Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

Bachelor in History

College of Arts

University of Bahrain

Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 5-9 November 2017

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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
ILOs	Intended Learning Outcomes
ITC	Information Technology Centre
MIS	Management Information System
NQF	National Qualification Framework
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
UoB	University of Bahrain

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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.

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

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

Table 1: Criteria for Judgements

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

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

A Programmes-within-College review of the programmes offered by College of Arts at 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 History, Bachelor in Mass Communication, Bachelor in Tourism, Master in Mass Communication, Bachelor in Sociology, Master in Psychological Counseling 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 History programme based on the self-evaluation report and appendices submitted by UoB and the supplementary documentation made available during the site visit, as well as interviews and observations made during the site visit review.

UoB was notified by the DHR/BQA on 6 March 2017 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College reviews of the programmes offered by College of Arts with the site visit-taking place in November 2017. In preparation for the review, UoB conducted its college self-evaluation of its programmes and submitted the self-evaluation reports with appendices on the agreed date on 8 June 2017.

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The DHR constituted a panel consisting of experts in the academic field of the programmes and higher education who have experience of external programme quality reviews. The Panel comprised of 12 external reviewers.

This Report records the evidence-based conclusions reached by the Panel of Bachelor in History 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 History. 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 History.

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 merging the Gulf Polytechnic and the University College of Arts, Science and Education, whereas the UoB included College of Arts and Science, College of Education, College of Business Administration, and 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 Science. Currently, the UoB includes 10 colleges. The College of Arts includes five departments: Department of Social Studies, Department of English language and literature, Department of Sociology, Department of Psychology, Department of Mass Communication, Tourism and fine Arts. The College offers Bachelor degree programmes across its five departments alongside postgraduate programmes at the master level. The mission of the College is focused on preparing intellectual and enlightened leaders equipped with mental and

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critical competences that strengthen their Arab and Islamic identity, the climate of freedom, cultural pluralism and respect for citizenship, and help 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 History Programme:

The Department of Social Sciences was established on May 10, 1999, based on the decision of the UoB's Board of Trustees related to the reorganization of the College of Arts, where the programme of Bachelor in History was offered through this department, in addition to delivering a minor in History for the students of other programmes. In the second semester of the academic year 2016-2017, the total number of enrolled students in the programme of Bachelor in History was (370) students. Recently, there are (9) full-time faculty members involved in delivering the programme, including (one Professor, 2 Associate Professors, 4 Assistant Professors, and 2 Lecturers), in addition to (3) administrative staff.

E. Summary of Review Judgements

Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the BA. in History

Indicator	Judgement
1: The Learning Programme	Satisfies
2: Efficiency of the Programme	Satisfies
3: Academic Standards of the Graduates	Doesn't Satisfy
4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance	Satisfies
Overall Judgement	**Limited Confidence**

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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   There is a clear academic planning framework for the programme, which outlines the programme objectives as indicated by the provided evidence and the Self-Evaluation Report (SER). These objectives are linked to the mission and vision of the University and the College. The programme seeks to provide students with specialized knowledge and skills, in addition to critical and analytical skills as well as strengthening the culture of community service. The programme objectives are –to a large extent- highlighted and applied through the specification of the offered courses in the programme in line with its objectives. From interviews, the Panel noted that administrative and academic staff members are aware of the objectives of the programme and its role in achieving the mission of the University and the general aims of the College. The Panel appreciates that there is a clear academic planning framework for the programme, and the programme's objectives are aligned with the mission of the College and the University.

1.2   The curriculum of the programme comprises compulsory and elective courses with a total number of credit hours of (128), including (18) credit hours for the college requirements, (54) credit hours for the specialized courses, (15) credit hours for the core compulsory requirements, and (30) credit hours for the minor. There are (4) tracks in the programme: Diplomatic History and International Relations, History of Bahrain and the Arabian Gulf, Social and Economic History, and Intellectual History. The credit hours for the programme are distributed over four academic years and the academic workload of the student, ranging between (18-15) credit hours for each semester, is appropriate and consistent with international and regional standards. The curriculum offers a reasonable set of theoretical knowledge, which covers all historical eras that students should know about in ancient history, Islamic history, medieval history, and modern history; however, the era of modern history dominates the majority of the courses in the programme. The Panel also notes the lack of balance between theoretical and practical courses, as most courses tend to be theoretical more than practical. Furthermore, the Panel notes the absence of some core courses such as those that are related to the skill of reading historical texts through different types of documents, as well as various historical manuscripts. This led to a lack in some of the specialized skills that are necessary for the students to increase the level of their knowledge on one hand, and the level of their performance on the other hand; and this was confirmed during the site visit interviews with faculty members, students, alumni, and employers. The Panel also reviewed the list of courses and pre-requisites, and found that some of these courses do not facilitate a smooth year to year progression across courses, and the practical aspect, in particular, which is related to achieving

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higher order of skills. This aspect involves providing students with the skill of reading and analysing historical manuscripts and inscriptions, and utilizing these skills in planning and executing research in the courses. Accordingly, the Panel recommends that the College, during the next periodic review of the programme, should review the allocation of theoretical and practical hours within the curriculum, and revise the distribution of courses and their pre-requisites within the study plan to achieve the greatest benefit for the student.

