



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

# **Directorate of Higher Education Reviews**

## **Programme Review Report**

**Royal University for Women  
College of Law  
Bachelor of Law**

**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Site Visit Date: 22 – 24 March 2021**

**HA011-C3-R011**

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## Acronyms

AY	Academic Year
BL	The Bachelor of Law
BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
CAC	College Advisory Committee
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
CL	College of Law
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
EAS	English for Academic Success
HEC	Higher Education Council
HoD	Head of Department
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILL	Inter-library Loan
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
IT	Information Technology
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OR	Office of registrar
OSL	Office of Student Life
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
QAAU	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Unit
Q&A	Question and Answer
QA&E	Quality Assurance and Enhancement
QMS	Quality Management System
RUW	Royal University for Women
SER	Self-evaluation Report

SIS	Student Information System
ToR	Terms of reference
WVU	West Virginia University

## I. Introduction

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

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

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

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

*Standard 1: The Learning Programme*

*Standard 2: Efficiency of the Programme*

*Standard 3: Academic Standards of Students and Graduates*

*Standard 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance*

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

**Table 1: Criteria for Judgements**

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

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

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

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

## II. The Programme's Profile

Institution Name*	Royal University for Women
College/ Department*	College of Law
Programme/ Qualification Title*	Bachelor of Law
Qualification Approval Number	Higher Education Council Decision No. (304) of 2012 in Meeting No. (27/2012)
NQF Level	8
Validity Period on NQF	5 years from the date the programme was placed on NQF
Number of Units*	47
NQF Credit	578
Programme Aims*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain comprehensive knowledge and understanding of substantive and procedural law.</li> <li>• Employ legal reasoning, effective analytical and evaluative skills to pursue legal professions and/or postgraduate studies.</li> <li>• Employ effective legal research skills.</li> <li>• Practice effective legal communication and advocacy skills.</li> <li>• Accomplish legal ethics and professionalism pursuing fairness and justice.</li> </ul>
Programme Intended Learning Outcomes*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquire knowledge and understanding of legal concepts and terminology in English and Arabic</li> <li>• Attain knowledge and understanding of relevant legislation and procedures</li> <li>• Analyse and interpret legislation and jurisprudence</li> <li>• Apply legal principles to practical cases to devise the most appropriate legal solution</li> <li>• Employ advocacy skills to draft court/arbitral memoranda and to plead orally</li> <li>• Conduct effective legal research using traditional and technologically advanced methods</li> <li>• Employ legal research to draft contracts and other legal documents</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use effective written communication skills to convey information to clients, peers, professionals and third parties</li> <li>• Practice effective oral communication skills to speak in public and persuade counterparts</li> </ul>
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\* Mandatory fields



### III. Judgment Summary

#### The Programme's Judgment: Confidence

Standard/ Indicator	Title	Judgement
<b>Standard 1</b>	<b>The Learning Programme</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>
Indicator 1.1	The Academic Planning Framework	Addressed
Indicator 1.2	Graduate Attributes & Intended Learning Outcomes	Partially Addressed
Indicator 1.3	The Curriculum Content	Partially Addressed
Indicator 1.4	Teaching and Learning	Addressed
Indicator 1.5	Assessment Arrangements	Addressed
<b>Standard 2</b>	<b>Efficiency of the Programme</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>
Indicator 2.1	Admitted Students	Addressed
Indicator 2.2	Academic Staff	Partially Addressed
Indicator 2.3	Physical and Material Resources	Addressed
Indicator 2.4	Management Information Systems	Addressed
Indicator 2.5	Student Support	Addressed
<b>Standard 3</b>	<b>Standard 3: Academic Standards of Students and Graduates</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>
Indicator 3.1	Efficiency of the Assessment	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.2	Academic Integrity	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.3	Internal and External Moderation of Assessment	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.4	Work-based Learning	Addressed

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

## IV. Standards and Indicators

### Standard 1

#### The Learning Programme

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

#### Indicator 1.1: The Academic Planning Framework

*There is a clear academic planning framework for the programme, reflected in clear aims which relate to the mission and strategic goals of the institution and the college.*

##### **Judgment: Addressed**

- The Bachelor of Law (BL) programme has been delivered by the College of Law (CL) of the Royal University for Women (RUW) since the Academic Year (AY) 2012-2013. The programme is offered under license from the Higher Education Council (HEC) in the Kingdom of Bahrain and is in line with the rules and regulations of the HEC. The Self-evaluation Report (SER) clearly describes the planning process of the programme, which is done in line with the RUW strategic plan. The CL operational plan is linked to the RUW strategic plan and is supported with the annual Academic Plan, which is developed based on the Dean's Roadmap. Evidence of consultations by the College Advisory Committee (CAC) was provided to the Panel to demonstrate that the planning process ensures the programme's relevance and fitness for purpose.
- With regard to potential risks at the level of Information Technology (IT), RUW has a disaster recovery policy, approved in 2018, which covers areas related to the protection of hardware and IT technical disruption. At the level of the quality of the programme and its delivery, the SER cites the example of creating e-course folders in the AY 2019-2020. During interviews and as provided in the SER, the Panel found that the University has taken serious steps to deal with the situation of Covid-19. These include conducting intensive workshops to train staff members on hybrid and online teaching, in addition to the establishment of the online education committee to ensure the swift transition to online learning for both students and staff members. However, the Panel was not provided with convincing evidence of the explicit identification of risks to the BL programme that are handled formally and effectively. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should maintain a contingency plan for the potential risks related to the BL programme, as well as an analysis of these risks and their mitigation.

- The BL Programme was validated and placed on the National Qualification Framework (NQF) in 2019. The Panel examined the provided evidence and is satisfied that the programme meets the national standards; the mapping exercises are well-developed; and the external verification of the programme has successfully been achieved. This was done through a sound process, which includes consultation of the CAC, the approval of the College Council and the final confirmation by the RUW Senate.
- The award title 'Bachelor of Law' is concise and clearly addresses the qualification type. The qualification certificate and transcript accurately describe the programme type and content. The programme title is clearly stated on the college website.
- The BL programme has five aims, which are clearly articulated in the programme specification document that dates February 2020 and are published on the university's website. The SER clarifies that the programme aims have been revised as a part of the periodic review process of the programme, which had been done in consultation of relevant stakeholders. During interviews, the Panel confirmed that a sound process is in place for periodically reviewing the programme aims in light of the market needs and in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- The Panel examined the provided evidence and confirms that the aims of the programme are in line with the university goals and aims. However, the Panel found that the aims are very generic, in a way that does not reflect the uniqueness approach of the College to provide outstanding legal education 'with focus on commercial law studies', as stated in its mission. In addition, although the three core pillars of higher education institutions - the teaching and learning, research and community engagement - are well-articulated in the university mission, research and community engagement, they are not clearly stated in the college mission. Furthermore, although the aims are inclusive of the teaching and learning and research components, they include no mention of community engagement. The Panel suggests in this context that the College may consider revising the aims in the next periodic review to reflect the special characteristic of the programme as being the only bachelor programme at the national level, which focuses on commercial law studies. The Panel is of the view also that the College may consider, when revising the aims, to include a reference to 'the Arab and Islamic values' in the fifth aim and to instil 'the life-long concept of continuing education' in the sixth aim.

## **Indicator 1.2: Graduate Attributes & Intended Learning Outcomes**

*Graduate attributes are clearly stated in terms of intended learning outcomes for the programme and for each course and these are appropriate for the level of the degree and meet the NQF requirements.*

**Judgment: Partially Addressed**

- RUW has ten graduate attributes that are clearly stated in RUW Student Handbook. These attributes are reflected in the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs). However, the Panel noticed that the graduate attributes are not clearly stated on the university's website or widely disseminated. Therefore, the Panel advises that RUW disseminates the graduate attributes more widely.
- The BL programme has nine PILOs, which are grouped under four categories: knowledge and understanding; subject-specific skills; thinking skills; and general and transferable skills. The PILOs are clearly stated in the Programme Handbook; Student Handbook; programme specifications; and the college website. The Panel examined the provided evidence and noticed that the PILOs are measurable, linked to the programme aims, and are, in general, relevant and appropriate for the programme type and level. The Panel examined the programme validation report and noted that the PILOs meet the NQF requirements and international norms. Though, no evidence was provided on benchmarking the PILOs with other comparable programmes (see recommendation under 4.4).
- During interviews, the Panel learned that the College follows a sound process for developing and reviewing the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs). In the Panel's view, the CILOs are, in general, appropriate to the content and the level of the courses and meet international standards. However, the Panel notes that the clarity and the scope of CILO/CILOs under the category of 'general and transferable skills' in all courses could be enhanced. For example, in 'International Business Law' (LAW374), CILO d1 -under the category of transferable skills- mentions 'us[ing] special skills to make formal presentation about specialized topics', and the same CILO was included in 'Public International Law' (LAW356) and 'Commercial Law' (LAW236). Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should rephrase the CILOs under the 'general and transferable skills' category to cover a wider scope of skills, such as communication and writing skills, group working skills, individual responsibility, using technology, decision making ... etc. In the panel's view, these skills are essential for the achievement of the third programme aim of 'practice effective legal communication and advocacy skills' and the fourth aim of 'accomplish legal ethics and professionalism pursuing fairness and justice'.
- The Panel was provided with the specifications of different courses and noticed that the CILOs in each are appropriately mapped to the course assessments and topics; however, no CILOs to PILOs mapping was found. In a wider scale matrix, dated February 2020, all courses were mapped to the PILOs, without specifying the exact mapping of every CILO to each PILO. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should ensure that CILOs in each course are mapped to PILOs.

