for the field
- review the intended learning outcomes of some courses, to enhance their alignment with the intended learning outcomes of the programme
- implement procedures that contribute to proper and effective utilization of e-learning.

#### 1.10 **Judgement**

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

## 2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

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

- 2.1 The UoB has an admission policy published at the level of its programmes, requiring that the applicant must have a secondary school certificate or its equivalent, with a minimum passing score of (70%); must have obtained their school certificate within a maximum period of two years at the time of application; and must pass an interview conducted by the University, in addition to passing a general aptitude test. Applicants are also required to pass a personal interview conducted with them to assess their personality and capability to be admitted to the programme. Applicants who have scored (90%) or above in their secondary school certificate, or having (500) in TOEFL, or (5.5) in IELTS are exempted from the English foundation programme. While, students, who have scored between (80%-89%) in secondary school, sit for the foundation programme exemption test. Moreover, there are specific admission policies for students who transfer from other programmes, colleges, or universities, to ensure that they are able to attain the programme learning outcomes. The Panel realized that the admission policies are available in a clear manner for the students and are published on the university website, in addition to noticing that both faculty and students are well-aware of these policies. The Panel confirmed during interviews that student selection is carried out centrally by the Deanship of Admission and Registration, and on the basis of competitiveness among the applicants in terms of their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) in high school, the personal interview, and their aptitude test score. The Deanship of Admission and Registration periodically reviews the admission policy and makes improvements to it after seeking the approval of the University Council. The Panel appreciates that there is a clear admission policy that is published at the university level and is well-known to stakeholders. However, the Panel is concerned about the lack of a systematic mechanism at the department level to review the admission requirements in general or to assess their effectiveness; besides, these requirements are not subject to a benchmarking process. Thus, the Panel urges the College to address this matter (see paragraph 2.2).
- 2.2 The Deanship of Admission and Registration is responsible for examining the students' submitted documents, and then the data are electronically entered into an admission system, which is specifically prepared for this purpose, in order to possibly adjust through the process of student admission in accordance with the seat availability in the programme. The statistics presented to the Panel indicate a fluctuation in the number of students admitted to the programme in the three academic years (2013-2014), (2014-2015) and (2015-2016) (145, 119, and 170, respectively). Moreover, the majority of the students admitted had to register in the foundational programme (71%, 75%, and 59% respectively), while the percentage of

students who entered the programme directly was limited (5%, 3%, and 11%, respectively). In addition, the number of transfer students from other programmes was small but their percentages are significant (24%, 23%, and 29%, respectively). Furthermore, the majority of students in the programme are from the Kingdom of Bahrain (more than 90%), in addition to a small percentage coming from the Arab Gulf states, and some other Arab States. The Panel noticed from site visit interviews with a sample of students that they have the cognitive capabilities and knowledge skills necessary for comprehending the courses of the programme. In relation to this, the SER stated that the Department tracks students' progress through calculating on a yearly basis the percentage of students admitted, the at-risk students, and the graduates. Nevertheless, it was revealed to the Panel during interviews with faculty that the Department does not participate in the process of identifying the characteristics of students admitted into the Bachelor in Sociology programme. In addition, there is no study conducted to link students' performance with their level at entry into the programme, nor to know whether or not their level at admission is one of the reasons behind the high student withdrawal rate from, and students' lengthy study period in, the programme (this will be addressed in detail in paragraph: 3.9). Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should develop a suitable mechanism in collaboration with the University, through which the Department is involved in the process of identifying the attributes of students admitted into the programme.

- 2.3 The College of Arts and the Department of Social Sciences have an organizational structure that is presented in a hierarchy headed by the Dean of the College, the College Council and its committees, then the Head of the Department (HoD) and the Department Council, and finally the department committees that are formed at the beginning of each academic year to support the management of the programme. As for the responsibilities and memberships of each of these committees, they have been clearly identified and the recommendations of these committees are reported to the Department Council for discussion and necessary decision-making. The council decisions are then reported to the College Council, which in turn raises them to the University Council if needed. During interviews, it was revealed to the Panel that there are clear lines of accountability and that the faculty members are well-aware of these management processes. Moreover, the HoD is responsible for managing the programme; coordinating with the Dean in regards to departmental and college issues; representing the Department in the College Council; and handling different student issues. With respect to the academic aspect, the HoD coordinates with the assigned committees to ensure that the programme is delivered in a way that benefits students and helps them progress. In addition to the HoD and the committees, there is also a head for the sociology section, who is appointed by a decision from the HoD, and is assigned to take part in the coordination of the Bachelor in Sociology programme. Furthermore, there are coordinators of multi-section courses who cooperate with their colleagues on the preparation of course content, the setting of examinations, and the

distribution of the midterm and final grades. The Panel appreciates that the programme has clear and effective lines of management, represented through its administrative and academic leadership, academic committees, and councils.

- 2.4 The Bachelor in Sociology programme is delivered by (10) academic members including: one professor (part-time), three associate professors (one part-time and two full-time), five assistant professors, and one lecturer. Accordingly, there are two academic members working part-time and the remaining eight members working full-time. The Panel noticed from the provided evidence that the faculty members have wide experience, and some of them are active in the areas of professional development, research and publishing, consulting and community service. The general information table included in the SER for the programme indicates that the ratio of students to the faculty members is (63:1) when excluding the part-time faculty members and (40:1) when including them, which indicates that the number of faculty members is insufficient to teach the courses offered by the programme. This was confirmed to the Panel during interviews, as the Panel learned that some faculty members take extra teaching loads that amount to (50%) or even (75%) of their regular academic workload. Although, the academic members are financially compensated for this overload, this extra workload reduces the time available for them to get involved in other activities, such as scientific research, which is a necessary requirement for staying up-to-date with their discipline or area of specialization and for their professional progress and promotion. Moreover, the insufficient number of professors and associate professors in the programme means that the leadership roles that the assistant professors take on require more of their time at the expense of other activities that lead to promotion and professional progress. This also implies that there is a lack of sufficient advisors and mentors for newly-employed faculty members. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should develop a clear plan to increase the number of the faculty members of higher academic ranks to take on leadership duties and guidance roles in the programme.
- 2.5 The University has procedures for recruitment, performance evaluation, and academic promotion for faculty members, which are explicit and published on its website, and in its guidebook. Moreover, the recruitment of new faculty members is subject to both the university regulations concerning faculty recruitment and to the policies and laws of the Civil Service Bureau in the Kingdom of Bahrain. During interviews with faculty, it was confirmed that the recruitment procedures are implemented in a clear and transparent manner, through specialized committees in the Department and the College. As for faculty appraisals, student evaluations of courses and their instructors are conducted at the end of each semester, in addition to the comprehensive appraisal carried out by the HoD when renewing employment contracts of non-Bahraini faculty members, or when faculty members apply for promotion. Furthermore, the University Council had approved in 2009 an annual faculty appraisal form, which was put into