1.3   The SER indicates that course specifications generally contain the required information as shown in the course files. During the interviews, faculty members pointed out that all courses are documented in specific files containing a standard template approved by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre (QAAC) to outline the course specifications. The Panel was also informed that the quality assurance committee moderates the course specifications periodically to ensure that they include all the required information in terms of identifying the provided topics and aligning them to the course learning outcomes, the implemented teaching and learning approaches, and assessment methods. The results of the informal benchmarking of the programme against some regional programmes reveal an advanced level of course contents and types within the offered study plan, which reflects the emphasis on cognitive values in the course titles and the extent of general knowledge sought to be achieved. However, the Panel found that some course specifications (e.g. 'History of the Islamic State in the Abbasid Era' (HISTO303)) are identified in a general manner. This lack of specialization leads to inaccuracy in stipulating the details and the subtitles of the course syllabus, and reduce the students' ability to achieve the specific objectives of the courses and therefore the programme. There is also an apparent lack in the course titles and its general frameworks, including the identification of the historical era covered by the course. The Panel is of the view that the specifications of the courses have to be reviewed, so their content will be clear enough to be read and studied by the students. Thus, the Panel advises the College to verify the course specifications in order to ensure that they are more focused and specific.

1.4   There are (9) Programme Intended Learning outcomes (PILOs), which are outlined in the programme specification. The PILOs are consistent with the learning objectives and the development perspectives of the programme. The PILOs are mapped to the (4) tracks of the programme: Diplomatic History and the International Relations, History of Bahrain and the Arabian Gulf, the Social and Economic History, and the Intellectual History. For example, learning outcomes (v), (w) and (x) state that the attainment of global civilization and humanitarian values is pursued through a consistent approach of delivery, which aims to enhance the mechanism of establishing a scientific research base in line with the highest standards and global research trends. This includes ensuring that students achieve the high level of skills related to cognitive

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and affective aspects as stated in the programme outcomes (a) and (c). The Panel was informed during the interviews that these outcomes were recently subject to revision, to meet the requirements of the labour market, and be appropriate with the international standards that the graduates of the programme have to achieve. The Panel notes with appreciation that the PILOs are aligned with the college mission, mapped to the programme objectives and the learning outcomes of the University, and consistent with the level of the programme in general. The department committees are still working to obtain the approval of the curriculum and academic programme committees in the College of Arts; in preparation for submission to the University Curriculum Committee in order to achieve the programme objectives based on the required standards of the QAAC at the University. Accordingly, the Panel recommends that the College should expedite receiving the necessary approvals for the revised learning outcomes of the programme.

1.5   There are specific learning outcomes for each course measuring knowledge and understanding, subject-specific skills, general and transferrable skills, and some are linked to the specific specialization of History. The Panel was informed during interviews that the process of developing learning outcomes for the courses is implemented by the faculty members and revised by the quality assurance committee of the Department, as well as the Quality Assurance Office (QAO) of the College of Arts, and the QAAC at UoB. The Panel observed through the provided evidence that the learning outcomes are appropriate and consistent with the courses and meeting the outcomes of the programme. The programme specification includes a clear matrix that shows the mapping the Courses Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) with the PILOs. The Panel also notes that the College is mapping the learning outcomes of the programme and the courses with the appropriate descriptors of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels, as stated in the SER. The Panel appreciates that the intended learning outcomes of the courses are consistent with the level of the courses in general and contribute to the achievement of the PILOs.

1.6   The SER indicates that the policy of teaching and learning in the College of Arts is based on the institutional system of the UoB. The College encourages faculty members to use different methods for teaching and learning, and not limiting themselves to traditional methods. It is indicated through course specifications the adoption of several means and approaches for teaching and learning which are appropriate and specialized in order to achieve the learning outcomes of the course and the programme. The methods of teaching and learning include theoretical lectures, brainstorming, discussions among students and faculty members, and the independent learning by using external resources from the library or online means. Moreover, from interviews with the students during the site visit, the Panel noted a general satisfaction towards the teaching methods and approaches that are used in the teaching and learning process of the programme. However, the Panel found through

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examining some of the course files that the programme needs to support the teaching and learning process with extracurricular activities, such as linking the courses with the local context of ancient, medieval, and modern history. Visiting museums, archaeological sites, and national institutions to review the available archives in these places, and learn how to utilize them in a scientific approach enable them to conduct local history studies. Furthermore, the course files refer to the use of modern means in presenting a number of courses. The Panel observed that the UoB gives a special attention for developing the teaching methods, as it has established a centre for e-learning to support the faculty members in implementing proper and effective use of the e-learning. However, the use of teaching methods based on e-learning is still used in limited manner in several courses (e.g. Modern and Contemporary History of Asia (HIST419) and the History of the European Renaissance (HIST306)). Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should implement procedures that contribute to proper and effective utilization of e-learning.