### Indicator 1.3: The Curriculum Content

*The curriculum is organised to provide academic progression of learning complexity guided by the NQF levels and credits, and it illustrates a balance between knowledge and skills, as well as theory and practice, and meets the norms and standards of the particular academic discipline.*

#### **Judgment: Partially Addressed**

- From interviews and as provided in the mission of the College, the BL programme provides legal education 'with a focus on commercial law studies'. This is reflected in the study plan, which focuses mainly on Commercial Law, Business Law, International Law and related subjects. The Panel found that this approach is guided basically by the market needs and is reflected in the activities of the Moot Court and other extracurricular activities. Based on this, the Panel appreciates the distinctive approach of the BL programme to focus on commercial law studies, which guides the study plan as well as students' activities. The Panel examined the study plan of 2017-2018, which runs over four years (8 semesters) and confirmed during interviews that it is the latest version. As stated in the SER, the BL programme is the only programme in Bahrain that is delivered in both English (60%) and Arabic (40%), which is a reasonable distribution in the panel's view. However, during interviews, the criteria for determining which courses are to be taught in English and which in Arabic was not made clear. Though, during interviews, an example was mentioned on changing the language of study of the 'Civil Law' course from English to Arabic based on law firms' feedback. The Panel notes that the 'legal research and writing skills' course (LAW118) and the 'practical legal training (Law Clinic)' course (LAW478) are delivered in English, while the skills taught in them are necessary to be acquired by students in both languages, especially that it was clear during interviews with students that their Arabic drafting skills are in need of enhancement. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should develop and implement, in the next periodic review, clear criteria for determining the language of instruction of each course in the BL study plan. Noting that the BL programme was placed on the NQF previously, the Panel is of the view that this is acceptable with regard to progression. Prerequisites are included for courses, with appropriate progression. However, the Panel notes few mismatches in pre-requisites; for example, 'Public International Law' (LAW356) is a pre-requisite for 'Private International Law' (LAW364), while each of them belongs to a different branch of law. During interviews, the Panel learned from the senior management that the College is in the process of working on this. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should, in the next periodic review, revise the pre-requisites in the study plan, to ensure their suitable placement within the plan.
- As per the SER and as confirmed during interviews, the curriculum has been so far subject to two reviews; one was when the programme was first offered in the AY 2012-2013 and the other took place in the AY 2017-2018 as part of the periodic review of the programme

which takes place every four to five years. The document 'RUW Curriculum Review Process' shows that the curriculum was reviewed based on several internal and external inputs, including benchmarking, surveys, market needs analysis, advisory committee feedback, etc. During interviews, the Panel learned that any suggested major changes are discussed and acted upon during the periodic review process, while minor changes can be addressed occasionally as required through updating the course specifications after being approved by the Dean. An example was given, during interviews, on updating the course specification of the 'Commercial Law' to include a newly promulgated legislation.

- Based on examining the study plan, course files, and the 'report on blended teaching and learning AY 2019-2020', the Panel confirmed that there is an appropriate balance between theory and practice and between knowledge and skills in the BL curricula. During interviews with senior management and staff, the Panel learned that the College ensures such a balance through a variety of methods including formal and informal benchmarking, annual review of the programme, and surveys of different stakeholders. For example, based on a recommendation from the CAC, members of the legal professions, and external reviewers, the 'Internship 2' course (LAW477) was replaced with the 'Practical Legal Training' course (LAW478). In addition, to improve the advocacy skills of the students, the College offered, starting from the AY 2016-2017, an elective course on International Commercial Arbitration. As per the SER, this course is linked to the Willem C. Vis Moot Court competition in commercial arbitration. Alumnae have also indicated that they benefited from various practical activities and different field trips, which exposed them to the practical side of their future profession. Therefore, the Panel is satisfied with the mechanism followed and the overall satisfaction of students and alumnae during interviews. However, the Panel noticed that most of the practical activities are either conducted in English language or are related to courses delivered in English. Therefore, the Panel suggests that the College offers some training opportunities on legal skills and drafting in Arabic.
- The Panel examined samples of course specifications and course portfolios and found that generally the course contents cover all elements in terms of depth and breadth. However, in a few courses, the content needs to be further enhanced, for example, in 'Public International Law' (LAW356) some topics overlap with 'International Organizations' course (LAW483), e.g. 'Regional Organizations for Cooperation and Integration', 'Sanctions countermeasures and collective security' and 'the UN principles', while lacking 'the diplomatic and consular relations', which is a core topic. The Panel found also that 'the law of treaties', which is one of the main topics is allocated only 3 hours, though it is quite long and has a lot of details. Thus, the Panel recommends that a review of the 'Public International Law' course (LAW356) to ensure the elimination of any topics out of the scope of the main theory and replacing them with more core topics such as diplomatic and consular relations should be conducted. Further, more topics could be added about Bahrain, as a state, in relation to the application of various rules of international law, e.g.

the relation between domestic law and international law with reference to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the maritime boundaries of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the status of ratification of different key treaties. The Panel also recommends that the College should add more focus on the international dimension of courses pertaining to international commercial law and its application e.g. 'Alternative Dispute Settlements' course (LAW247).

- The Panel examined textbooks and references in course syllabi and found that most course specifications were approved in September 2019. The Panel notes that most of the textbooks and reading materials are current; for example, the course specification of 'Commercial Law 3' (LAW342), approved in November 2020, includes the 'decree amending some provisions of commercial companies Act', which was issued recently in 2020. The use of current professional practice and recent research findings was discussed satisfactorily with staff members and students. However, the Panel found that, in a few courses, textbooks, whether core or additional, need to be updated. For example, in 'Criminal Procedure' (LAW353), the core textbook is dated more than 10 years ago. The date is 2010 and there is a more recent edition published in 2018. The same applies in 'Private International Law' (LAW364). In 'Civil and Commercial Law Procedure' (LAW471), the textbooks are not dated. The Panel acknowledges the reference made to websites of national ministries and authorities for further information (e.g. Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism website, and the Bahrain chamber of Commerce and Industry website) in the course specifications. However, the Panel is of the view that the College could benefit also from including national legal databases in the course specifications, in addition to those websites (e.g. the court of cassation database and the legislation & legal opinion commission database). Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should introduce a formal mechanism for regularly ensuring the currency of core textbooks and references as well as the utilization of national legislative databases.

## **Indicator 1.4: Teaching and Learning**

*The principles and methods used for teaching in the programme support the attainment of programme aims and intended learning outcomes.*

### **Judgment: Addressed**

- On the institutional level, the SER refers to two teaching and learning policies: the RUW teaching and learning policy, last revised in October 2019 and the RUW blended teaching and learning guidelines, last revised in April 2019. The Panel is satisfied with the range of teaching methods as described in the policies, which are appropriate for the BL programme.
- The Panel examined samples of course specifications and course portfolios and noted a variety of teaching methods, which are consistent with RUW's policies and mapped to the



Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) of each course. During interviews with staff members, the Panel confirmed that blended learning methods are effectively implemented in their courses especially during the special circumstances of Covid-19. Interviewed staff referred to using different teaching methods such as analysis of legal texts and courts' decisions, case study, class discussion, mooted, guest lectures and field trips, which are all appropriate and suitable for the BL study.

- The RUW blended teaching and learning guidelines include a section on 'Technology Mediated Learning Environment'. This section includes provisions on: E-learning and Mobile learning; online portal self-service; computer mediated assessment; and online resources. In addition, the Panel was provided with a draft of RUW e-learning Policy, which is still underway. The Panel learned during interviews that such provisions came in handy during Covid-19 circumstances. An Online Education Committee has been established to facilitate the transition to full e-learning and, in addition, RUW has employed (Moodle) to improve online teaching and learning. The Panel learned during interviews that several procedures have been taken since the outbreak of the Pandemic, including creating a webpage for online learning during Covid-19 and conducting several professional development programmes for staff and students. The Panel also found evidence on weekly monitoring of online teaching activities. Overall, the Panel is satisfied with the current arrangements in relation to embedding e-learning as a part of the teaching and learning operations and urges the Institution to expedite the issuance and the implementation of the RUW e-learning Policy.
- The College follows RUW policies of teaching and learning. The RUW blended teaching and learning guidelines provide a variety of methods to encourage students' participation in learning, such as: inquiry-based learning; field trips; workshops; peer-based learning etc. The SER provides many examples on employing these methods to expose students to professional practices and develop their independent and lifelong learning. These examples include field trips to national institutions such as the Bahrain Parliament for students who were enrolled in the 'Constitutional Law 2' course (LAW234) and Bahrain Chamber for Dispute Resolution for students who were enrolled in the Alternative Dispute Resolution course. In addition, the Panel notes with appreciation the students' exposure to international professional experiences, such as the field trips to the UK Constitutional Court and other public institutions abroad, which were conducted in the AY 2019-2020 and the Law summer course 'Contemporary Legal Topics' (Law310), which was held at the University of Oxford in the AY 2018-2019.
- With relation to enhancing research capabilities of students, the SER states that the BL study plan was amended in the AY 2016-2017 to include 'Legal Research and Writing Skills' course (LAW118) and once more in the AY 2017-2018 to include 6 credits for the final research project divided into two courses: 'Final Year Project 1' (LAW498) and 'Final Year Project 2' (LAW499). During interviews, the Panel learned that these amendments

were done based on a recommendation by many stakeholders (e.g. the Advisory Committee, employers, external reviewers) to improve the legal research skills of the students. Furthermore, the Panel found that students are encouraged to create and innovate through the research tasks or projects, which are included as assessment types in a number of course specifications. Furthermore, other blended learning methods which require high critical thinking and research skills are also employed in teaching, such as: case study, analysing legal texts and moot court activities. Based on examining students' work, the Panel confirms the creative and innovative capabilities of students.

- 'Enhancing both Employability and Life-long Learning' was stated in the RUW teaching and learning policy as one of the main pillars of education that RUW is committed to pursue. It has also been reflected in the RUW blended teaching and learning guidelines. As explained earlier in this indicator, it was clear to the Panel that the College employs a range of formal and non-formal learning activities, which encourage students' employability and life-long learning. This was confirmed too during interviews with students, alumnae and employers.