effect in the academic year 2015-2016. Documents provided as evidence indicate a high retention rate of faculty members in the programme. In light of all this, the Panel appreciates the clear and transparent procedures for the recruitment and evaluation of academic staff, as well as the available evidence on high rates of retention in the programme. However, the Panel urges the College to continue supporting faculty participation in international scientific conferences, which help in enhancing their academic and professional capabilities, and increasing their chances for academic promotion. As for induction of new faculty and staff, the Panel was informed during interview sessions, that the College of Arts informally introduces newly recruited members to the available resources of the College, the nature of their rights and obligations, and the important information and regulations documented in the 'Faculty Handbook 2016'. Nevertheless, the Panel recommends that the College should organize a formal induction programme for new academics at the department, college, and university levels, to introduce them to the University policies, regulations, resources, and various services. The College should also evaluate the effectiveness of this formal induction programme. With regards to academic promotion, the University has a clear policy stipulating that the applicant must complete the legally approved employment period and demonstrate competency in teaching, university activities, scientific research, and university and community services. Despite this clear policy, however, interviews with faculty members indicated that the implementation of the promotion procedures in terms of timeframe is not consistent with what is stated in the formal policy; since, as the Panel was informed during interviews, the replies from the different promotion committees are usually delayed without any clear reasons. This is in addition to the fact that the promotion requirements with respect to scientific publishing in peer-reviewed journals include the condition of not acknowledging Arabic research articles published in Arabic journals, which are not indexed within SCOPUS- the index officially adopted by the University. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should implement a clear plan for supporting faculty members in applying for promotion.

- 2.6 The University of Bahrain has a number of systems for information or data management that help in making decisions in relation to the Bachelor in Sociology programme, including systems for online registration, academic advising, and human resources. During the site visit, the Panel found that the University provides - *via* its website- the administrative and academic staff with online access to information related to their salary slips, attendance reports, overtime hours, and other data that may be needed by the administrative and academic staff members. Students also can register their courses and pay their tuition fees through this system. Moreover, access to the records of enrolled students in the programme, their timetables, and the names of their academic advisors at the beginning of each semester is also available. Interviews with faculty confirmed to the Panel the ability of recording students' attendance through the system and monitoring grades online, with the HoD

electronically monitoring faculty timetables and students' evaluation reports of faculty members. Despite the availability of a Management Information System (MIS) and its alignment with the programme aims and needs, as well as its limited utilization in the management of the programme, students, and various resources, the Panel found no evidence of using this system in a comprehensively strategic way that enhances the decision-making process. Thus, the Panel appreciates that there is an adequate MIS that is suitable for the programme aims and needs. The Panel also advises the College to further develop the MIS and utilize it to enrich decision-making at the strategic level.

- 2.7 The SER states that the University of Bahrain has clear policies and procedures to ensure the security of students' records and the accuracy of results, which can be recovered through central data storage. The Information Technology Centre (ITC) of the University implements strict procedures to ensure the confidentiality of students' data and teachers' records through a multi-stage system, which restricts access to data that requires a login ID, and necessitates a change of user password every (120 days). With respect to the process of entering grades, it is assigned only to the course instructor, approved by the HoD, and changed formally -upon request -after the approval of the HoD and the Dean. During the site visit tour, the Panel found that data on student tests, projects, attendance and absence, as well as answer papers of the final examinations are stored by the programme managers; while, the Deanship of Registration stores students' records and data through two means: first, through paper records and second, through entering data online and updating them constantly to ensure their accuracy. In addition to that, there is a risk-management plan in place with an IT disaster recovery plan, which is implemented by the IT centre in cases of disaster or emergency. Moreover, there are servers for data backups that are kept safe both inside and outside the campus. The Panel appreciates that there is a rigorous system for risk management and for maintaining the security of records, and the accuracy and integrity of student and staff-related data, as well as the accuracy of the programme results.
- 2.8 During the site visit, the Panel toured the university facilities including classrooms, the library, and the e-learning centre, and had the chance to view the university resources available to support the learning process. The College of Arts building includes (30) classrooms, which accommodate about (40) students each, are equipped with projectors, and are suitable for the Bachelor in Sociology programme. Furthermore, there is (Wi-Fi) service across the building, available for the students, faculty, and administrative staff; there are also university e-mail accounts and access provided to each student and employee, to facilitate communication among several parties whether inside or outside the University. Moreover, the college building contains two technology laboratories equipped with computers. The Panel was also informed during the tour that computers in the open-area of the College of

Information Technology are available daily for all students of the University of Bahrain from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm. In addition, there are good facilities in the library available for students of the Bachelor in Sociology programme, with access to electronic resources available whether inside or outside the campus. Submitted evidence indicates that the university library includes (308,000) hard copy books, (150,000) e-books, and (27,000) electronic journals, and a variety of databases. The students interviewed by the Panel expressed their satisfaction towards the available facilities, and the teaching and learning resources provided to them. In general, the Panel recognizes -with appreciation- that the College of Arts facilities and the library building provide an appropriate educational environment that meets the needs of both the students and faculty members in the programme.

- 2.9 UoB has a system for tracking the use of different resources. In relation to this, the Panel noticed during the site visit that the timetables for the use of classrooms and laboratories are posted on these facilities' doors. Furthermore, the IT centre of the University, which provides technical support for the laboratories and the staff, receives technical support requests that get tracked by the e-help desk system. Furthermore, as observed by the Panel, there are daily schedules and tracking reports explaining computer usage in the institution, in addition to recording errors, the cases of use, or some problems resulting from students' computer activities, which provide a mechanism for technology-related maintenance and troubleshooting. Moreover, Zain E-learning Centre in the University provides a platform for e-learning courses, where the system collects data about the use of its e-learning resources and generates several reports on the scope and forms of their usage, from which the Panel noticed a limited use of the e-learning system by the faculty members of the Bachelor in Sociology programme, as was indicated in paragraph 1.6. Similarly, the library carries out the necessary tracking for its electronic resources and keeps records of its operations and the use of electronic resources and other resources within it. The Panel learned during interview sessions that the College evaluates the effectiveness and the quality of the library services, the electronic services, and other services provided by the student affairs office, through a set of questionnaires distributed and filled by the students. The Panel also learned from library officials and the e-learning centre staff that there are available records for tracking provided upon request. The Panel acknowledges that there are tracking systems to evaluate the utilization of different resources; however, no evidence was provided on their use by the programme managers to inform regular and periodic decision-making. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should further utilize the tracking reports and the updated data of the tracking systems to enhance making decisions that contribute to enhancing the educational process.
- 2.10 During the site visit and from the provided evidence, the Panel was informed that there is appropriate support for the students, including support in the laboratories and