1.7   The SER states that the Bachelor in History programme follows the general assessment regulations of the UoB in line with the System of Study and Examination of the University. The system stipulates the mapping of the assessment to the CILOs, the implementation of systematic and fair assessment by including formative and summative approaches, and providing the feedback to the student within (3) weeks of the assessment. The system also includes the procedures that are taken against plagiarism and cheating in examinations and how to prevent them, in addition to the procedures of submitting an appeal against the results of any course, and re-marking the final examination. The faculty members are required to apply these procedures. The grades of each course are distributed into (40%) for the final examination, (60%) for the class work, classroom activities, midterm examinations, and quizzes. According to the implemented regulations and rules of the UoB, the student is allowed to submit an appeal against his/her grades or evaluation in a certain course, and in this case, the concerned Head of the Department (HoD) sets up a special committee to review the student appeal and take the final decision objectively and fairly. Moreover, the assessment policy provides a section on feedback, which enables students to review their performance, identify their weaknesses, and receive suitable guidance to ensure avoiding the mistakes in future. During the site visit, the Panel observed that students and faculty members are well aware of the assessment policy, and the interviewed students expressed their satisfaction with it. Therefore, the Panel appreciates that there is a clear and specific policy at the University level for student assessment, which is consistent with the programme type and level, and students and faculty members are well aware of it. The Policy also includes fair procedures for the appeal process. In addition, the internal committees such as the department committee of quality assurance and the QAO of the college check samples of the performance examinations and the assessment files. However, the implementation of these procedures is still inconsistent within the programme, and the approved policy of

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internal and external moderation for the programme is still not applied for the assessment tools used in the courses. Hence, the Panel urges the College to apply all the mechanisms related to assessment (see paragraph 3.3, 3.5, and 3.6).

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

- There is a clear academic planning framework for the programme, and the programme's objectives are aligned with the mission of the College and the University.
- The programme intended learning outcomes are aligned with the college mission, mapped to the programme objectives and the learning outcomes of the University, and are generally appropriate for the level of a bachelor degree programme in history.
- The intended learning outcomes of the courses are consistent with the course level in general and contribute to the achievement of the programme intended learning outcomes.
- There are clear policies for student assessment that ensure fairness and transparency.

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

- review, during the next periodic review of the programme, the allocation of theoretical and practical hours within the curriculum, and revise the distribution of courses and their pre-requisites within the study plan to achieve the greatest benefit for the student
- expedite obtaining necessary approvals on the revised 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.**

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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 in private schools, 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 appropriate for the Bachelor in History Programme. 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. These admission criteria are aligned with other criteria adopted by similar universities regionally or internationally. The Panel reviewed the profiles of the admitted students, and found that their attributes are incorporated into the adopted requirements and specifications of the admission. Furthermore, the Panel

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noted during interviews with students that they general have the cognitive abilities and skills to understand the courses of the programme. According to the SER and the support offered to the student at-risk of academic failure, the Department is responsible for monitoring the progress of students by identifying the percentages of the admitted student compared to at-risk student and the graduates of the programme. Nevertheless, the Panel found, during interviews with the faculty that the department's academic staff were not involved in identifying the specifications of the admitted students into the Bachelor in History programme, which leads to discrepancies in their specifications/attributes and increasing the number of withdrawals, and the length of study (this will be covered in detail in paragraph 3.9). Accordingly, the Panel recommends that the College should develop an appropriate mechanism in cooperation with the University, through which the Department is involved in the process of determining the specifications/attributes of the admitted students in the programme.

2.3   The College of Art 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, the HoD, the Department Council, and finally the department's committees. During interviews with the programme management, the Panel found that the HoD is responsible for managing the programme and coordinating with the Dean and the University to address all issues in the Department and the College; he also represents the Department in the College Council. In addition to the HoD, there is the head of the history section, who is appointed by a decision from the HoD, and is assigned to take part in the coordination of the 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. In addition, there are academic and administrative committees, to which the HoD assigns faculty members and consults with them at the beginning of every academic year. The Panel learned during the site visit interview sessions that the responsibilities of the department committees were reviewed and their number was reduced to increase their efficiency, and decrease overlapping among them. Although the interviewed faculty members during the site visit were satisfied with these changes, the Panel noted that there was contradicting information provided by the staff of the Department about the number of committees, the new committees, and their names. The Panel appreciates that there are clear and effective lines of leadership and management through the heads of academic and administrative sections, the department's committees along with academic councils; and the Panel advises the College to ensure that all staff members are kept aware of the latest changes in setting up the department's committees.

2.4   There are nine faculty members contributing to the delivery of the programme with a good level of academic qualifications and knowledge that are needed to meet the

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requirements of the offered courses in the programme. Their academic ranks are (one Professor, two Associate Professors, four Assistant Professors, and two Lecturers). The Panel noted that some of the faculty members have research expertise, which contributes to enhancing the learning process of the students. The College and the Department seek to enhance the abilities and competencies of faculty members through conducting training courses, workshops, and scientific conferences according to plans implemented by the University management, in coordination with the Dean and the Office of the Vice President of the Academic Programme. It is evident, as indicated in the tables included in the SER, the faculty files and interviews, that most faculty members have attended training courses on different skills, which benefited and provided them with a practical experience in teaching and learning. However, there is a lack in the number of the faculty members compared to the number of the students, as it is noted that the number of faculty members has decreased from (12) members to (9) members over the last four academic years. Moreover, the faculty workload may increase to more than (5) courses in a semester, and the number of students ranges between (40-80) in each section. The Panel noted from interviews and the supporting evidence that some of the faculty members have taught additional hours representing (50% to 75%) of their regular workload. Although faculty members are financially compensated for the additional workload assigned to them, this reduces the time available for them to do other activities such as research which is necessary to keep up with the discipline updates, career progression, and promotion. This was reflected in having research output in only certain aspects of the history fields, while there are a number of fields that are not well researched especially in the modern history, as well as economic and intellectual aspects in the era of Islamic and medieval history. Furthermore, the Panel noted during site visit interviews that the heavy teaching and administrative workload limit the ability of senior academics to give guidance and advice to new academics. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should develop a comprehensive plan to increase the number of the academic staff members and select academics who hold higher ranks to lead and guide 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