### **Indicator 1.5: Assessment Arrangements**

*Suitable assessment arrangements, which include policies and procedures for assessing students' achievements, are in place and are known to all relevant stakeholders.*

#### **Judgment: Addressed**

- RUW has an Assessment Policy, which was last revised in 2014. The Assessment Policy itself is not published on the university website, however, its provisions are embedded in the Student Handbook of 2020-2021, which is available on the website and widely distributed to all stakeholders. Beside this Policy, the Panel found on the university website guidelines for assessment during the special circumstances of Covid-19, which state clearly that they were developed based on HEC related guidelines. On the college level, the procedures and the mechanism for assessment, which encompasses assessment briefs, assessment weight and time of submission, are planned and included in the course specifications. The Panel examined samples of course specifications and noted a variety of assessment tools including research tasks, case study, reports, written examinations, oral examinations, students' participation and engagement. However, the Panel is of the view that the University would benefit from the regular review of the assessment policy (see recommendation under 4.1) and from more focus on online assessment.
- Access to assessment policies and procedures was discussed in interviews with faculty, during which the Panel learned that dissemination of policies and procedures is mainly online either through the website, by email or through Moodle. Interviews with students confirmed appropriate dissemination too. The Panel examined the university website and

noted that the policies *per se* are not published; however, a clear description of their main provisions is stated, which is acceptable.

- The SER clarifies that all assessments in the BL programme are formative, except for the final examinations which are considered summative. From interviews, the Panel learned that the criteria for marking and assessment are provided on the first page of examination papers. The Panel examined sample examinations and found that marking criteria are clearly stated and the criteria for awarding them are also provided either in rubrics or model answers. The issue of prompt feedback was discussed with staff, who affirmed that assessment feedback is provided to students through individual emails once the assessments are graded. The SER clarifies that based on instructor's feedback on different types of assessment, at-risk students are identified and early intervention measures, such as extra lectures, are carried out to monitor their progress.
- As provided earlier, the research-oriented aspect of the BL programme is represented in the final project, which is divided into two courses: 'Final Year Project 1' (LAW498) and 'Final Year Project 2' (LAW499), in addition to research tasks that are assigned to students as part of their course assessment. The RUW plagiarism policy, approved in December 2016, is applicable on all research aspects of the programme. Although the date of reviewing the policy is December 2019, the Panel was not provided with the updated version. The Panel advises the Institution to reconsider changing the title of the policy to 'Anti-plagiarism Policy' and to ensure the regular review of this policy. During interviews, the Panel learned that there is a reliance on software such as Turnitin, especially for projects.
- The SER sufficiently describes the mechanism followed to ensure the transparency of assessment grading. On the institutional level, RUW has a 'generic marking criteria' document, which was developed in 2016. On the college level, all BL courses utilize the unified rubrics for oral, written and research assessments. These criteria, whether on the university level or the college level, are uploaded on Moodle and included in the course files. During interviews, the Panel learned that internal and external moderation is undertaken to ensure the fairness of assessment (see also Indicator 3.3). The Panel examined sample graded assessments and noted that the samples' grades are fair and follow their related rubrics. Overall, the Panel acknowledges the transparent mechanisms followed in grading student achievement in examination assessment, including internal and external moderation; however, these mechanisms are less evident for non-examination assessments. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should improve the transparent mechanisms for grading non-examination work.
- The College follows RUW Student Grade Appeal policy approved in 2014. As per the SER, grade appeals by students are examined by a Grade Appeal Committee, which is an *ad hoc* committee, formed by the Dean and comprising two instructors, not including the grade

appeal-concerned instructor, to ensure impartiality. A sample of grade appeal was provided, which shows satisfactory procedures and a sound process for examining students' appeals. With regard to academic and non-academic misconduct, the SER explains that CL implements related provisions as stated in the RUW Student Handbook. The Disciplinary Committee is a standing committee at the university level, which is renewed at the beginning of each AY. The Panel examined the committee formation and advises that a member from CL should be included in its structure due to the nature of the work in this committee.

## Standard 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 2.1: Admitted Students

*There are clear admission requirements, which are appropriate for the level and type of the programme, ensuring equal opportunities for both genders, and the profile of admitted students matches the programme aims and available resources.*

#### Judgment: Addressed

- RUW has a clear 'procedure for admissions', which shows the effective date as of May 2018. The admission requirements are reflected in the Student Handbook and are clearly published on the university website. About 30 students are admitted each AY. In the AY 2019-2020, 30 students were admitted, all of them on a full-time basis, including 19 Bahraini and 11 from the Gulf Region countries. Since the Panel found no evidence of unfairness, and as per discussions during interviews, the Panel is of the view that the admission procedure is fairly and consistently applied.
- As per the RUW 'procedure for admissions' and RUW 'Access, Transfer and Progression Policy, applicants are admitted based on their possession of a recognized high school certificate and a minimum level of English language proficiency (IELTS score of at least 5.5 or equivalent). Neither documents nor the university website included information on the exact score required in the secondary school certificate. The Panel found no evidence of any college-specific requirements for admission other than the general requirements of the University as stated above. The Panel examined the cohort analysis spreadsheet over the past four years and found that it shows a good progression, which indicates that admitted students are fit for the programme level. This was also confirmed during interviews with staff, students and alumnae who pursued their postgraduate studies in reputable universities abroad. Nevertheless, the Panel recommends that the College should specify the minimum required score of the secondary school certificate required for the admission in the BL programme.
- As per the SER, applicants who score below 5.5 in IELTS or its equivalent are enrolled in the English for Academic Success (EAS) programme for one or two semesters in order to improve their linguistic skills. To further support students who successfully pass the EAS programme with a low score, they are advised to register for the course 'English for

Tertiary Studies' (LAR103). Though 40% of the courses are delivered in Arabic and the Panel acknowledges that law studies require proficiency in Arabic language, the Panel found no evidence of admission requirements with regard to Arabic language proficiency. During interviews with students and alumnae, the Panel confirmed that studying in Arabic language is a challenge for some students. Moreover, external stakeholders have expressed their concern, during interviews, with regard to the students' skills of legal drafting in Arabic. The Panel acknowledges that the SER has mentioned this issue as a gap to be addressed in the future. From interviews with senior management and as described in the SER, it was clear to the Panel that the CL exerts efforts to support students who struggle in Arabic language courses, by recommending additional Arabic language courses in addition to the required 'Arabic Language' course (LAR101). However, the Panel is of the view that Arabic proficiency is a core requirement to study law in Arabic speaking countries. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should develop suitable procedures for identifying applicants who lack the required Arabic language skills and investigate mechanisms for providing them with suitable remedial support before entry into the programme.

- RUW has an 'Access, Transfer and Progression Policy', which includes clear provisions on external transfer of credits and internal transfer between one programme within the University to another. These provisions are published in the Student Handbook. The Panel examined the Policy and is of the view that it is suitable and consistent with international and regional practices. According to the statistical information in the SER, no transfer students were admitted directly to the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year since the AY 2015-2016.
- The SER states that 'the admission procedures are periodically revised as part of the annual review of the RUW Student Handbook'. Both the RUW 'Procedure for Admissions' and 'Access, Transfer and Progression Policy' show effective date as of May 2018, which demonstrates regular revision of the admission policies. However, the Panel learned during interviews that the admission requirements for the BL programme have not been changed since the programme inception in 2013. The SER clarifies that based on students' performance and feedback from relevant stakeholders, the College Council discussed in its meeting dated 19/3/2020 the possibility of introducing an 'Arabic Language entry requirement'. The options were to either conduct an interview of the student applicants by Arabic speaking law staff or a formal Arabic language placement test. The decision was taken to include this as a part of the improvement plan. Given that legal Arabic studies require high proficiency in Arabic language skills, the Panel suggests that the College may require a certain score in Arabic language in the secondary school certificate. (See also recommendations under bullets 2 and 3 of this indicator).

## Indicator 2.2: Academic Staff

*There are clear procedures for the recruitment, induction, appraisal, promotion, and professional development of academic staff, which ensure that staff members are fit-for-purpose and that help in staff retention.*

### **Judgment: Partially Addressed**

- RUW has a 'Human Resources Policies' document dated 26 May 2016, which includes clear provisions on recruitment, induction, appraisal, and promotion of academic staff. Further, RUW has a 'Procedure for Recruitment and Appointment of Academic Staff'. In the AY 2020-2021, a new faculty staff member (LL.M Holder) was hired. During interviews with faculty, the Panel confirmed that a sound process is in place for hiring new staff members. With respect to faculty appraisal, the Panel notes that the percentages are distributed as follows: Teaching and Related work (30%), Research and Publications, including Conference Presentations (10%), Community Work (30%), Teacher Evaluation by Students (20%) and Evaluation by the VP (Academic) (10%) based on the activities, awards and recognition achieved by each faculty member. The faculty members have the opportunity to discuss their evaluation with the Dean and to lodge an appeal if required. However, the Panel is concerned with the low percentage of the 'Research and Publications' component, especially that research is essential in ranking the College and shaping its reputation. On the other hand, the component of 'Teacher Evaluation by Students' (20%) is high, especially that students' evaluation may -in some cases- be subjective. Therefore, the Panel suggests increasing the percentage of the 'Research and Publications' component in the academic staff appraisal to be more than 10%. With regard to promotion, RUW has an 'Academic Promotion Regulation' dated 2016, which includes details on the criteria used in the promotion process. However, during the site visit, the Panel learned that no academic promotion has taken place recently, though one application is in process. Criteria for promotion includes a reasonable number of publications (five for promotion to Professor and four for promotion to Associate Professor), provided that these publications are published in 'reputable and refereed journals, books or conference proceedings'. The Panel suggests that the terms 'reputable and refereed' should be clarified (e.g., journals listed in Scopus index., etc.). During interviews with senior management, the Panel learned that this issue is under consideration at the university level. As per the 'Academic Promotion Regulation', the Panel notes that the minimum promotion score for the research component is 30 points for the promotion to Professor and 20 points for the promotion to Associate Professor. This was justified during interviews on grounds that RUW is a teaching-oriented institution. The Panel notes also the emphasis on the teaching component in the promotion regulations. Despite this, the Panel is of the view that academic promotion is a different issue and, thus, advises the College to add more emphasis on research with regard to

academic promotion, through increasing the points allocated to the research component and decreasing the points designated to the teaching component.