the library, as well as support for e-learning, through infrastructure or available computer applications, and human resources, such as the support provided by laboratory technicians or specialists in the library. In addition, there are technicians available for the computer laboratories to provide continuous maintenance services of computers for students' and faculty use. As for Zain E-learning Centre, it provides training sessions on the optimal use of the "Blackboard Learning Management System" for both faculty and students. The University also provides an online technical support feature, to enable users to directly report any problem in hardware or software. With respect to academic advising, there is a system to help students choose their appropriate courses, in addition to several supports provided for students with special needs such as helping them in course registration, providing them with specially equipped car for their transportation needs, and supportive services by volunteer students. This is in addition to providing them with a special handbook and special services in the library, such as a room especially equipped for students with visual impairments. Moreover, the Career Guidance Office under the Vice President Office of Community and Graduate Services prepares students for facing labour market challenges, by providing them with several services such as 'Career Day', CV submissions, candidates' services, and employment services. Moreover, the Department of Counselling and Guidance of the Deanship of Student Affairs provides advice to students through the work of specialized social workers. The University also provides students with comprehensive health support through its healthcare unit and its Security and Safety Department, which works on ensuring students' safety and security. Interviews with students confirmed to the Panel their satisfaction with the different support services provided to them by the University. Nevertheless, the Panel noticed upon examination of samples of expected graduates' satisfaction surveys, a lack of evidence on the use of these surveys in improving different services provided to students. As a result, the Panel appreciates the various support services provided by the University to the students. However, the Panel suggests expanding the scope of evaluating students' satisfaction toward the support services provided to them, by regularly and periodically involving students of all undergraduate years in the evaluation process, and to also make use of the evaluation results in improving the available support in the programme.

- 2.11 According to the SER, the Department of Counselling and Guidance of the Deanship of Student Affairs, in coordination with the colleges of the University, organize an induction day at the beginning of each academic year, in which newly admitted students are oriented and introduced to the college facilities, university services, different academic programmes on offer, as well as to the policies and regulations of the University and to some other services offered by the Deanship of Student Affairs. Moreover, several guidebooks are distributed to the students, including the Student Handbook, the students' rights and duties guide, and the regulations of academic misconduct. At the college level, they are introduced to the different departments and

the offered programmes in the College of Arts, in addition to receiving an explanation on the system of study in the Bachelor in Sociology programme. Nevertheless, during interviews with the faculty, the Panel found that there are no arrangements for students who are transferred into the programme. Furthermore, the Panel noticed through data in the SER that the rate of attendance on the induction day was relatively low, as the average attendance all over the University was only (40.8%) of the total number of students admitted in the academic year 2013-2014; while, the attendance rate of the College of Arts students in specific was about (42.3%), which is only slightly higher than that of the University. In addition, the Panel was not provided with a definitive answer on how students who miss the induction are accommodated and provided with the necessary information. During interviews, the Panel learned that the Deanship of Student Affairs is keen on evaluating the induction day, by distributing surveys to the students and their parents who attended the events of this day. The interviewed students expressed their satisfaction with the induction day, due to its role in preparing them for their studies. The Panel appreciates that there are sufficient and organized arrangements in place for preparing newly admitted students of the Bachelor in Sociology programme; however, the Panel advises the College to adopt alternative mechanisms to provide information for students absent from the induction programme.

- 2.12 The SER and the supportive evidence indicate that the University has an academic advising system, which involves well-documented data available on the university website, and through which students are distributed among their academic advisors from the beginning of each academic year, and every instructor's office hours with students are identified and posted with the instructor's timetable on their office door. The advising system monitors the problems of students at risk of academic failure, who have a CGPA less than (2.0). The faculty members explained during interview sessions that any at-risk student is blocked from online registration in new courses until they seek advice from their academic advisor on how to overcome the reasons behind their academic failure. Nonetheless, the Panel is concerned about the effectiveness of the academic advising process due to each academic advisor being assigned an average of more than (85) students. This was confirmed to the Panel during interviews with students, who reported very few visits to their academic advisors' offices and limited communication with them, due to the limited office hours available for academic advising in addition to the heavy teaching load of their academic advisors. Moreover, and according to interview sessions, the Student Training and Development Section offers in every semester a peer-teaching programme, through which the at-risk students who need the help of their advanced academic peers are provided with peer-teaching sessions. Accordingly, the Panel acknowledges that a system of academic guidance for students is in place, as well as policies that identify students at risk of academic failure; however, the Panel recommends that the College should implement a clear plan for providing adequate

academic support for students at risk of academic failure, in order to help them succeed, and should periodically measure the effectiveness of this plan.

2.13 As stated in the SER, supporting materials, and other available evidence, the students of the programme have several opportunities to expand their knowledge and experience through support activities, including participation in the Bahrain Summer programme, student activities and exhibitions, in collaboration with the college's associations and clubs. This is in addition to field trips and visits of other institutions both inside and outside the Kingdom of Bahrain and three credit-hours dedicated for extra-curricular activities within the programme's study plan. Moreover, informal learning takes place through a series of workshops, seminars, and conferences organized by the College of Arts Students' Association, which contribute to expanding students' organizational knowledge and communication skills. In addition, there is support for students to attend conferences and local and regional competitions. Furthermore, the Career Guidance Office of the University organizes an annual day called 'Career Day' which serves as a link between the students and the local community organizations, such as companies and operating organizations. This provides students with a good opportunity to discover and learn about the actual needs of the labour market. During interviews, the students expressed satisfaction with the opportunities provided by the University to expand the scope of their learning. Consequently, the Panel appreciates that there is a learning environment in the College contributing to expanding the knowledge and experience of students, which supports informal learning activities.

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

- There is a clear admission policy that is published at the university level and is well-known to stakeholders.
- The programme has clear and effective lines of management, represented through its administrative and academic leadership, academic committees and councils.
- There are clear transparent procedures for the recruitment and evaluation of academic staff, as well as the available evidence on high rates of retention in the programme.
- There is an adequate Management Information System that is suitable for the programme aims and needs.
- There is a rigorous system for risk management and for maintaining the security of records, and the accuracy and integrity of student and staff-related data, as well as the accuracy of the programme results.

- The College of Arts facilities and building provide an appropriate educational environment that meets the needs of both the students and faculty members in the programme.
- There are various support services provided by the University to students.
- There are sufficient and organized arrangements in place for inducting newly admitted students of the Bachelor in Sociology programme.
- There is a learning environment in the College that contributes to expanding the knowledge and experience of students, which supports informal learning activities.

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

- develop an appropriate mechanism in collaboration with the University, through which the Department is involved in identifying the attributes of students admitted into the programme
- develop a clear plan to increase the number of faculty members of higher academic ranks to take on leadership duties and guidance roles in the programme
- organize a formal induction programme for new academics at the department, college, and university levels, to introduce them to the university policies, regulations, resources, and various services, and evaluate the effectiveness of this programme
- implement a clear plan for supporting faculty members in applying for academic promotion
- further utilize the tracking reports and the updated data of the tracking systems to enhance making decisions that contribute to enhancing the educational process
- implement a clear plan for providing adequate academic support and assistance for students at risk of academic failure, in order to help them succeed, and periodically measure the effectiveness of this plan.