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Council had approved in 2009 an annual faculty appraisal form, which was put into effect in the academic year 2015-2016. According to the provided evidence, the retention of qualified faculty members is enhanced through benefits other than salaries such as opportunities for publishing their scientific research, participation in conferences, and research sabbatical. Although the Panel noted through the submitted evidence and interviews with faculty members, that there is a high retention rate, yet it was revealed that some of the provided benefits have been discontinued particularly research sabbatical, and the support provided to them to participate in conferences. The Panel also did not find evidence of surveys to measure staff satisfaction. 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 staff retention in the programme. The Panel also 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. During the interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the College of Arts informally introduces newly recruited faculty members to the available resources of the College, and the nature of their rights and obligations. 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 has a number of systems for information or data management that help in making decisions in relation to the Bachelor in History 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

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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 UoB 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 the programme managers store data on student tests, projects, attendance and absence, as well as answer papers of the final examinations. 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 ITC 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 College and the University and noted that the College provides the essential resources to fulfil the learning needs including: classrooms equipped with projectors and computer laboratories. In addition to several places for student activities such as the arts club, music, theatre, chess, mass media, arts cinema, gymnasium, and health centre. Furthermore, there are sufficient individual offices for the academic staff members, equipped with computers and are adequate for work and meeting students. The Panel found these resources comfortable

and adequate in number and its capacity. However, during the site tours, the Panel found that some classrooms are small and not adequate to the student number as well as the examinations halls that cannot accommodate the number of examinees and hinder the control and monitoring process of the examinations. The Panel also noted the lack of modern equipment that support students' learning process by using modern laboratories to examine historical monuments, in addition to the absence of specialized libraries for ancient historical documents, which affects the attainment of one of the main learning outcomes of the programme (see paragraph 3.7). Accordingly, the Panel recommends that the College should provide laboratories for examining historical monuments, and specialized libraries to save ancient historical documents, which are needed for the programme delivery. During the tour in the library building, the Panel learned that the library provides all necessary services for faculty members and students, as well as the inter-library loan service. Moreover, there are about (115) computers for students use, and the library provides a guidance team to help new students. The Panel acknowledges the library's initiatives towards expanding the use of the e-book, and participating in international databases in both Arabic and English, which would help to increase the efficiency of the programme. During the library tour, the Panel noted the available spaces for individual silent study and the group study, as well as halls that are dedicated for individuals with special needs. The Panel also found that the library working groups are sufficient and appropriate. In general, the Panel notes -with appreciation- that the facilities in the College of Arts and the library building provide an adequate educational environment that meets the needs of the faculty and the students of 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 ITC 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 History 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

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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 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 the 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 make use of the evaluation results in improving the available support in the programme.

2.11   According to the SER, the Department of Advice and Guidance of the Deanship of Student Affairs in coordination with the colleges of the University organize the induction programme. It is an orientation activity for the newly admitted students during which the students are introduced to the location of colleges, facilities, the available services at the University, programmes offered, policies and regulations of, and some other services offered by the Deanship of Students Affairs. Moreover, there are guidebooks distributed to them including the student handbook, students' rights and duties and the regulation of academic misconduct. At the level of College of Arts, students are introduced to different departments and programmes, in addition to explaining the study system of the Bachelor of History programme. Interviews with the faculty revealed that there are no arrangements of induction for students who are transferred to 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 to that, the Panel was not provided by a definitive answer on how to provide the students who could not attend the induction programme 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 the induction of newly admitted students into the Bachelor in History programme; however, the Panel advises the College to adopt alternative mechanisms to provide information for students who missed the induction programme.

2.12   The SER clarifies that the University has an academic advising system, where students are distributed to their academic advisors at the beginning of the academic year, in addition to identifying the office hours to meet with students, and advising timetable is posted on doors of the faculty offices. The advising system monitors the problems of students at risk of academic failure with a CGPA which is less than (2.0). At-risk student meets with his/her academic advisor to help him/her and give the appropriate advice to raise his/her CGPA. Faculty members- as reported to the Panel- were able to work with at-risk students outside the classroom to change their academic status and improving it beyond the risk stage. However, the evidence provided to the Panel shows the high number of students who are allocated for each academic advisor which goes up to (40) students, in addition to the lack of evidence about the department's

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tracking of the progress of the at-risk students in the programme. The Panel was also informed during the meetings with students about the lack of their visits to the academic advisor office and limiting their communication with him/her on online communication only due to the limited office hours available for academic advising in addition to the busy schedule of the academic advisors. As stated in the SER and according to interview sessions with the faculty members, the Department of Student Training and Development offers peer-tutoring sessions in each semester, through which the student at risk of academic failure are being assisted by their outstanding senior classmates. The Panel found that various academic supports are available for the students who are poor in the English language *via* National Geographic Centre for Learning Resources which has been recently established at the University. Accordingly, the Panel acknowledges that a system of academic advising for students is in place, as well as the existences of procedure identifying 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 to help them succeed, and measure its effectiveness periodically.