- As per the SER, RUW has a 'Research Policy', which guides the research themes developed in each college. The 'RUW College Research Themes' document dates to 2 November 2017 and includes five research themes, which are reflected in the CL Research Plan of the AY 2018-2019. Though the effective date of the Plan is stated as 2015, the Panel believes it to be a typo, and notices that the Plan includes around 20 topics and research related activities with estimated costs. It also shows the involvement of most of the academic staff. During interviews, the Panel learned that the Plan is monitored, and a research output report is prepared at the end of each AY. The Panel examined an undated report of 'CL Academic Research Output', which shows eight successfully published topics, most of them were published in international journals. Accordingly, the Panel confirms the alignment of the quality research with the College research plan. However, since the research plan covers only one AY (2018-2019), the Panel recommends that the College should develop a mechanism to ensure the continuity of conducting scientific research in alignment with updated research plans.
- According to the Academic Staff Workload Policy, the teaching load per week is as follows: Professor: 3 courses and 5 projects, Associate Professor: 4 courses and 4 projects, Assistant Professor: 5 courses and 3 projects and Lecturer: 5 courses. There is no detailed information on the special needs of women. The Panel is of the view that five courses in a semester for Assistant Professors is high as per international standards and would not allow for research and community engagement activities. Therefore, the Panel advises the College to reduce the teaching load of Assistant Professors per week to 4 courses.
- As per the SER, there are currently five full-time faculty members employed in the BL programme as follows: (one Associate Professor and four Assistant Professors), in addition to one lecturer. The programme employs also one part-time Assistant Professor. The Panel examined the academic staff CVs, which demonstrate appropriate qualifications and experience in general; however, the faculty's specialization covers few branches of law, namely: International Law, Public Law, Civil Law, Commercial Law and Administrative Law. Therefore, the College lacks specialized academic staff in other main branches such as: Criminal Law, law of Civil Procedures, Private International Law and Financial Law. The Panel found examples of academic staff teaching outside their specializations. For example, in Fall 2020-2021, Constitutional Law, Criminal Law and Labour Law were taught by the same faculty member; also, Constitutional Law, Criminal Procedure, Criminal Law, International Criminal Law, Labour Law and Sharia Law were taught by the same faculty member; in the AY 2019-2020, Civil law, Civil and Commercial Procedures (and Execution Procedures), Family Law and Private International Law were taught by the same faculty. During interviews, the Panel learned that academic staff teach courses that are close to their areas of specialization or falling within their academic



interests, some interviewees stated that they are licenced to teach in different specializations, while others stated that since the faculty staff are lawyers, they have the ability to teach different courses. The Panel acknowledges that the staff-to-student ratio is appropriate (1:17 in the AY 2019-2020); however, there is an obvious lack of specialized faculty. In the same vein, the Panel noticed in the provided evidence that in the AY 2020-2021, the following courses were taught by an LLM holder: Introduction to Law, Legal Research and Writing Skills, Practical Legal Training (Law Clinic) and English for Law. While the Panel acknowledges that non-core courses may be taught by an LLM holder, core courses such as 'Introduction to Law' and 'Legal Research and Writing Skills' should only be taught by a specialized Ph.D. holder. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should develop and implement a plan to increase the number of staff members in different specializations, especially in Criminal Law, Private International Law, and Law of Civil Procedures, and to ensure that core legal courses are being taught by specialized faculty members who hold a Ph.D. degree.

- RUW has a 'Professional Development Policy for Academic Staff' that went into effect on 5 April 2017. In line with the Policy, a Professional Development plan is prepared at the beginning of each AY for the entire University, which includes Professional Development activities at the university level, college level and individual level. Evidence on conducting series of workshops was provided to the Panel. As clarified during interviews, the Dean and the Head of Department (HoD) monitor the professional development process as a whole, though, no evidence was provided on applying surveys to evaluate workshops or on their improvement. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development activities offered and improve them as needed.
- The SER states that the average staff retention rate in the last three years was 100%, as all faculty members renewed their contracts. During interviews, the Panel confirmed that RUW implements effective measures to retain highly qualified staff. The Panel is of the view that the high staff retention rate is indicative of implementing in practice sufficient incentives at RUW.

### **Indicator 2.3: Physical and Material Resources**

*Physical and material resources are adequate in number, space, style and equipment; these include classrooms, teaching halls, laboratories and other study spaces; Information Technology facilities, library and learning resources.*

#### **Judgment: Addressed**

- The Panel was provided with two tour videos, which show suitable infrastructure at RUW. As described in the SER and as shown in the provided evidence, the numbers and

sizes of classrooms, teaching halls and other facilities are sufficient. In addition, CL has a separate well-equipped room for the Moot Court. During their interview, students were satisfied with the college's facilities and no specific concerns were raised. The Panel, though, suggests equipping a separate place for the legal clinic activities.

- The SER states that the campus is fully Wi-Fi enabled. In addition, an RUW email ID is assigned to each student and every academic as well as administrative staff member to facilitate communication. During interviews, the Panel was informed that IT technicians are available during the day to provide their services to staff and students. As provided in the SER and confirmed during interviews, IT facilities were improved after the outbreak of Covid-19; faculty members were provided with a microphone and a camera for a better quality in delivering online lectures and the Moodle system was enhanced with the 'Big Blu Button' function to allow a better quality for synchronous online teaching. During interviews, students and faculty did not raise any issues about IT facilities. Overall, the Panel is of the view that the IT facilities are adequate for students' needs.
- As described in the SER, CL has a dedicated section in the RUW library. The Panel viewed the library through the video tour and is of the view that it is appropriate in terms of study spaces and accessibility. This was also confirmed during interviews. In terms of resources, the CL section includes approximately 1000 printed copies of titles in both English and Arabic, in addition to an annual subscription to reliable databases such as E-brary, Proquest, Springer and 'LexisNexis', which is a specialized database in the field of Law. However, the Panel did not note any subscription to online Arabic databases in the field of Law (e.g., Dar Almanduma, Al Manhal and East laws). When discussed during interviews, the faculty explained that they rely on the Middle East section at 'LexisNexis' database with regard to any Arabic resources. However, since 40% of the courses are delivered in Arabic, the Panel recommends that the College should subscribe to online Arabic databases in the field of Law to cater for research and courses in Arabic. During interview with administrative staff, the Panel learned that the library does not have an Inter-library Loan (ILL) service. Since the field of Law is large to the extent that no library in the world can contain it, the Panel advises the College to enter into an ILL arrangement with other local and regional academic libraries.
- The SER states that the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Department manages all issues related to ICT including maintenance. In addition, ICT technicians are available during working hours to address any request in this regard. As described during interviews, RUW has a formal mechanism to ensure the maintenance of the resources and facilities and to measure their adequacy. Students and staff were satisfied with the status of the IT equipment and facilities.
- RUW has Health and Safety Policy and Procedures, approved in March 2017. The Health & Safety Committee is responsible for hosting awareness, training sessions and fire drills

in collaboration with the concerned parties. The measures taken to respond to the emergency of Covid-19 pandemic as provided in the SER and described during interviews with different stakeholders show that RUW implements appropriate arrangements to ensure the health and safety of students and staff on campus.

## **Indicator 2.4: Management Information Systems**

*There are functioning management information and tracking systems that support the decision-making processes and evaluate the utilisation of laboratories, e-learning and e-resources, along with policies and procedures that ensure security of learners' records and accuracy of results.*

### **Judgment: Addressed**

- As per the SER, RUW uses Power Campus- Self Service as a Student Information System (SIS). A demonstration of the SIS by the CL was presented remotely to the Panel during the site visit. The use of the SIS for decision making was discussed satisfactorily with senior management, demonstrating its effective use. In general, the SIS is fit for purpose and impressive in its facilities. The College also uses a Document Management System where all documents (procedures, handbooks, manuals, and templates) are kept. Overall, the Panel appreciates that the SIS is a sophisticated decision-making aid at RUW.
- Tracking reports are generated by each concerned department at RUW and sent to the concerned decision-makers. The provided evidence includes generated reports about registration and students use of the library facilities. Evidence on utilizing generated tracking reports in decision-making was also provided. During interviews with senior management, the Panel confirmed the utilization of such reports in decision-making processes.
- RUW has a Policy for Security of Students Records approved in May 2018. According to the Policy, the Office of Registrar (OR) is responsible for ensuring that student data (grade sheets, medical report etc.) is maintained in electronic and hard copy in a secure location. In addition, RUW has a Disaster Recovery Policy, approved in April 2018, with the purpose of protecting essential data from loss. With regard to the accuracy of results, RUW has a Policy for Grade Approval, approved in November 2018, with the aim of ensuring transparency and accuracy of grade results. Security and accuracy of learners' records was discussed satisfactorily during interviews.
- As per the SER, the certificates and transcripts are issued by the OR after the HEC approval according to the 'Procedure for Graduation'. During the interview with administrative staff, the Panel was informed that once the list of approved graduates is received from the HEC, the OR prepares the certificates. The certificates are printed, signed, and stamped by the RUW President. The degree certificates are available in both English and Arabic.

The Panel assesses that these are standard procedures for preparing certificates and transcripts. The timeline of issuing the certificates and transcripts is not clearly described in the SER; however, during interviews, the administrative staff assured that these are issued in an appropriate time. The Panel examined a sample of 'Graduate Clearance Form', which shows that the awarded certificates were issued in a timely manner. Nonetheless, the Panel suggests that timeliness of issuing the certificates and transcripts should be determined in the certificates and transcripts preparation procedures.