## 2.16 **Judgement**

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

### 3. Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

- 3.1 Graduate attributes are clearly stated in terms of programme ILOs and educational objectives, which are mapped to the UILOs. In addition, the PILOs are mapped with the CILOs and there are performance indicators identified for each PILO, where each indicator is measured by a group of assessment tools either directly or indirectly. Information about the mapping of the CILOs to the PILOs is included in the course files and specifically in the assessment forms, in which the assessment tools are mapped to the CILOs, which in turn are mapped to the PILOs. This is to ensure the achievement of the expected graduate attributes. Hence, the Panel appreciates that the graduate attributes are clearly defined through the educational objectives and intended learning outcomes of the programme, and that there are mechanisms for measuring their achievement through the assessment processes. However, after reviewing some of the course files and listening to alumni and employers feedback during interview sessions, the Panel did not find any evidence indicating the achievement of the outcomes related to the acquisition of practical skills in the social field. The Panel is also concerned that the applied mechanisms are not implemented consistently in a way that ensures the effectiveness of measuring the achievement of the ILOs and the graduate attributes, as will be detailed in the subsequent paragraphs of this indicator.
- 3.2 The University has a clear and comprehensive policy for benchmarking academic programmes, which was adopted in April 2015. The SER refers to the efforts exerted by the College in externally benchmarking the Bachelor in Sociology programme, through which its study plan was benchmarked against two equivalent sociology programmes offered in two regional institutions for higher education, in addition to being benchmarked against some American universities. The Panel notes that the benchmarking exercises conducted up till the time of the site visit were limited and non-comprehensive, as they focused only on the course titles in the programme's study plan and on the assessment approach used in written examinations without going into any detail. Moreover, the benchmarking was conducted informally and did not involve many academic standards in relation to courses, syllabi, and levels of students' achievements. With respect to the universities benchmarked against, the Panel found during interviews with faculty members, that these were selected according to their ranks internationally; while, as for the benchmarking data, it was extracted from the information available on the universities' websites. In addition, the University did not provide any evidence indicating how it benefited from the benchmarking results in developing the Bachelor in Sociology programme. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should place into effect the university's



benchmarking policy and conduct a formal and comprehensive benchmarking exercise of all aspects of the programme against other similar programmes, and make use of its results in developing the programme.

- 3.3 The College relies on the institution's rules and regulations with respect to the policies and procedures related to assessment, which are a part of the UoB's system for study and examination. This is in addition to relying on the instructions included in the IDEAS guidebook in relation to outcomes-based assessment, which is prepared by the QAAC at the University. The Panel was informed during interviews with faculty and students that course syllabi are distributed to students during the first lecture of every course and they include the course's assessment criteria, grades' distribution, and schedule of assessments, along with the policy and regulations relevant to academic plagiarism. Nevertheless, the Panel noticed that policies and penalties of academic plagiarism are not effectively applied at the university level; since, as the faculty members explained to the Panel, they rely only on their own academic and teaching skills to combat plagiarism. They also confirmed that the plagiarism penalty can take the form of making a student repeat the plagiarised assignment or, in some cases, it can even reach the point of failing the student in the course. Despite this explanation, the Panel did not find a clear and mutual understanding among the faculty members and students with respect to the types and mechanisms of penalizing cases of plagiarism. Nevertheless, the Panel notes that the students are well-aware of the assessment procedures, and are kept well-informed about their grades, so that they can follow their academic progress across the semester. Similarly, interviews and supporting evidence indicate that the faculty members are also well-aware of the assessment processes in place within the Bachelor in Sociology programme. However, during interviews, and through an examination of a sample of course files, the Panel realized that some of the procedures related to quality assurance were only recently implemented. For example, the Panel noted a lack of effective implementation of internal and external moderation of the assessment tools. This is in addition to the utilization of inaccurate mechanisms in the measurement of ILOs' achievement, as will be detailed in the subsequent paragraphs. As a result, the Panel recommends that the College should develop a robust mechanism for ensuring the implementation of all university policies and procedures related to the evaluation of students' achievements, such as: student feedback policy, academic plagiarism policy, and moderation policy at the programme level, in order to ensure that students meet the academic standards of the programme.
- 3.4 The SER indicates that the programme adopts certain mechanisms to ensure alignment between the assessment tools and the ILOs. Among these mechanisms, the instructor updates the course syllabus at the beginning of every semester and maps in it the assessment tools to the CILOs. This is in addition to measuring the attainment of each ILO by using the 'Course Assessment Form', which is developed by the QAAC of the

University. An examination of a sample of course files confirmed to the Panel that this form is being used to align the assessment outcomes with both PILOs and CILOs, and also to measure the achievement of these outcomes; since, at the end of each semester, the achievement of each outcome is measured against the percentage of students who achieved (70%) on each learning outcome. Additionally, the Panel noticed that the assessment plans are designed in a way that ensures the compatibility of assessment with learning outcomes. Furthermore, a distinctive set of criteria to assess performance indicators had been developed, through which performance is assessed at four levels: 'standard', 'satisfactory', 'in progress' and 'unsatisfactory'. Nonetheless, no precise and clear criteria specifications or rubrics that ensure the quality and consistency of assessment among different courses were set. This was evident from the discrepancies in assessment criteria explanations spotted in different course files. In addition, there was a lack of appropriate assessment methods utilized that are crucial for measuring the achievement of certain programme learning outcomes, especially outcomes that are related to higher-order thinking and analysis (see paragraph: 3.7), which was not detected through the implemented monitoring mechanisms. In light of this, the Panel appreciates that there are appropriate mechanisms to ensure the alignment between the assessment process and the learning outcomes. However, the Panel urges the College to implement internal and external moderation of assessment tools, which is considered one of the means to ensure that the CILOs are being covered according to the specifications of each course (see paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6), and to develop specific rubrics for performance assessment that help in accurately evaluating the achievement of CILOs and PILOs.