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 the support activities including participation in seminars of research planning, thesis, events of the deanship of graduate studies and scientific research, and the site visits both inside and outside the Kingdom of Bahrain. However, the Panel noted the limited field visits and extra-curricular activities in the Bachelor in History programme (see paragraph 1.6). During site visit interviews, it became clear to the Panel that students are allowed to participate in a wide range of informal learning activities organized by different entities at the University. These activities include cultural and social activities, sports events, seminars, and various workshops organized by the University, in addition to the Career Day, and expanding the organizational knowledge and communication skills of the students through completion of their graduation projects. Students also learn work ethics when working on their graduation projects. During the interview sessions, students expressed their satisfaction towards the opportunities offered by the University, the College, and the Bahrain Credit Media Centre to expand their learning experience. 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 appropriate for the Bachelor in History programme.

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- There are clear and effective lines of leadership and management through the heads of academic and administrative sections, the department's committees along with academic councils.
- There are clear and transparent procedures for the recruitment and evaluation of academic staff, as well as the available evidence on high rates of staff retention in the programme.
- There is an adequate management information system that is suitable for the programme aims and its 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 facilities in the College of Arts and the library building provide an adequate educational environment that meets the needs of the faculty and the students of the programme.
- The University provides various support services to the students.
- There are sufficient and organized arrangements in place for the induction of newly admitted students into the Bachelor in History programme.
- The learning environment at the University contributes to expanding the knowledge and experience of the students and supports the informal learning activities.

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

- develop an appropriate mechanism in cooperation with the University, through which the Department is involved in the process of determining the specifications/attributes of the admitted students in the programme
- develop a comprehensive plan to increase the number of the academic staff members and select academics who hold higher ranks to lead and guide 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 its effectiveness
- implement a clear plan for supporting faculty members in applying for promotion
- provide laboratories for examining historical monuments, and specialized libraries to save ancient historical documents which are needed for the programme delivery
- 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 for students at risk of academic failure to help them succeed, and measure its effectiveness periodically.

2.16 Judgement

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

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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 of the History programme are covered in the learning outcomes of the University as well as the PILOs 'to ensure the comprehensiveness and depth of the programme outcomes' as stated in the SER. Moreover, the educational objectives of the programme and the ILOs for both the programme and its courses include the knowledge, skills, professional and behavioural aspects, which are expected within the graduate attributes. The PILOs are translated into CILOs to measure its achievement by using specific assessment tools to ensure the attainment of the PILOs as it was evident from the provided course files during the site visit. Furthermore, the attainment of the ILOs is measured indirectly through the feedback gathered from stakeholders. Hence, the Panel appreciates that the graduate attributes are clearly defined within the educational objectives of the programme, in addition to identifying procedures to measure the achievement of the graduate attributes through the assessment. However, the Panel is concerned that the applied mechanisms are not implemented in a consistent way to ensure its effectiveness in measuring the achievement of the ILOs and graduate attributes, as will be detailed in the next paragraphs of this indicator.

3.2 There is a benchmarking policy at the university level, which stresses that the University is committed to improving its performance according to the highest international standards in all aspects of teaching and learning, research, educational and administrative activities, and community service. The SER refers to the efforts of the College of Arts in the external benchmarking of the programme, as the study plan of the programme was benchmarked against other two similar programmes offered by two regional institutions of higher education. In light of its results, the Department suggested a modified study plan for the programme. However, the processes of benchmarking that was implemented at the programme level was informal and based on the available information on the websites of these two institutions. Moreover, the submitted evidence and site visit interviews indicated that the two institutions were merely chosen according to their academic rank within some international rankings, and the benchmarking process is limited to the curriculum, course titles, and a brief course description only, without including the CILOs, syllabus, educational learning resources and the level of students' achievements. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should activate the benchmarking policy of the University, and benchmark all the aspects of the programme formally against similar programmes and utilize the results in improving the programme.

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3.3   The College relies on the institutional assessment policies and procedures that govern the UoB's system for study and examination; in addition to the instructions included in the guidebook (IDEAS) on the assessment that is based on the ILOs, which was prepared by QAAC at the University. The Panel was informed during interviews that faculty members introduce the assessment mechanisms of each course to the student at the beginning of the semester in the course specification, which contain the assessment criteria, distribution of grades, and a table that includes the assessment types, in addition to academic plagiarism regulations. 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. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the College is keen to monitor the implementation of assessment policies through the collaboration with the QAAC at the University, the QAO at the College and the quality assurance committees at the Department. In addition to that, there is evidence on implementing periodical review for the course files to verify the availability of performance indicators and the methods used to measure them. In general, provided documentation and interviews of the site visit indicate that evaluation processes are implemented in the Bachelor of History programme, and that the faculty and students are familiar with these processes. However, some of the quality assurance procedures are newly implemented in the programme. For example, the Panel noted the lack of effective implementation for the internal moderation of the assessment tools, as well as the lack of external moderation, besides the inaccurate mechanisms that are used in measuring the achievement of ILOs properly, as will be detailed in the next paragraphs. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should implement a rigorous mechanism to ensure the implementation of all policies and procedures of the University related to the evaluation of students' achievements, such as providing them with feedback, the detection of academic plagiarism, and moderation at the programme level to ensure that the graduates meet the academic standards of the programme.