## **Indicator 2.5: Student Support**

*There is appropriate student support available in terms of guidance, and care for students including students with special needs, newly admitted and transferred students, and students at risk of academic failure.*

### **Judgment: Addressed**

- As per the SER, RUW has established policies and procedures to provide a wide range of support to students, which guide the CL approach in this respect. The SER provides details on student support services. These include, for example, orientation programme, academic advising in addition to enhancing the library assets with print and online resources. During interviews, the Panel learned that the Office of Student Life (OSL) is responsible for the pastoral care of students. The Panel also notes wide satisfaction among students about the range of services provided to them by the OSL, including workshops and other activities. Concerning the library, it provides various services to users including topic guidance, copyright rules, technical processes and an annual orientation at the beginning of the AY. The library also conducts workshops on the effective use of the library resources, the use of the Turnitin software, plagiarism awareness and more. Although the library serves all RUW students, it is only managed by three specialists (the library manger and two assistants). The Panel suggests that the library appoints more staff to cater for students' needs.
- Providing support in Career Counselling is one of the OSL responsibilities. The Annual Career Fair, in which potential employers including law firms and legal offices are invited, is conducted at the university level and arranged by the OSL. In addition, the Centre for General Studies offers Pearson Assured courses on Career success to all RUW students. Students are guided through the 'RUW Careers Handbook', which includes information about the career fair. The Panel learned through interviews that during the Covid-19 pandemic, RUW conducted an online career guidance workshop. At the college level, individual sessions of career guidance are provided to graduating students, as part of the students' advising process. The College also supports students after their graduation in seeking jobs and/ or postgraduate studies applications.

- At the university level, OSL provides students with the needful induction about all facilities and services available for them at RUW. The RUW Student Handbook includes information about the university's student life and facilities. These are also available for all students on the university website. A Student Orientation programme is held for all newly admitted students at the beginning of each semester of every AY. At the college level, a programme specific orientation session is conducted, and students are provided with the Programme Handbook. During interviews, the Panel learned that in the current AY 2020-2021, the student orientation was held online. During interviews, students were satisfied with the induction arrangements that they had received through the College at the beginning of their admission.
- As per the Academic Advising Policy, a student should meet her advisor four times each semester. During interviews with students, they mentioned that they have the freedom to choose their advisors and in case of lack of harmony between a student and her advisor, the advisor maybe changed. Furthermore, all interviewed students expressed their appreciation and gratitude for their advisors. Moreover, the College Council follows up by individual academic advisors on the status of student advising. The meeting minutes of 19 March 2020 show a focus on the measures to be taken for some identified at-risk students.
- RUW has a Special Needs Policy, which is addressed to students with disabilities. Currently, and since the inception of the BL programme, there have been no special needs students enrolled in the programme. During interviews with administrative staff, the Panel was informed that the OR has an employee specialized to deal with special needs' students. Overall, the Panel is of the view that related provisions are adequate.
- As described in the SER, at-risk students are identified through the OR, which promptly informs academics about their academic probation status, so that they can provide early intervention. During interviews, the Panel learned that the support for at-risk students includes engaging them more into courses in which they struggle and conducting one-to-one meetings to provide additional teaching. The progress of the at-risk students is regularly monitored by the College Council. Students at risk are also required to meet with their advisors more often. In addition, students on probation are required to meet their academic advisors and sign a probationary contract, in which the students are obliged to follow certain measures including not to register more than 12 credits per semester until the probationary status is removed; attend and participate in classes; and hand in all assignments on time. Overall, the Panel is satisfied with the type of support provided for at-risk students.
- Student support services are assessed through surveys (e.g. the graduate exit survey, alumnae survey), in addition to Question and Answer (Q&A) sessions with the University President and with the College Dean, which are organized every semester to discuss

students' academic or non-academic issues. The outcomes of these sessions are discussed in the College Council and actions are taken when necessary. The College improvement plan shows that the outcomes of different surveys and the Q&A sessions are being included in the plan and some areas of improvement were successfully addressed.

## Standard 3

### Academic Standards of Students and Graduates

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

#### Indicator 3.1: Efficiency of the Assessment

*The assessment is effective and aligned with learning outcomes, to ensure attainment of the graduate attributes and academic standards of the programme.*

##### **Judgment: Partially Addressed**

- As shown in the provided sample of course specifications, different assessment methods (e.g., midterms, assignments, projects, and quizzes) are used to assess students' works. The Panel examined a sample of examinations and noted a suitable level of complexity (e.g. 'Intellectual Property' (LAW363), 'Family Law I' (LAW355), and 'Criminal Procedure' (LAW353). However, in a few cases, the assessment's level of complexity was not suitable. For example, the final examination of 'Introduction to Law' (LAW111) was very simple with only two direct theoretical questions, the same was noticed in the final examination of 'Criminal Procedure' (LAW353), which was too direct and simple. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should ensure that all assessments are suitable in terms of their level of complexity.
- As shown in course syllabi and confirmed during interviews with faculty, the assessments (e.g., oral examination, written examination, and projects) are appropriately aligned to CILOs, which are aligned to the PILOs that are themselves reflective of the RUW graduate attributes (see Indicator 1.2).
- As sufficiently described during interviews, the students' CILOs achievement is measured at the end of each semester through the 'Assessment-CILO Matrix' spreadsheet, which shows the percentage of students achieving the course ILOs through the assessments. The achievement of CILOs is also reflected in the 'faculty's personal reflection on the course', which includes the faculty's personal reflection on possible areas of future improvement. The Panel appreciates the effort that has been invested into the Assessment-CILO Matrix spreadsheet template and the faculty personal course reflection.
- As described in the SER, the HoD ensures the proper implementation of the assessment process including consistency, level adequacy, and quality of assessments and, then, submits all assessment tasks to the Dean for approval. In the panel's opinion, this

mechanism is better to be handled by a committee to reduce the burden from the Dean and the HoD from one side and to ensure the participation of faculty of different specializations in the monitoring process from the other. However, the Panel learned during interviews that due to the small number of faculty, this mechanism is entrusted to the HoD and the Dean, where each of them covers one of the two major branches of Law (Public Law and Private Law). While the Panel did not notice any anomaly in this practice, establishing a committee for monitoring the implementation and improvement of the assessment process is advisable. (see also recommendations under indicator 2.2 and 4.2)

### **Indicator 3.2: Academic Integrity**

*Academic integrity is ensured through the consistent implementation of relevant policies and procedures that deter plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct (e.g. cheating, forging of results, and commissioning others to do the work).*

#### **Judgment: Partially Addressed**

- CL implements the RUW Plagiarism Policy, which includes clear provisions on the steps to detect, prevent and penalize plagiarized work. Information on Plagiarism and reference to the Plagiarism Policy is also included in the RUW Student Handbook. During interviews, the faculty explained how they inform students about plagiarism and the Panel confirmed this during interviews with students. RUW has also developed the 'Plagiarism Awareness Handbook' and the library organizes regular plagiarism awareness sessions. Nonetheless, nothing about ethical conduct of research or other forms of academic honesty was mentioned in the SER or the provided evidence. Hence, the Panel recommends that the University should clearly include ethical considerations in its related policies and ensure their dissemination amongst students and staff.
- As described in the SER and confirmed in different interviews, all research-based assessments are submitted to the instructors through Turnitin. The acceptable similarity percentage is to be determined by the instructor, though it shall not exceed 30% as per the related policy. The Panel examined samples of Turnitin reports and is of the view that processes for detecting and deterring plagiarism are in place, though recommends that the College should consider reducing the minimum similarity percentage allowed in research-based assessments and take into consideration other content-related similarity aspects when checking for plagiarism.
- As described in the SER all plagiarism cases are recorded in the Plagiarism log sheet, maintained by the Dean. The Panel examined the 'Plagiarism log sheet' and found that it contains only one case, dated 28 April 2018, and the action taken was 'to re-submit the assessment within 24 hours as per the Policy'. As per the Policy in the first offence, the alternate assessment submission will be graded with 100% of the marks; however, in case



of repeating the offence, the original assignment will be graded with less than 100% of the marks. The Panel found these measures as adequate.

### **Indicator 3.3: Internal and External Moderation of Assessment**

*There are mechanisms in place to measure the effectiveness of the programme's internal and external moderation systems for setting assessment instruments and grading students' achievements.*

#### **Judgment: Partially Addressed**

- RUW has an Assessment Policy, approved in March 2013, which includes provisions on internal and external moderation of assessments. Pre-Moderation of assessments is done by faculty members of the same area of specialization before the assessments being finally approved. The moderator also provides feedback on the correctness and appropriateness of questions. The assessment is then further revised and approved by the HoD and the Dean. In various interviews, the Panel learned that the moderation process is well-established and ensures that all ILOs are addressed by assessment tools.
- As per the SER, all course files which include samples of students' graded assessments, Assessment of CILO's Achievement, and External Examiner/ Verifier reports are audited by the HoD and the Dean in terms of completeness and appropriateness. The Panel was provided with a 'Course Folder Audit Report' of November 2020, which includes general observations about all audited course files. Nothing about checking the fairness of grading as a part of the internal moderation process was mentioned in the SER. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should extend the internal moderation processes to include post-moderation of assessments in order to ensure their consistency and fairness of grading.
- At the end of every semester, all course folders are audited by the Dean and the HoD to ensure that all sections are complete. In this audit, a Course Folder Audit Report is developed including their observations and recommendations. These recommendations are discussed in the College Council. The Panel found evidence on incorporating these recommendations in the College Improvement Plan. However, the Panel notes that the Course Folder Audit Report is mainly limited to minor issues, such as the completeness of course files or signature on personal reflections, without evidence provided on the internal moderation process being formally evaluated or reviewed. Again, the Panel is concerned with exhausting the Dean and the HoD with many responsibilities including evaluating the effectiveness of the internal moderation. Therefore, the Panel concurs with the recommendation under indicator 4.2 that the process of the evaluation should be handled by a committee on the college level, and recommends that the College should develop a mechanism through which a formal evaluation of the effectiveness of the internal moderation process is carried out on a regular basis.

- The procedures of the external moderation process are detailed in the RUW Assessment Policy. As described in the SER, 30% of the courses in each semester are subject to external verification and assessment moderation. During interviews with external moderators, the Panel confirmed that they are provided with the full course files of courses in their specialization. The selection of external moderators was inclusive of local and international experts with relevant professional academic background.
- A sample of the external moderator reports was provided to the Panel, which cover various areas, including the assessments' appropriateness, types and content for the courses; adequacy of assessment criteria; fairness of grading; and students' level of work. The outcomes of external verification are discussed and analysed by the College Council and included in the improvement plan.
- Like the internal moderation process, the Panel finds the external moderation lacking a formal mechanism through which it is evaluated or reviewed for effectiveness. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the College should develop such a mechanism through which the effectiveness of the external moderation process is evaluated on a regular basis.