- 3.5 The University has a system of moderation for examinations and students' assessments, which includes moderation requirements, the internal pre-moderation of examinations, and internal post-moderation of course grades. This system requires that the questions of the final examination be subject to moderation, so as to ensure the coverage of all CILOs in accordance to the specifications of each course. The SER states that the Department follows this policy and has implemented mechanisms for reviewing grades' distributions of courses at the end of every semester. In addition, there is a post-moderation process of the examination questions, implemented by the QAAC in cooperation with the QAO in the College, where every course file is reviewed at the end of each semester, to evaluate the level of questions and examinations, their alignment with the learning outcomes, and their documentation in the assessment form. However, this moderation is implemented after the end of the examinations' period and after the issuance of results, which means that the moderation results are taken into consideration only if the course is re-offered in the future; this is in addition to the fact that it is not required that those in charge of conducting the post-moderation necessarily be from the same area of specialization as the courses they are moderating. The Panel was informed during interviews with faculty that in the case of a single-section course, the course instructor submits the

course questions that he sets to another instructor in the academic department to verify them informally; while, for the multi-section courses, the midterm and final examinations are set by the course coordinator in cooperation with other instructors who teach other sections of the course. In addition, correcting the examination papers and issuing grades are done in a collective manner by all instructors teaching the multi-section course. The Panel acknowledges that there is reasonable internal moderation of examinations in multi-section courses but finds that the implemented procedures to be inconsistent with the moderation policy of the University. Moreover, there is not a comprehensive system to monitor the implementation of internal moderation of assessments and to ensure its effectiveness; since, the exercised moderation in the programme lacks formally documented implementation, which hinders the programme managers to measure the performance level in relation to the quality and rigorousness of the applied assessment mechanisms and their appropriateness for the courses' levels, content, and intended learning outcomes. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should further pursue the development of its internal moderation mechanisms, to include both pre and post moderation of all basic assessment tools, and implement these mechanisms in a formal and consistent manner, so as to ensure the accuracy of assessment and programme improvement.

- 3.6 The UoB has a moderation policy of examinations and students' assessments, which was approved by the University Council in 2015, and includes internal and external moderation requirements, as well as pre and post moderation mechanisms for examinations. However, the SER states that the programme has not yet implemented any external moderation of assessment tools, since it currently depends in this respect on the QAAC of the University. During the site visit, the programme managers referred to the university's tendency to adopt the external accreditation policy as an external indicator of the rigor and fairness of assessment. Nevertheless, up until the time of the site visit, the programme was not subjected to such reviews, and, in any case, these reviews are periodical and do not provide external pre or post moderation of assessment tools in a continuous and detailed manner. It was also evident to the Panel that external benchmarking of students' achievements and graduates' standards are not yet implemented (see paragraph: 3.2). Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should implement appropriate formal mechanisms of external moderation that are consistent with the university policies, to benefit from the external moderation reports and feedback in programme improvement and course development.
- 3.7 The Panel examined several samples of students' assessed works, including the midterm and final examinations, assignments, quizzes, research reports and academic articles, which were provided to the Panel during the site visit. The Panel noted that there is a wide range of used assessment types and strategies, including multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, essay questions, field trip reports, and short

research papers. In addition, there is evidence of students' oral presentations, through which their communication skills are assessed. Although there is evidence from the course files that some students' works are generally of a suitable level, the Panel nevertheless found that some of the examination questions measured low levels of knowledge that are incomparable with the academic standards of assessment tools in similar programmes regionally and internationally. The Panel finds that this is due to the lack of a clear approach applied in the programme to moderate the assessment tools, and the students' assessed works (see paragraphs: 3.5 and 3.6), in addition to the lack of specific criteria or rubrics for identifying levels of assessed performance (see paragraph: 3.4), to ensure comparability of approaches used in the programme with similar approaches used at the local, regional and international levels. Hence, the Panel urges the College to initiate the establishment of a holistic system for the moderation of assessment tools and students' works, to ensure that the level of students' achievement is adequate to the programme level and type (see paragraphs: 3.3-3.6).

- 3.8 The SER indicates that to confirm that the level of the programme achievements meets its educational aims, direct mapping of its assessments to the CILOs, and then mapping of the CILOs to the PILOs are conducted. Alternatively, this is done indirectly through conducting alumni, employers, and graduate exit surveys. The SER indicates that the feedback from the alumni survey shows a high level of satisfaction toward the achievement of the PILOs (1-3), which are related to knowledge and transferable skills; while, the alumni's level of satisfaction toward the two PILOs (4) and (5), which are related to fieldwork and work ethics, is lower (37%). The Panel noticed that there are action plans put in place to identify aspects of improvement and address issues resulting from such feedback analyses. In addition, the Panel's interviews with alumni and employers indicated that the latter have a reasonable degree of satisfaction toward the level of the programme's graduates. Moreover, the Panel reviewed samples of course files and noticed that grades' distributions among various assessment tools do not differ from what is applicable in similar bachelor programmes; nevertheless, some utilized assessment tools are not suitable for measuring the achievement of some programme outcomes, mainly those that aim at: deepening the practical and applied skills of the graduates, preparing them to understand Sociology on a scientific basis, and providing them with business ethics and field research in the discipline. Thus, although the Panel appreciates that there are direct and indirect mechanisms that contribute to ensuring the alignment of the graduates' achievements with the programme aims and outcomes; the Panel nevertheless urges the College to ensure the effective implementation of the moderation policy for examinations and the university evaluation of students at the programme level (see paragraphs: 3.5 and 3.6).

- 3.9 The SER provides data related to students' CGPAs at admission, transfer, and withdrawal from the programme for the academic years 2011-2012 to 2015-2016. The Panel notes however inconsistencies in the provided statistics and is of the view that such statistics fail to provide a clear analysis of the performance of student cohorts in terms of retention, withdrawal rates, and progression across academic years. Nevertheless, the provided statistics indicate that the rate of student withdrawals from the programme is relatively high, as it reached a minimum of (7) students in the year 2011 and then increased to (21) and (46) students in the years 2012 and 2013 respectively. Following this, the rate of withdrawals started to decline gradually until it reached (23) and (18) students in the years 2014 and 2015, respectively. The Panel is of the view that these numbers are high, especially if we take into account the numbers of students admitted into the programme from 2013-2014 to 2015-2016, which were (145, 119, 170) respectively, and the ratios of students who transferred into the programme entering in their second or third year, which were: (23%, 23% and 29%) respectively. In addition to this, the Panel finds as a source of concern the lengthy study time period of some students, which in some cases exceeds seven years. Moreover, the Panel notes that the SER report does not tackle in detail the issue of identifying the first destination of students after their graduation. However, data collected through the 2015-2016 exit survey of graduating students indicates limited job offers for sociology majors, and interviews with alumni and employers confirm that most of the programme graduates get recruited in government jobs. Furthermore, the Panel notes a general lack of data analysis in relation to student cohorts and this was confirmed during interviews with the programme team; as, the Panel was not provided with any evidence indicating that the College implements data analysis of student cohorts' performance, or of benchmarking their results with other similar programmes or even with other programmes offered by the College of Arts or by the University itself. Accordingly, the Panel recommends that the College should implement a comprehensive study and a systematic analysis of the programme's student cohorts, to track their year by year progression, rates of admission, transfer, withdrawal, study length, and their first destination upon graduation, and utilize the analysis results in the development of the programme.
- 3.10 The programme of Bachelor in Sociology includes a compulsory capstone course (SOCIO435), with a prerequisite condition of passing (90) credit hours of the programme requirements. In this course, students are trained on research methods and on how to prepare for the completion of a research project. In addition, they are offered six class hours as foundational lectures in research at the beginning of the semester. For this course, there are clear policies and procedures defining the responsibilities of both the academic supervisors and the students, by which every student enrolled in the course has to choose a topic for their research from one of the three specialized tracks: social theory and applications; social development; and anthropology and heritage. Moreover, a supervisor should be assigned for each