3.4   The SER indicated that the programme adopts mechanisms to ensure alignment between the assessment tools and the ILOs, as the instructor updates the form of the course specifications and maps the assessment tools to the CILOs at the beginning of every semester. He/she also measures the attainment of each outcome of the ILOs through the 'Course Assessment Form', which is developed by the QAAC at the University, according to the percentage of students who achieved success rates (60% or higher) within the applied assessment tool. In addition, the report of the CILOs

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assessment and its mapping to the PILOs are integrated, and accordingly measuring achievement of the PILOs. The quality assurance committee of the Department reviews the files and the documents at the end of each semester, however, the implementation of such mechanisms in the programme is still new and is inaccurate, which was revealed through the course files revision and during interview sessions of the site visit. Moreover, the Panel learned that the performance assessment ratings were developed on four levels: outstanding, satisfactory, progressing and dissatisfactory. However, there was no clear criteria to ensure quality and consistency in different courses. This was evident through the contradiction of explanation in the files of some courses. It was also evident the lack of assessment approaches needed to achieve some of the PILOs (see paragraph: 3.7), which was not traced by the applied mechanisms. Despite the above mentioned, the Panel appreciates that there are appropriate mechanisms to ensure the consistency between the assessment process and the learning outcomes. The Panel also urges the College to implement the internal and external moderation for the assessment tools, which is considered one of the tools to ensure that the CILOs are being covered according to the specifications of each course (see paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6). It is also recommended that the College should develop a clear description for the levels of performance assessment to measure the achievement of the CILOs and then PILOs.

3.5   UoB 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. However, during the site visit interviews with the faculty members, the Panel was informed that in the case of a single-section course, the course instructor submits the course questions that he/she sets to another instructor in the 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 to that, marking the examination papers and giving grades are done collectively by all instructors teaching the same 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 level of courses, content, and ILOs. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should further pursue the development of its internal

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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 for examinations and students' assessment, which was approved by the University Council in 2015, it includes the requirements of the internal and external moderations and mechanisms of pre- and -post moderation for examinations. However, the SER clarifies that the programme has not implemented yet any external moderation for the assessment tools, as it depends recently on the QAAC of the University. During the site visit, the programme management referred to the university tendency to adopt the external accreditation policy as an external indicator to ensure fair and rigours assessment. However, the programme until the time of this visit has not gone through such reviews, as these reviews are periodical and do not provide external pre- or post-moderation for the assessment tools in a continuous and detailed manner. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should implement suitable formal procedures for the external moderation and ensure their alignment with the University's policies in this regard, and it should utilize the moderation results in developing the programme, reviewing and improving the courses.

3.7   The Panel examined a sample of student assessed work 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 the use of a wide range of assessment tools and strategies including multiple choice questions, short answer questions, essay questions, field visit reports, and research papers. In addition to that, there was evidence on presenting oral presentations by the students to evaluate their communication skills. However, the Panel noted the lack of assessment approaches that are needed to attain some of the PILOs. For example, the PILO: 'providing the student with skills enabling him/her to examine documents and manuscripts', includes theoretical assessment which provides the student with the necessary knowledge and methodology to examine documents and manuscripts. However, the acquisition of this skill needs practical assessment approaches to apply theoretical knowledge *via* a practical test in order to ensure the student's proficiency in using the skills of dealing with documents and manuscripts as per the approaches followed regionally and internationally, which was not evidenced to the Panel through reviewing the course files. Furthermore, the lack of educational resources limits the assessment of this skill practically (see paragraph 2.9). It was evident to the Panel during the site visit, that there is a lack of modern assessment approaches in the programme to enhance students' skills, including critical thinking which requires independent resources, data analysis, writing reports and presentations based on analysing historical documents and examining monuments in a way that enhances the student attainment of the PILO: "enhance the adherence to integrity and objectivity in

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dealing with history". Moreover, the variety of assessment tools helps in improving the level of student achievements in practical aspects, and opening work opportunities for the programme graduates in the regional and international market in areas that are beyond the educational track. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should revise students assigned work to ensure that it is suitable for the type and level of the programme; and contributes to achieving all PILOs.

3.8   As stated in the SER, the programme uses two different systems to evaluate whether the graduate's achievements meet its objectives or not, one directly through mapping the assessments to the CILOs, and then mapping the CILOs to the PILOs, and the other indirectly through making surveys for the alumni, employers and expecting graduates. Their opinions according to the surveys were less supportive, as clarified in the SER. The interviewed programme team justified that the sample size subjected to the survey was small (16), which makes it inadequate to measure the satisfaction of stakeholders towards the level of graduates' achievements. The Panel scrutinized the final grades of the students and a sample of graduation projects, and found that the sample was aligned with the PILOs in general. Nevertheless, it did not cover some PILOs, which require deepening the practical aspects for the graduates, preparing them to understand the history across different eras in a scientific approach, providing them with work ethics and the field research in the area of history and archaeology, and examining manuscripts and historical documents. Thus, the Panel appreciates that direct and indirect mechanisms are in place to help in ensuring the alignment of the graduates' achievements with the programme objectives and outcomes. The Panel also urges the College to ensure the effective implementation of the University's moderation policy for examinations and student assessment on the programme level (see paragraph 3.6 and 3.5).