### **Indicator 3.4: Work-based Learning**

*Where assessed work-based learning takes place, there is a policy and procedures to manage the process and its assessment, to assure that the learning experience is appropriate in terms of content and level for meeting the intended learning outcomes.*

#### **Judgment: Addressed**

- RUW has a clear 'Internship Policy and Procedures' document, approved in January 2018, which stipulates the establishment of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with employers to streamline the internship opportunities within the College. The coordination between the University and the labour market is managed centrally through the RUW Career Guidance and Internship Unit. The Panel was provided with a list of internship placement for law students, which includes around 37 public institutions and reputable law firms in Bahrain. Given that the number of students is around 30 in the programme, the students have the chance to choose the internship place according to their preferences. During interviews, the Panel learned from staff that the students' Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) is taken into consideration when allocating students to the internship institutions. The CL Internship Coordinator manages the whole process of internship, in consultation with the Dean and provides students with general guidelines. In order to ensure that students have equal experiences during internship, CL has developed internship guidelines for employers that contain a description about the experience

expected to be gained by the students during the internship period. Monitoring the implementation of these guidelines rests on the internship coordinator.

- Roles and responsibilities of different parties involved in the internship training process including academic supervisors, training supervisors and students are clearly described in the RUW Internship Policy and Procedures and the CL guidelines for employers. As confirmed during interviews, these documents are communicated to all relevant parties usually through emails before starting the internship training.
- The internship course is mapped to the PILOs (see recommendation under 1.2). In the internship course specification, CILOs are mapped to assessment, topics and assessment methods. Therefore, it can be deduced that the Internship CILOs are contributing to the achievement of PILOs. The 'Internship' (LAW399) is a mandatory three-credit course (a minimum of 200 working hours) in which students can register after completing a total of 69 credits (including 21 university- required credit hours) without any specific prerequisite courses. This means that the student who already completed only 48 college credits, whether compulsory or elective, is eligible to undertake the Internship, therefore, this infers that the student may not complete the basic introductory law courses before applying for Internship. In the panel's view, a student may not benefit from the Internship if she did not complete the basic introductory law courses before applying for the internship course; therefore, this affects the internship contribution to the achievement of the PILOs. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should review the prerequisites and the number of credit hours to be completed prior to Internship registration, so as to ensure students' completion of the basic introductory law courses (determined by the College) before their work-based learning experience. In addition to the internship course, the College introduces the 'Practical Legal Training (Law Clinic)' (LAW478), which is a mandatory three-credit course and requires only completion of 69 credits (no prerequisite course is required). The Practical Legal Training course is linked to the PILOs and is delivered in English. As provided in the course description, this course aims to train students to 'submit written memorandum to defend clients in mock hearings and to plead orally their arguments'. The SER clarifies that training in this course is on cases related to Civil Law, Commercial Law and Criminal Law. In the panel's view, advocacy skills are important to be acquainted by students in both languages; however, given that the language of Bahraini Courts is Arabic, training on these skills would be more beneficial to students if delivered in Arabic. Therefore, the Panel advises the College to consider providing the Practical Legal Training course in both languages.
- The Internship Policy and Procedures at RUW provide guidelines on the assessment distribution. Based on this Policy, students are assessed as follows: 50% by the course instructor (oral presentation 40% and feedback from the site visit 10%) and 50% by the work supervisor (evaluation of the host company 40% regularity at work 10%). The Panel examined samples of internship visit forms, employer evaluation forms, employer

feedback discussion forms, and student internship reports and is of the view that work-based learning assessment is well managed and appropriate in general.

- As described in the SER, evaluating the effectiveness of the internship course is measured through the course contribution to the achievement of PILOs and the feedback elicited from different stakeholders. An example for improvement based on students' feedback and evaluating the course contribution to the PILOs achievement is the CL 'Internship Guidelines for Employers', which was developed after observing that the role assigned to the students during their internship was not contributing to the achievement of the PILOs. Instructors' visits to the workplace and feedback from meetings with the employers are taken into consideration to improve the effectiveness of the internship experience. During the interview with alumnae, the Panel noticed their positive impressions about the internship training and how it had contributed to their overall experience. External stakeholders have also expressed their satisfaction about the level of the students, especially in English language, in comparison with their counterparts from other local universities. The Panel confirms the improvements completed based on evaluating the effectiveness of the internship and appreciates the efforts of the College in this regard.

### **Indicator 3.5: Capstone Project or Thesis/Dissertation Component**

*Where there is a capstone project or thesis/dissertation component, there are clear policies and procedures for supervision and evaluation which state the responsibilities and duties of both the supervisor and students, and there is a mechanism to monitor the related implementations and improvements.*

#### **Judgment: Addressed**

- As provided in the Programme Handbook, the final year project is divided into two courses: the 'Final Year Project 1' (LAW498), which is three-credit hours that requires the completion of 105 credits earned as pre-requisites, and the 'Final Year Project 2' (LAW499), which is three-credit hours that requires the completion of the 'Final Year Project 1' (LAW498) as a pre-requisite. Both are delivered in English language. The 'Final Year Project 1' provides students with insights on how to conduct a final project and the students are required to develop a part of the research project, which should be finalized in the 'Final Year Project 2' course. Both courses are linked to the PILOs. The Panel suggests that the College may consider availing the final year project courses in both languages (English and Arabic).
- The roles and responsibilities of the supervisors and students are generally stated in the RUW assessment policy. In addition, the Panel was provided with the 'Final Research Project Handbook' of the AY 2020-2021. The Handbook includes guidelines about the research process in general, how to develop a research project, grading, and plagiarism.

However, the roles and responsibilities of the supervisors and students are not clearly articulated in the Handbook, though they are inferred between the lines. Therefore, the Panel advises the College to add a section for roles and responsibilities of the supervisors and students in the Research Project Handbook. The Final Research Project Handbook is uploaded on the learning management system course page. During interviews, the Panel confirmed that it is well-communicated to all stakeholders.

- As provided in the SER and supporting evidence, the progress of students is monitored by the supervisors through regular meetings and regular updates on their progress on a weekly basis; however, no evidence was provided on the weekly follow-up of the students' progress. As discussed during interviews, supervisors provide feedback to students through formal assessment of their projects. The students' progress is assessed through the progress report, which is submitted at the time of midterm and through the evaluation of the Final Project and its presentation. As stated in the SER, students' satisfaction is measured through external examiners' reports, faculty personal reflections, course and teacher evaluations, students' feedback collected through the graduate exit survey and external reviews. During interviews, students were satisfied with the whole supervision process; however, no evidence was provided on collecting feedback from students through surveys other than the graduate exit survey. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should formally collect feedback about the students' satisfaction with the supervision process and the resources available to carry out their final year research projects and use the elicited results for improving the capstone courses.
- As described in the 'Final Research Project Handbook', the assessment of the final year project is divided as follows: 50% on the final project, 20% on the progress reports, 20% on the presentation (*viva*), and 10% on class participation. The *viva* is assessed by a panel composed of the project supervisor, an internal examiner and an external examiner, while all other components are assessed by the supervisor. As reported during interviews, rubrics are used to assess each component of the final year project and all projects are submitted through Turnitin. The Panel examined a sample of the final year projects and is of the view that the assessment is accurate and appropriate to the level of the programme.
- The final year project is continuously evaluated through 'The External Examiner Report' as well as feedback from relevant stakeholders, and improvements are done when deemed necessary. For example, the course was divided into two courses, three credit hours each, based on the faculty personal reflections and the feedback of the external examiner. The process in which this improvement was carried out, as detailed in the SER shows an effective mechanism for monitoring and improving the final year project.

### **Indicator 3.6: Achievements of the Graduates**

*The achievements of the graduates are consonant with those achieved on equivalent programmes as expressed in their assessed work, rates of progression and first destinations.*

**Judgment: Addressed**

- From interviews with faculty, students, alumnae, employers, as well as from the review of graded students' assignments included in course portfolios, the Panel confirms that the level of students' achievements is appropriate for the Bachelor degree in Law programme and is comparable with similar programmes.
- A Programme Data Set, which includes statistical information about the students' enrolment and graduation rates is generated on a semester basis. This information feeds into the Cohort Analysis, which is generated every four-year cycle. During interviews with senior management, the Panel learned that the data is discussed in the College Council and used for planning the next year's student enrolment targets. The Panel examined the analysed data and noted high retention and progression rates (90% and 80% respectively) and most of the students graduate within 4.5 years. The graduates' CGPA has been increased from 2.96 in the AY 2016-2017 to 3.30 in the AY 2019-2020. Withdrawal rates are very low (3 withdrawal cases in 2015-2016; 2 cases in 2016-2017, 1 in 2017-2018, 1 in 2018-2019, and 1 in 2019-2020).
- As described earlier in this indicator, the student's progression is tracked on a semester basis through the programme data set and on a cohort basis every four-year cycle through the cohort analysis report, which shows a high progression rate. The ratio of enrolled to graduated students was 30:25 in the AY 2019-2020 (approximately 83%). With respect to the graduate destinations, CL has established 'the Alumni tracker', which is a spreadsheet that includes information about the employment status of the BL alumnae since the establishment of the programme, including the organization in which they are employed and their positions. These data along with analysed feedback of the graduate exit survey are discussed in the College Council and the CAC and plans for improvement are set. For example, the CL succeeded in increasing the percentage of the employed graduates in relevant positions from 50% in the AY 2016-2017 to 57% in the AY 2018-2019. Therefore, the Panel appreciates the establishment of a comprehensive Alumnae Tracker and its effective utilization in improving the programme.
- As described in the SER, CL communicates with its alumnae through the 'RUW Alumnae portal' and through the assigned faculty member. CL has also assigned a liaison officer to assist the Dean's Office to keep constant contact with the Alumnae. During interviews, the Panel learned that alumnae satisfaction is also discussed during Alumnae gatherings, which are organized annually. The interviewed alumnae and employers were generally satisfied with the graduates' profile. During interviews, the employers praised the level of graduates in terms of legal skills in English. Graduate exit survey, Employers Survey, Alumnae Survey are used to assess the graduates and employer satisfaction with the

graduates' profile. These surveys are analysed, and their results are discussed in the College Council. Overall, the Panel appreciates the general satisfaction expressed by the graduates toward the graduates' profile.