student to monitor his/her performance during the period of writing and conducting the research. The research project is evaluated by the supervisor and by at least one internal examiner from the Department, where the supervisor's evaluation counts for (60%) of the final project grade while the examiner's counts for the remaining (40%). In addition to the project, the student is required to give a visual presentation at the beginning and at the end of the semester, to discuss the challenges and difficulties of research preparation. During site visit interviews, the Panel found that both the students and the supervisors are well-aware of the guidelines of this course, and understand well their responsibilities; the faculty members also mentioned that some results from the students' research studies were incorporated into research publications. Generally, the interviewed students expressed to the Panel their satisfaction toward the level of communication with their supervisors, and the provided support. The Panel appreciates that there are appropriate procedures and arrangements in place to support the capstone course in the achievement of programme aims. In this context, it is noteworthy to mention that the University Council approved on June 13, 2013 the anti-academic plagiarism system, whose provisions apply to all members of the University including staff, faculty, and students. Despite this, however, the implementation of this system or policy is still below expectations (see paragraph 3.3). The Panel studied a sample of student projects and found that it demonstrates suitable research topics and appropriate levels of achievement. However, the Panel is concerned that there is no policy to define ethical principles associated with research work; although, there is a basic PILO related to this (the student should be characterized by ethical principles of research in the field of social work). This is a matter of concern for the Panel especially since research in Sociology is related to the collection of personal and social data, which requires a professional framework to organize the use of such data and sets rules and regulations for its collection and analysis. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should develop a policy in relation to ethical principles for research work, and develop the necessary procedures and mechanisms to ensure and monitor its implementation and measure its effectiveness.

- 3.11 The UoB has an explicit policy for the establishment of the PAB, consisting of a number of external members providing support for the programme. The terms of reference of the PAB are clearly stated in the quality assurance handbook, which include a clear listing of the advisory members' role in providing feedback about professional and labour market needs relevant to the programme. Additionally, the programme has two other advisory committees: the first includes student representatives and the second includes alumni representatives. The HoD is responsible for appointing the members of the advisory entities, in addition to his responsibility as a chairman and a secretary of the PAB, which includes employers. This constitutes a matter of concern for the Panel due to the lack of independence of this Board. The Panel also notes that these advisory entities are only recently established (e.g. the student committee was

established in 2015, and the PAB in 2017), tend to meet irregularly, and lack regular records of meetings, as was confirmed by the programme team. Moreover, the Panel did not find clear evidence on involving the PAB in evaluating the programme outcomes against the labour market, and in assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum according to areas of specialization. In result, the Panel recommends that the College should enhance the independence of the programme advisory entities and to activate the programme advisory board in a way that expands its functions and ensures its schedule of periodical meetings, as stated in the university policy.

- 3.12 The SER indicates that the College uses surveys to collect feedback from the graduates and the employers. With respect to the graduate survey, (19) forms were collected from students who had graduated from the programme more than two years ago, and in the case of the employers, a total of six forms were collected. The Panel considers this number to be insufficient to ensure the validity of results, especially since the programme graduated (67) students during the academic years 2013-2014 to 2015-2016. The results of these surveys indicate a high level of satisfaction rate (90%) with respect to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes (1-3) of the programme, which are related to knowledge and transferable skills. Whereas, the satisfaction rate with respect to the two outcomes (4) and (5), which are related to field work and work ethics was found to be much lower (37%). This was confirmed by the programme's graduates and the employers' representative, who were interviewed by the Panel during the site visit, and who expressed their general satisfaction with the graduates' quality, but also referred to the need to enhance graduates' field skills through the introduction of a work-based learning component. In light of all this, the Panel urges the College to measure the satisfaction level of alumni and employers periodically and on a wider scale within the labour market, in order to utilize its results in improving the programme (see recommendation in paragraph: 4.8).
- 3.13 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Academic Standards of the Graduates, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- The graduate attributes are clearly defined through the educational aims and the intended learning outcomes of the programme, and there are mechanisms for measuring their achievement through the assessment processes.
  - There are appropriate mechanisms to ensure the alignment between the assessment process and the learning outcomes.
  - There are direct and indirect mechanisms that contribute to ensuring the alignment of the graduates' achievements with the programme aims and outcomes.
  - There are appropriate procedures and arrangements in place to support the capstone course in the achievement of programme aims.

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

- place into effect the university's benchmarking policy and conduct a formal and comprehensive benchmarking exercise of all aspects of the programme against other similar programmes, and make use of its results in developing the programme
- develop a robust mechanism for ensuring the implementation of all university policies and procedures related to the evaluation of students' achievements, such as: student feedback policy, academic plagiarism policy, and moderation policy at the programme level, to ensure that students meet the academic standards of the programme
- further pursue the development of its internal moderation mechanisms, to include both pre and post moderation of all basic assessment tools, and implement these mechanisms in a formal and consistent manner, so as to ensure the accuracy of assessment and programme improvement
- implement appropriate formal mechanisms of external moderation that are consistent with the university policies, to benefit from the external moderation reports and feedback in programme improvement and course development.
- implement a comprehensive study and a systematic analysis of the programme's student cohorts, to track their year by year progression, rates of admission, transfer, withdrawal, study length, and their first destination upon graduation, and utilize the analysis results in the development of the programme
- develop a policy in relation to ethical principles for research work and the necessary procedures and mechanisms to ensure and monitor its implementation and measure its effectiveness.
- enhance the independence of the programme advisory entities and to activate the programme advisory board in a way that expands its functions and ensures its schedule of periodical meetings, as stated in the university policy.

### 3.15 **Judgement**

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **Does not satisfy** the Indicator on **Academic Standards of the Graduates**.



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

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

- 4.1 The UoB has institutional policies and regulations that are adopted by the College of Arts and the Department of Social Sciences, to manage the Bachelor in Sociology programme; which include the System of Study and Examinations, Admission Policy, Academic Plagiarism Policy, Policy of Offering New Programmes, and Benchmarking Policy. These policies are available for both the faculty members and the students *via* the university website, and in a number of publications and guidebooks, such as the College Directory, the Faculty Handbook, and the Quality Assurance Manual. The Panel was informed during different interviews that the College Dean and the HoD are both responsible for ensuring the dissemination and implementation of these policies and procedures to all stakeholders of the programme. The faculty members interviewed by the Panel stated that they are informed of any updates on policies and regulations during their meetings with the councils of both the College and the Department. In addition, as mentioned by the programme team, the University sends the policies expected to be revised to the team for feedback and advice, thus ensuring the involvement of the faculty members in the policy revision process. The Panel appreciates that there are general policies and institutional regulations organizing the role of both the College and the Department in managing and delivering the programme, and that faculty and students are well-aware of them, in addition to some academic staff contributing in their revision and development. However, the Panel notes the inconsistent application of some policies, and urges the College to provide mechanisms that assist in the effective implementation of the policies related to the programme (see paragraphs: 3.2, 3.4-3.6, 4.6, and 4.7).
- 4.2 There is an organizational structure in the College characterized by flexibility and occupational specialization that ensures the distribution of tasks in a manner that helps in the fulfilment of the College aims and objectives, as well as those of programmes offered and supervised by the College, including the Bachelor in Sociology programme. The Panel notes the existence of a hierarchy in the programme management across the Department, the College, and the University, in addition to academic councils, and various committees on the three levels. The HoD is responsible for managing the programme in cooperation with the programme coordinator, in addition to regular meetings of the Department Council. The department committees provide the necessary support for decision-making and forward their reports for discussion in the Department Council meetings and then from there to the University Council for final approval. The management of the College is the responsibility of its