3.9   The SER provides data about the rates of admitted and transferred students for the academic years 2013-2014, and 2015-2016. After reviewing the formal data and information provided by the programme management and the Registration Department, it was revealed for the Panel that the admission percentage is good and similar to its equivalent at regional and global levels, and it has been improving compared to previous years. However, the Panel is concerned by the high number of admitted students against the number of the faculty members (see paragraph: 2.4). The Panel also reviewed the rates of withdrawal and retention through the provided documents during the site visit, which show an increase in the number of students withdrawing from the programme, reaching (19%) of the total students in the programme during the previous three years. Moreover, the study period seems high, as there are students still studying since the academic year 2009-2010, in addition to the dismissed students due to their low CGPA. However, there is no analytical study to explain the reasons behind all of that. The site visit interviews revealed the deficiency in the analysis of data relating to student cohorts. Moreover, the Panel noted

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that the SER did not tackle in detail the issue of identifying the first destination of students after they graduate as the data in the surveys of the expected graduates for the year 2015-2016 shows the limited offers of employment for this discipline. The Panel was informed during its interviews with the alumni and employers that most of the programme graduates are employed in teaching. The Panel noted the lack of evidence on the benchmarking of the programme with other similar programmes at the regional or international level in regard to the rates of retention and the first destination of the graduates (see paragraph: 3.2). 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 SER states that the programme provides a course on research writing to prepare students for their senior graduating project course (HISTO430), during which students are being advised as per certain standards to ensure the achievement of the programme objectives and its outcomes. This is done by coordinating between the coordinator and instructor. The student should complete (90) credit hours of the programme requirements before registering in the senior project course, in addition to completing the pre-requisites of the courses. He/she should choose a new topic for the research that should be unrepeatable and in the area of the specialization. Moreover, a supervisor should be assigned for each student to monitor his/her performance during the period of writing and making the research. Furthermore, (6) contact hours of foundation lectures should be attended by the students at the beginning of the semester. The student is also obliged to present a visual presentation at the beginning and the end of the semester, to discuss the challenges and difficulties facing him/her during the research preparation. The project is assessed by the supervisor (60%), and internal examiners from the Department (40%). During the site visit interviews, the Panel noted that both the students and the supervisors of the projects are well-aware of the guidelines of this course and they understand their responsibilities. The interviewed faculty members, during the site visit, indicated that the results of some students' projects were utilized in preparing research publications. The Panel reviewed a sample of student projects and found that it includes appropriate topics and proper levels of achievement. Therefore, the Panel appreciates that suitable actions and arrangements are in place to support the delivery of the graduation research project to attain the programme objectives. It is worth noting that the University Council adopted on 13 June 2013 the Anti-Academic Plagiarism System, whose provisions are applied on all members of the University including staff, instructors, and students. However, the programme of plagiarism detection (Turnitin) is still not activated as previously discussed in paragraph (3.3), although the course description indicates that it aims to achieve the learning outcome: 'the ability to continue scientific research and to enhance practical skills of the student'. The Panel

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did not find any evidence on this outcome whether in the samples of student research or through the meetings with the faculty and students. The Panel also did not find evidence on the contribution of the senior project course in achieving the programme outcomes that are related to 'providing the student with skills helping him/her in examining documents and manuscripts', and 'enhancing the commitment to reliability and objectivity in addressing history'. Hence, the Panel urges the College to develop assessment mechanisms for the graduation project to achieve its relevant PILOs (see paragraph: 3.7).

3.11   The UoB has a clear policy for the use of advisory councils in its programmes to support them. The functions of the advisory committees are clearly documented in the quality manual including the submission of feedback about the professional needs, and the labour market needs related to the programme. The Bachelor in History programme has its own advisory committee consisting of three external members and four graduates. The provided evidence indicates that the members of the advisory committee represent the sectors of education, culture, and mass communication, while the Panel did not find a representation for other sectors related to the programme such as the historical tourism sector, or other sectors related to manuscripts and Islamic historical centres. The Panel had the opportunity to meet some of the advisory committee members of the programme and noted that some of them have recently been appointed. The Panel also learned that the HoD appointed the advisory committee of the programme, in addition to his role as a chairperson and a secretary for it, as stated in the minutes of meeting. The Panel is concerned about the lack of independence of the advisory committee, despite the evidence on its submission for a number of suggestions, such as the alignment of the programme outcomes with the labour market needs, and merging groups according to the areas of specialization. The Panel advises the College to enhance the independence of the programme advisory committee; and to enrich and support the committee with representatives from the historical tourism sector and Islamic history centres.

3.12   The SER states that the Department surveys the expected graduates of the programme, alongside the employers and the alumni to measure their satisfaction towards the criteria of the graduate attributes. The quality system of the University states the importance of making a survey for the stakeholders of the programme by distributing questionnaires periodically to the alumni and the employers, to measure their satisfaction with the graduate attributes and the intended learning outcomes. The Panel was provided with samples of these surveys, which revealed that they were implemented irregularly, and only activated recently, as a small number of the expected graduates (16) and a number of graduates (22) completed these surveys, while the number of employers who provided feedback was not identified. The presented results in the SER indicated a confused or sometimes low level of satisfaction in some indicators. During interviews, the graduates were generally

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satisfied with the level of knowledge and academic integrity, while the employers expressed their dissatisfaction with the graduate attributes in some respects, particularly the practical and fieldwork aspect. Therefore, the Panel urges the College to measure the satisfaction level of the alumni and the employers regularly and on a wider scale within the labour market, and 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:

- Graduate attributes are clearly defined within the educational objectives of the programme, in addition to identifying procedures to measure the achievement of the graduate attributes through the assessment.
- Appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the consistency between the assessment process and the learning outcomes.
- Direct and indirect mechanisms are in place to help in ensuring the alignment of the graduates' achievements with the programme objectives and outcomes.
- Suitable actions and arrangements are in place to support the delivery of the graduation research project to attain the programme objectives.