## Standard 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.*

#### Indicator 4.1: Quality Assurance Management

*There is a clear quality assurance management system, in relation to the programme that ensures the institution's policies, procedures and regulations are applied effectively and consistently.*

##### **Judgment: Addressed**

- As described in different parts of this report, RUW has appropriate policies and regulations for the different needs of the programme. The 'Guidelines for Governance and Quality Management' document, approved in June 2013, includes sound provisions on the process of consideration, deliberation, periodic review and approval of policies. All institutional documents are available to all staff through different portals (e.g., the Document Control Register, website and several printed documents in which the policies are published). RUW has also a 'Policy for Policy Writing', approved in March 2017, which states that 'all University policies are valid for three years'. During interviews, the Panel learned that the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Unit (QAAU) is responsible for managing the Document Control Register and ensuring the periodic review of all policies and procedures on a three-year basis, or sooner if deemed necessary. It was clarified to the Panel also that there is an electronic notification system to alarm the quality management of the dates of reviewing policies. However, the Panel noticed that most of the policies provided during this review were older than three years (e.g. Disaster Recovery Policy, Policy for Security of Students Records, Internship Policy and Procedures, all approved in 2018; Health and Safety Policy and Procedures, approved in 2017; RUW Student Grade Appeal policy approved in 2014; and Assessment Policy, approved in 2013). Therefore, the Panel recommends that the institution should ensure that the most updated policies and procedures are in use.
- The Quality Assurance is managed centrally by the QAAU at the University level. As per the 'Guidelines for Governance and Quality Management', arrangements for quality assurance within the colleges are determined by the Deans' Council. The QAAU is responsible for ensuring adherence to quality standards as well as the continuous enhancement of academic and administrative aspects. In addition, the Senate Standing Committee on Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QA&E), in which all colleges are



represented, is tasked to review all academic processes and ensure their consistent implementation by different colleges. Further, the QA&E Committee reports to the University Senate once every two months, on a minimum, concerning the implementation of the arrangements for quality assurance within colleges.

- As described earlier, the quality assurance at RUW is managed centrally through the QAAU. The 'Guidelines for Governance and Quality Management' document describes the QAAU responsibilities, in which ensuring consistent implementation of policies and procedures is not clearly stated, though it is inferred between the lines. The SER provides some examples on the mechanism followed, including that the course folder is audited each year by the QAAU in collaboration with the College, in addition to the regular external verification of around 30% of the courses offered each semester and reviewing the whole programme by an international reviewer to check its alignment with international standards. At the end of each semester, the College submits 'The End of Semester Report', which includes a brief about the quality assurance practices across the College and recommendations on improvements. The Panel was provided with extra evidence including the internal audit report and different follow-up emails from the Human Resources Department at RUW. As confirmed during interviews, the mechanisms described above ensure the consistent implementation of a wide range of policies across the College (such as the Assessment Policy, the Internship Policy and Procedures, the Student Grade Appeal policy ... etc.).
- The SER describes the arrangements taken to raise the awareness of all academic and support staff about the quality assurance related issues. These arrangements include conducting an orientation at the beginning of each AY, where the academic Quality Assurance Framework is discussed. This is in addition to capacity building workshops, which are conducted on a regular basis for academic and administrative staff to attend. From interviews with the college's administrative and academic staff, the Panel confirmed their understanding of their roles and their involvement in quality assurance process. For example, the academic staff members are participating in the development of the College improvement plan and most of them are members in the College Council through which they discuss feedback received from different stakeholders.
- According to the 'RUW Framework for Quality Management', the quality assurance at RUW is managed centrally by the QAAU, which is concerned with two types of quality assurance: the Quality Management System (QMS), which focuses on all quality assurance issues related to administration; and the Academic Quality Assurance, which consists of quality assurance management in all the colleges. The QA&E is a standing committee, which is mandated to ensure 'the continuous improvement, effectiveness and consistency of implementation of policies and procedures related to academic quality assurance undertaken by colleges'. The committee consists of HoDs of all the colleges and reports to the University Senate once every two months on a minimum.

## Indicator 4.2: Programme Management and Leadership

*The programme is managed in a way that demonstrates effective and responsible leadership and there are clear lines of accountability.*

### **Judgment: Addressed**

- According to the CL organizational chart of 2020-2021, the College has a Dean followed by one HoD, who is followed by four faculty members. The Panel is of the view that as per the international and regional practices, most colleges of law have either two departments (Public Law Department and Private Law Department), or multiple departments to cover each branch of law (e.g. Criminal Law Department, Civil Law Department .. etc.). It has been clarified during interviews that due to the small number of faculty (four faculty members, in addition to the HoD and the Dean), it will be both hard and ineffective to establish more than one department. While the Panel agrees with this view, the Panel had recommended in indicator 2.2 that the college should increase the faculty number; therefore, the Panel urges the College that once the faculty number increases, a review of the college organizational chart to include more than one department should be conducted.
- As described in the SER, the Dean chairs the College Council and is member of the Deans Council, while the HoD chairs the Department Council and reports to the Dean. However, the Panel notes that faculty members are distributed between both councils. In addition, most responsibilities rest on the Dean and the HoD with no standing committees on the college level (e.g. a moderation committee, quality assurance committee) that may report to the Dean and the HoD and, thus, offer another layer of responsibility line to help in ensuring better and effective decision-making. Therefore, although it is acknowledged that the reporting line is clear as it stands, the Panel recommends that the College should consider the establishment of standing committees and *ad hoc* committees as deemed necessary and to include them in the college organizational chart, in order to reduce the responsibilities of the Dean and the HoD and to assist in effective decision-making. (this is also related to the recommendation under indicator 2.2 to increase the number of faculty members).
- The Panel was provided with the job description of both the Dean and the HoD, which shows clear terms of reference (ToR) for both posts. The SER clarifies that the College used to have the 'College Council Committee for Quality Assurance in Assessments', which had been established to contribute to review all midterm and final assessments for all courses. Then, in the AY 2019-2020, the committee was replaced with the Programme Coordinator, and in the AY 2020-2021, the HoD post was established along with the Department Council. With the appointment of the HoD, the functions of the programme coordinator have been carried out by the HoD.

- The clarity of the different managerial positions at various levels is identified as per the job descriptions of senior management as well as related guidelines 'Guidelines for Governance and Quality Management' document. These evidences show exactly who is responsible for the custodianship of the academic standards of the programme at the different levels: department, college, and university. This was clear and confirmed to the Panel from interviews with college administrative and academic staff. However, the Panel notes that the Dean and the HoD were involved in many tasks related to evaluation and monitoring of quality assurance in a way that obscures the clarity of responsibility. For example, with respect to assessment, it is internally pre-moderated by faculty and, then, it is reviewed and approved by the HoD and the Dean, who are responsible also for auditing all course folders, including assessment, and compiling all their recommendations in the Course Folder Audit Report, which is discussed in the College Council chaired by the Dean with the HoD being a member. Although understanding that the small number of faculty is not allowing the establishment of committees and multiple layers of reporting, the Panel is of the view that handling many tasks by the Dean and the HoD would negatively affect the clarity of academic responsibility. (see recommendation under bullet 2 of this indicator and under indicator 2.2)
- Based on the abovementioned with regard to reviewing the organizational structures, lines of responsibility and management, the Panel is of the view that the current management of the BL programme is in need for further review in light of related recommendations as clarified above.

### **Indicator 4.3: Annual and Periodic Review of the Programme**

*There are arrangements for annual internal evaluation and periodic reviews of the programme that incorporate both internal and external feedback, and mechanisms are in place to implement recommendations for improvement.*

#### **Judgment: Partially Addressed**

- According to the SER and as discussed during interviews, CL implements an annual programme evaluation, which relies on various inputs including: the review of the course specifications, textbooks, and curricular activities; feedback collected from students during the Q&A session, surveys (e.g. Graduate Exit Survey, Employers Survey, Alumnae Survey; Faculty personal reflections); and the QAAU audit. The Panel was provided with the 'Annual Report' for the AY 2018-2019, which is claimed to be inclusive of the results and areas of improvement assessed by the College Council. However, by examining the Annual Report, the Panel found that it is more like a programme profile than a self-evaluation report. No in-depth analysis was provided in any part of the report, also no recommendations, suggestions or conclusion was stated. The Panel was provided also with the 'consolidated improvement plan', which shows clear actions, goals, timeline, and

an assigned responsible person. Although the plan includes inputs from various sources, the annual report was not mentioned in the plan. The Panel, therefore, recommends that the College should ensure the comprehensiveness and the inclusiveness of the annual programme self-evaluation report and that its output be utilized for improvement on both programme and course levels.