Dean, who also serves as the College Council head, leads, and manages a number of academic departments falling under his deanship, in addition to the Office of Graduate Studies, and QAO. The members of the College Council include heads of departments, a senior faculty member from each department, in addition to three external members. According to interviews conducted by the Panel, the faculty members participate in decision-making through the Department Council, which forwards its reports to the College Council and then to the University Council; and there are clear lines of accountabilities. Consequently, the Panel acknowledges that there is a responsible leadership for the management of the programme. However, the Panel noticed that managing and monitoring the implementation of some policies related to programme delivery and outcomes are not effective, and this resulted in the lack of achievement of some graduate attributes, as previously discussed in the third indicator. Accordingly, the Panel urges the College to address this shortcoming; to ensure responsible and effective leadership of the programme with all its academic standards.

- 4.3 The structure of the quality assurance system at UoB consists of the QAAC at the university level, the QAO of the College, and the quality assurance committees in the departments. From the provided evidence and interviews with the programme team and faculty members, it was evident to the Panel that the responsibility of applying the quality assurance system lies first in the hands of the faculty members in their courses, and then in the hands of the course coordinators of multi-section courses, followed by the quality assurance committee in the Department, and finally comes the role of the QAO in the College, which works under the QAAC of the University. The QAAC developed a guide for the assessment procedures of academic programmes, which focuses on the learning outcomes. Hence, the Panel appreciates that there are formal and appropriate policies and procedures for quality assurance at the university and the college level. The Panel realized that the quality assurance manual or guide is published in English, which may constitute a difficulty for the programme team in fully understanding it, particularly that the programme of Bachelor in Sociology is taught in Arabic, which is the official language of the University. The interviewed programme team mentioned during the site visit that the quality assurance unit makes unofficial translations for some quality assurance systems included in the guide. Hence, the Panel is of the view that there is a need to translate the full guidebook into Arabic, so as to ensure its comprehension and application on a wider scale. The college's QAO is responsible for monitoring the different aspects of quality and accreditation in the College and, thus, prepares a detailed report to be submitted to the QAAC of the University. The quality assurance requirements indicate the need to carry out self-assessment reviews of the programme on a periodical basis, where the Director of the QAO of the College monitors with the faculty members the updating of course files and ensures their comprehensiveness in terms of contents. The Director then writes a report on this matter in cooperation with the quality assurance committee of the concerned department. The site visit interviews, and the provided evidence

indicated that the QAO at the College has recently conducted an assessment of the programme, and a review of course files, furthermore, resulting -with other internal quality assurance processes- in the development of an improvement plan for the programme. Based on this plan, the QAAC implemented a detailed audit of the programme. Despite all this, the Panel noticed that the programme did not implement all the recommendations that resulted from the internal quality assurance processes and which are stated in its improvement plan. The Panel also noticed that the mechanisms utilized to verify the academic level and standards of graduates are not applied consistently in the programme (as detailed in indicator 3). Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should improve the monitoring and evaluation methods of the quality assurance management system in the programme and should measure their effectiveness.

- 4.4 The QAAC of the University and the QAO of the College of Arts organize workshops for the academic and administrative staff, to increase their knowledge of the philosophy of quality assurance, and measure their levels of satisfaction toward these workshops. According to the SER, the college's QAO conducted several training courses and workshops for the academic and administrative staff. During the two academic years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, the College implemented a number of training workshops on quality assurance requirements, such as training related to the BQA's Programme-within-College Review Framework, as well as to the requirements of the NQF, self-assessment, and preparation of course files, in addition to several specific workshops related to teaching and learning, such as writing of CILOs. All these training activities are important for raising the awareness and improving the practical performance of faculty members and for the effective formulation of objectives that the College seeks to achieve. The Panel noted that the interviewed faculty members have a general understanding of the quality assurance requirements, and its role in ensuring the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes. However, through examining the course files provided during the site visit, the Panel found some discrepancies in faculty's implementation of quality assurance procedures and in their design of assessment tools. In addition, some faculty members interviewed during the site visit indicated that quality assurance culture is still a new culture for the Department, and that there are some faculty members who view it more as a burden. Generally, the Panel appreciates the efforts of both the University and the College in disseminating the quality culture among faculty members, and advises the College to measure the effectiveness of workshops offered in relation to quality assurance.
- 4.5 The UoB has a system for the introduction and development of academic programmes and courses, which was approved in the University Council's meeting number: 12/2013. The system includes a description of how to offer and develop academic programmes and courses, and also how to block or suspend them, and there are

specific forms available for all the different operations of this system. According to this system, the offering of a new programme or the development of an existing one must be carried out through an analytical study. This study should involve the scoping of the current labour market needs, the consideration of future perspectives and strategic plans, in addition to the surveying of the views of the labour market stakeholders, in particular the official entities, such as the ministries, public institutions and agencies, and professional associations, alongside with the views of the beneficiaries, such as students and others. The decision-making mechanism relevant to this system begins with the Department Council, and then moves to the College Council, and finally to the University Council. The Panel is of the view that this policy involves appropriate procedures for introducing and offering new academic programmes.

- 4.6 The SER states that there are clear policies and procedures for the annual review of programmes, which are documented in the University Policy of Quality Assurance. As per this policy, the quality assurance committee of the College conducts an annual review of its Bachelor in Sociology programme, through preparing an SER and an improvement plan submitted to the QAAC of the University. The interviewed faculty members explained their role in the self-evaluation process, which consists of preparing evaluation reports about the achievement of ILOs in every course and that in turn are used in measuring the achievement of the PILOs in general. The faculty members also prepare a file for each course offered during the semester, which includes the CILOs' evaluation report. In addition, feedback is also collected from students on the courses offered each semester. Despite this, there was no evidence on implementing a regular annual review of the Bachelor in Sociology programme that contributes to its on-going improvement. In conclusion, the Panel acknowledges that there are some arrangements in place to conduct an internal evaluation of the programme annually, which includes the preparation of an internal audit report about quality related activities, an SER, and an improvement plan for the programme. However, the Panel advises the College to take the needed arrangements to ensure consistent implementation of policies and the monitoring of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the improvement plan.
- 4.7 According to UoB's Programme Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy, a periodic review of the academic programmes should be implemented, so as to ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes, the effectiveness of the curriculum, and the utilization of stakeholders' feedback in the review process. The provided evidence and the SER indicate that the Department of Social Sciences conducted in the academic year 2011-2012 a general review of the Bachelor in Sociology programme, which was undertaken by the faculty members, in cooperation with the programme stakeholders, through the use of results generated from surveys and personal interviews with alumni and employers. Moreover, in the academic year 2013-2014 some modifications to the programme were made based on the results of the review process and of field