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

- activate the benchmarking policy of the University, and benchmark all the aspects of the programme formally against similar programmes and utilize the results in improving the programme
- implement a rigorous mechanism to ensure the implementation of all policies and procedures of the University related to the evaluation of students' achievements, such as providing them with feedback, the detection of academic plagiarism, and moderation at the programme level to ensure that the graduates meet the academic standards of the programme
- develop a clear description for the levels of performance assessment to measure the achievement of the course intended learning outcomes and programme intended learning outcomes
- 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 suitable formal procedures for the external moderation and ensure their alignment with the University's policies in this regard, and it should utilize the moderation results in developing the programme, reviewing and improving the courses

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- revise students assessed work to ensure that it is suitable for the type and level of the programme; and contributes to achieving all programme intended learning outcomes
- 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.

3.15 **Judgement**

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

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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 History 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 History 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

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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 History 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

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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   It was revealed to the Panel during the site visit interviews that there is an understanding by the administrative and academic staff for processes and procedures of the quality assurance. As stated in the SER, the QAO in the College presented several training and workshops for both the administrative and academic staff in the College. During the period (2015-2017), 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. However, and according to the provided evidence, the Panel is of the view that these courses did not contribute effectively in ensuring the consistent implementation of the quality assurance concepts within the daily work of the academic staff. Despite the reasonable understanding of the faculty members who were interviewed during the quality assurance session, and their role in ensuring the teaching and learning process. The Panel found through verifying the course files that there is inconsistency in applying the quality assurance procedures amongst the faculty members. Thus, 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

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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 History 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 History 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 periodical review for the academic programmes should be implemented to ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes, the effectiveness of the curriculum, and the utilization of the stakeholders' feedback in the review process. The Panel noted that the College with the QAAC conducted a holistic review for the programme recently (2016) and the Department has utilized some results of this review in developing the course specifications and files, establishing the advisory committee for students and the advisory committee for alumni and employers. However, the Panel was informed that this review was implemented by internal bodies only, without including any external ones, although, the University's policy requires it. There is also an evident confusion in the concept of periodic review and ongoing evaluation for the programme. Furthermore, some of the QAAC recommendations were not put into

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practice yet as indicated by the interviewed faculty members during the site visit; and they are awaiting the final approval of the University's Council and its various committees. Thus, the Panel recognizes that there is a policy for the internal review of the programme along with mechanisms for improvement. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should consider the results of the holistic periodical review of the programme; and include an external element as stated in the University's policy; in addition to developing the mechanisms of improving, monitoring them, and generating periodical reports about the rates of the achieved improvements.

4.8   As stated in the SER, the College collects the views and opinions of the programme stakeholders. Including student exit surveys at graduation, evaluation forms for the course and the instructor, alumni surveys, meetings of Student Advisory Council, and the Employers' Advisory Council. Mechanisms are activated and applied periodically to collect the views of students about the courses *via* an online form for each course, which is filled by the student at the end of each semester. The Centre of Measurement and Evaluation in the University analyses them and results are provided to the faculty members and the HoD to assist them on how to improve their performance. However, there is no evidence on surveying the stakeholders periodically and consistently. In addition to the low response to these surveys (see paragraph: 3.12) which affects the statistical value of the results. The Panel was provided with evidence on monitoring and analysing the results of several surveys used to measure the level of satisfaction toward the programme and its outcomes. However, the Panel noted the lack of evidence referring to the regular use of these results to enhance the decision-making in the programme comprehensively. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should continue to develop its mechanisms to survey the stakeholders through a representative sample, and analyse the data periodically and regularly to utilize the results in developing the programme, and inform all its internal and external stakeholders with the results.

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

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processes. Additionally, there is also the Administrative Training Centre which focuses on the capacity development of administrative staff in the different departments and colleges. 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 advises the College to determine the professional development needs of faculty members according to the results of their appraisal and for future improvement purposes, and carry out an ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the professional development activities conducted.

4.10   The SER indicates that the Bachelor in History programme applied several methods for scoping the labour market needs, and ensuring that it meets these needs, through the feedback of employers, and the contact with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development to get statistics on labour needs (of job seekers). Moreover, the QAO in the College conducts the Partners Day, and invites the employers to get their feedback about the required skills for the graduates. According to the SER, and the Panel's interviews during the site visit, the College ensures through the advisory councils and the analysis of the surveys results that the programme is aligned with the needs of the labour market. Moreover, most of the interviewed faculty members and students revealed the importance of the practical training/internship as an indicator that the programme is up-to-date with the labour market needs. The Panel was informed by the faculty members about their utilization for the surveys results in developing the practical side and skills of the students within the courses. Nevertheless, the Panel did not find any evidence on conducting systematic scientific studies about the labour market that are directly related to the programme. 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.

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- There are formal and appropriate policies and procedures for the 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.
- 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 used approaches for monitoring and evaluating the quality assurance management system in the programme and measure its effectiveness
- consider the results of the holistic periodical review of the programme; and include an external body as stated in the University's policy; in addition to developing the mechanisms of improving, monitoring them, and generating periodical reports about the rates of the achieved improvements
- continue to develop suitable mechanisms to survey the stakeholders through a representative sample, and analyse the data periodically and regularly to utilize the results in developing the programme, and inform all its internal and external stakeholders with the results
- 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 a limited confidence in the Bachelor in History programme of College of Arts offered by the University of Bahrain.