studies conducted by the Department on a sample of graduates, employers, and ministry representatives from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, alongside a number of social work stakeholders in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The modifications introduced resulted in the identification of three sub-disciplines or tracks: Social Theory and its Applications; Social Development; and Anthropology and Heritage), from which students could choose their courses in one of these tracks. Furthermore, the College implemented a second general review of the programme, in preparation for this BQA programme review. This second review resulted in the SER that was provided to the Panel, in addition to an improvement plan including the introduction of new courses related to sustainable human development and the labour market, such as courses in sociology of the elderly and sociology of disabilities. The review also led to an increase in the practical courses and in work-based training, which are still in progress in terms of implementation. Nonetheless, the Panel found that these reviews were conducted solely through internal members, without any involvement of external members, although this is a university requirement. Thus, the Panel appreciates that there is a periodic review of the programme contributing to its development. The Panel however recommends that the College should adopt arrangements for holistic periodic reviews of programmes, involving external members, as is stated in the university policy, and should develop mechanisms related to improvements' implementation, monitoring, and the generation of generating periodic reports about the extent of their accomplishment.

- 4.8 As stated in the SER, the College collects the feedback from the programme stakeholders, through graduates' exit surveys, students' course evaluations, alumni surveys, PAB meetings, and other advisory committees' meetings. In relation to this, there are mechanisms applied periodically to collect the views of students about their courses, *via* an online evaluation form for each course, filled by the student at the end of each semester, and analysed by the Centre of Measurement and Evaluation in the University. Upon analysis, this Centre provides the faculty members and the HoD with the results of the analysis, so as to inform them of how to improve their performance. Despite this, there was no evidence on surveying the stakeholders periodically and consistently. This is in addition to the low response rate of surveys (see paragraph 3.12), which affects the statistical value of the results. Furthermore, although the Panel was provided with evidence on the collection and data analysis of several surveys used to measure the level of satisfaction toward the programme and its outcomes; there was lack of evidence referring to the regular use of these results in holistically enhancing the decision-making process in the programme. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should continue developing its mechanisms to survey stakeholders, through a representative sample, and should analyse the collected data periodically and regularly, so as to utilize its results in developing the programme, and inform all internal and external stakeholders of the programme about the resulting developments.

- 4.9 The staff appraisal system dictates that the faculty member has to present an annual report on their achievements, to be evaluated by the HoD. Based on their achievements outlined in the report and on their evaluation by the students, the HoD develops a plan for the continuous development and improvement of their performance. The criteria of the annual appraisal include: teaching, supervising the students, research and scientific publishing, and university and community service. In addition, the University has developed the Unit of Excellence in Teaching and Leadership, which professionally trains faculty through offering the Post-Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP) programme for new faculty members and the Continuous Academic Development programme for the experienced members. The University also provides the staff with a number of capacity-building workshops and training through specialized centres, such as the Measurement and Evaluation Centre, the QAAC, and Zain E-Learning Centre, which is dedicated to training on e-learning processes. Additionally, there is also the Administrative Training Centre which focuses on the development of administrative staff in the different departments and colleges. The Panel noted that, up until the time of the site visit, there were only two faculty members who had participated in the PCAP programme. Hence, the Panel appreciates the efforts of the University in providing several opportunities including the establishment of the "Unit of Excellence in Teaching and Leadership" to develop teaching and professional practices of new and senior faculty members. Nevertheless, the Panel was informed during interviews that some faculty members are dissatisfied with the lack of University support in relation to their participation in international conferences. Moreover, there are no effective mechanisms of identifying professional development needs at the department level- mechanisms such as peer-evaluation or classroom supervision. This is in addition to the lack of clear evidence of mapping professional development programmes/activities to faculty members' appraisal. Accordingly, the Panel recommends that the College should determine the professional development needs of faculty members according to the results of their appraisal and should, for future improvement purposes, carry out an ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the professional development activities conducted.
- 4.10 The SER indicates that the Bachelor in Sociology programme has applied several methods for scoping the labour market needs, and for ensuring its fulfilment of these needs through the feedback of employers. The SER refers also to a field study that was conducted in 2015 by a faculty member in the programme, which focused on the status of social sciences in Gulf Universities (University of Bahrain model). The results of this study and of the surveys indicate a need to develop the programme by introducing a work-based learning component through internship courses, completed through work in relevant institutions and organizations. This was taken into consideration in the improvement plan provided with the SER. Based on the interviews conducted during the site visit, the College monitors through its advisory entities the development and improvement of the Bachelor in Sociology programme, to ensure its alignment with

the labour market requirements. Nevertheless, these advisory entities have been established only recently and do not meet regularly. The Panel also did not find any evidence on programme-related comprehensive and systematic scientific studies of the labour market being conducted to investigate the reasons behind students' low desire to register in the programme (see paragraph 2.2), or to examine the future trends of the sociology discipline in the region generally and in the Kingdom of Bahrain particularly. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should conduct systematic studies regularly, to enable the programme to identify current and future labour market needs.

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

- There are general policies and institutional regulations organizing the role of both the College and the Department in managing and delivering the programme and that the faculty and students are well-aware of them, in addition to some academic staff members contributing in their revision and development.
- There are formal and appropriate policies and procedures for quality assurance at the university and the college levels.
- There are efforts from the University and the College to disseminate the culture of quality among faculty members.
- There is a periodic review policy for academic programmes which contributes to the development of the Bachelor in Sociology programme.
- The university provides several opportunities including the establishment of the Unit of Excellence in Teaching and Leadership to develop teaching and professional practices of the new and senior faculty members.

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

- improve the monitoring and evaluation methods of the quality assurance management system in the programme and measure their effectiveness
- adopt arrangements for holistic periodic reviews of programmes, involving external members, as is stated in the university policy, and develop mechanisms related to improvements' implementation, monitoring, and the generation of periodic reports about the extent of their accomplishment
- continue developing its mechanisms to survey stakeholders, through a representative sample, and analyse the collected data periodically and regularly, so as to utilize its results in developing the programme, and inform all internal and external stakeholders of the resulting developments
- conduct systematic studies regularly, to enable the programme to identify current and future labour market needs.

#### 4.13 Judgement

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



## 5. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own self-evaluation report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the site visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the *DHR/BQA Programmes-within-College Reviews Handbook, 2014*:

**There is limited confidence in the Bachelor in Sociology Programme offered by the University of Bahrain.**