- Inputs for improvement from various sources are discussed in the College Council on a yearly basis, and then included into the 'consolidated improvement plan', which is updated every year. The Panel examined the 'consolidated improvement plan' as of its latest update in the AY 2020-2021 and noted that it includes recommendations on both programme and course levels since 2015, most of which have been successfully completed.
- RUW has a 'periodic programme review policy', approved in December 2017, which stipulates conducting external and internal periodic reviews of programmes at least once every four years. According to the Policy, a periodic self-evaluation report (in case of internal periodic review), or a report of external reviewers (in case of external periodic review) shall be submitted to the College and, then, the College Council shall appoint members to work on developing an improvement plan. The purpose of the periodic review of the programme is to 'evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of each programme and facilitate timely identification of areas in need of improvement'. Overall, the Panel is of the view that the Policy is comprehensive.
- In line with the 'Periodic Programme Review Policy', the BL programme has been subject to external review by international reviewers in 2015 and in 2019. In addition, feedback from the CAC, along with the students' surveys, course and teacher evaluations and faculty personal reflections are used for internal programme review. As learned from interviews, all internal and external feedback is discussed in the College Council, with the consultation of the CAC and representatives from the legal industry. Based on this consultation and discussion within the College Council, the areas for improvement are determined, and the process of implementation is initiated. From interviews and the SER, the Panel found that the College has benefited from a second external review conducted by an international external expert, on the occasion of graduating the first batch on the Law curriculum of the AY 2017-2018. The Panel found evidence of discussing the second external reviewer's report at the College Council and suggesting actions for enforcing the findings. However, the Panel notes that evidence presented with regard to the periodic review of the programme was limited to the curriculum review and, thus, the Panel recommends that the College should ensure that the periodic review of the programme is inclusive of all aspects of the programme including admission, facilities, resources, etc.
- The QA&E, QAAU, and the College Councils are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the periodic review recommendations. However, while the Panel acknowledges the process in place for periodically reviewing the BL programme, the

Panel nevertheless notes that the review/evaluation process of the progress made on the implementation of recommendations is not systematically conducted. The Panel, therefore, recommends that the College should evaluate the effectiveness of reviewing the implementation of periodic reviews' recommendations, and appropriate and systematic mechanisms be introduced based on the evaluation results.

#### **Indicator 4.4: Benchmarking and Surveys**

*Benchmarking studies and the structured comments collected from stakeholders' surveys are analyzed and the outcomes are used to inform decisions on programmes and are made available to the stakeholders.*

##### **Judgment: Partially Addressed**

- RUW has a 'Benchmarking Policy' developed in April 2017. Evidence provided shows an MoU with one regional university to formally engage into benchmarking activities of different colleges including CL; however, with no actual results. The SER clarifies that this is due to the lack of a formal response from the partner side. CL has benefited from the strategic partnership between RUW and West Virginia University (WVU), USA in benchmarking activities such as assessment procedures and feedback processes; however, evidence provided shows that it has been more like an external moderation process. An evidence on communication with the HEC, dated 21 April 2019, shows that RUW is intending to conclude MoUs with international universities. The SER dwelled into details about the external reviewer report of 2015 and 2020 as evidence of conducting benchmarking activities. Evidence was also provided on discussing their results within the College Council and taking decisions for improvement. However, the Panel found that these activities, as described in the SER, do not accurately reflect the concept of benchmarking as provided in RUW benchmarking policy. In addition, as clarified in indicator 1.2, the Panel found no evidence on benchmarking the ILOs. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should undertake a comprehensive benchmarking study in compliance with the benchmarking policy of RUW and utilize its results to inform decision-making and, hence, improving the programme.
- In line with the RUW 'Surveys Policy', approved in December 2017, CL is regularly collecting feedback from different stakeholders through various types of surveys. Feedback from students is collected through course evaluation forms and e-learning students' survey. Feedback from other stakeholders is collected through the graduate exit survey, alumnae survey and employers survey. In addition, from interviews, the Panel learned that feedback is also collected through regular Q&A sessions with students and formal meetings with CAC and employers.

- From the submitted documentation, the Panel was able to find evidence of stakeholders' input being used systematically to inform decision-making processes in the programme. The results are reflected in the College consolidated improvement plan and actions are taken accordingly. For example, based on analysing the Graduate Exit Survey, a course on writing skills has been added to the college improvement plan and then offered in the revised curriculum of AY 2017-2018.
- Recommendations for improvement based on analysed feedback are discussed in the College Council and then added to the consolidated improvement plan of the College. From interviews, the Panel found that the improvement plan is maintained and monitored by the Dean. Further, the Panel found that most items on the improvement plan have successfully been addressed. As indicated in the SER, students are informed about the implemented improvements based on their feedback through the student representative at the College Council. In addition, the Panel found evidence on informing the CAC about the implementation of the revised curriculum based on their suggestions. During interviews with different internal and external stakeholders, the Panel confirmed their awareness about some improvements made based on their feedback; however, the Panel suggests that this mechanism should be done more systematically. The Panel notes during interviews with various stakeholders a general satisfaction from their part toward the programme's responsiveness to their feedback and suggestions.

#### **Indicator 4.5: Relevance to Labour market and Societal Needs**

*The programme has a functioning advisory board and there is continuous scoping of the labour market and the national and societal needs, where appropriate for the programme type, to ensure the relevancy and currency of the programme.*

##### **Judgment: Addressed**

- On the university level, RUW has the 'Policy for College Advisory Committees', approved in February 2017; while on the College level, CL has developed the 'Mandate of the CAC' document, undated, which includes clear provisions about the CAC ToRs. As per the SER, the CAC is chaired by the Dean and comprises one faculty member and experts from the legal professions, legal advisors, specialists and one RUW Law Alumna.
- As provided during interviews, the CAC meets regularly from two to three times every year, which is consistent with its mandate to meet on a regular basis at least once every semester. The Panel has found plenty of evidence on using feedback from the CAC in decision-making. During discussions with CAC members in interviews, it was clear to the Panel that they were aware of all strengths and areas for improvement of the BL programme and had actively participated in the process of improving the programme.

Therefore, the Panel appreciates the effective involvement of the CAC in decision-making processes at the College.

- As clarified in the SER and confirmed during interviews, CL ensures that the BL programme meets labour market needs through various sources including the CAC meetings, in which the improvement of the curriculum is periodically discussed; ensuring that the employability skills are embedded in the courses as per the HEC directives; and feedback collected from employers and employed graduates. During interviews, the Panel had the chance to discuss this issue satisfactorily with graduates, who were accepted to pursue their post graduate studies abroad in prominent international universities, and alumnae who were employed in reputable law firms and government institutions.
- RUW has employed a private specialized company (KPMG) to conduct a professional feasibility study for all the programmes offered by RUW. The Panel examined the study, dated September 2019, and found that it shows that the BL programme is relevant and meets the needs of the legal market, being the only programme in Bahrain with teaching in both English (60%) and Arabic (40%) and focusing on 'commercial law studies'. Therefore, the programme meets the national and international legal market needs.
- All results from the labour market studies, surveys and CAC meetings are discussed by the College Council, and then reflected into the consolidated improvement plan as necessary. The Dean follows up on these action plans, and interviews confirmed to the Panel that monitoring and review of these mechanisms takes place. The Panel, however, was unable to find what indicates a systematic and well-documented monitoring and review process of these important mechanisms, which help ensure that the programme meets labour market and societal needs. The Panel, thus, recommends that the College should review and evaluate the mechanisms used to ensure that the programme meets labour market and societal needs.

## V. Conclusion

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

**There is Confidence in the Bachelor of Law of College of Law offered by the Royal University for Women.**

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

1. the distinctive approach of the BL programme to focus on Commercial Law Studies, which guides the study plan as well as students' activities
2. the students' exposure to international professional experiences
3. the SIS is a sophisticated decision-making aid at RUW
4. the effort that has been invested into the Assessment-CILO Matrix spreadsheet template and the faculty personal course reflection
5. the efforts of the College in improving the programme based on evaluating the effectiveness of the internship
6. the establishment of a comprehensive Alumnae Tracker and its effective utilization in improving the programme
7. the general satisfaction expressed by the graduates toward the graduates' profile.
8. the effective involvement of the College Advisory Committee in decision-making processes at the College

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

1. maintain a contingency plan for the potential risks related to the BL programme, as well as an analysis of these risks and their mitigation.
2. rephrase the CILOs under the 'general and transferable skills' category to cover a wider scope of skills
3. ensure that CILOs in each course are mapped to PILOs
4. develop and implement, in the next periodic review, clear criteria for determining the language of instruction of each course in the BL study plan
5. revise, in the next periodic review, the pre-requisites in the study plan to ensure their suitable placement within the plan



6. review the content of 'Public International Law' LAW356, to ensure the elimination of any topics out of the scope of the main theory and replacing them with more core topics such as diplomatic and consular relations
7. add more focus on the international dimension of courses pertaining to international commercial law and its application
8. introduce a formal mechanism for regularly ensuring the currency of core textbooks and references as well as the utilization of national legislative databases
9. improve the mechanisms followed for grading non-examination work of students
10. specify the minimum required score of the secondary school certificate required for the admission in the BL programme.
11. develop suitable procedures for identifying applicants who lack the required Arabic language skills and investigate mechanisms for providing them with suitable remedial support before entry into the programme
12. develop a mechanism to ensure the continuity of conducting scientific research in alignment with updated research plans
13. develop and implement a plan to increase the number of staff members in different specializations, especially in Criminal Law, Private International Law, and Law of Civil Procedures, and to ensure that core legal courses are being taught by specialized faculty staff members who hold a Ph.D. degree
14. regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development activities offered and improve them as needed.
15. subscribe to online Arabic databases in the field of Law to cater for research and courses in Arabic
16. ensure that all assessments are suitable in terms of their level of complexity
17. clearly include ethical considerations in its related policies and ensure their dissemination amongst students and staff
18. consider reducing the minimum similarity percentage allowed in research-based assessments and take into consideration other content-related similarity aspects when checking for plagiarism.
19. extend the internal moderation processes to include post-moderation of assessments in order to ensure their consistency and fairness of grading
20. develop a mechanism through which a formal evaluation of the effectiveness of the internal moderation process is carried out on a regular basis
21. develop the mechanism through which the effectiveness of the external moderation process is evaluated on a regular basis.
22. review the prerequisites and the number of credit hours to be completed prior to Internship registration, so as to ensure students' completion of the basic

- introductory law courses (determined by the College) before their work-based learning experience.
23. formally collect feedback about the students' satisfaction with the supervision process and the resources available to carry out their final year research projects and use the elicited results for improving the capstone courses.
  24. ensure that the most updated policies and procedures are in use
  25. consider the establishment of standing committees and ad hoc committees as deemed necessary and to include them in the college organizational chart, in order to reduce the responsibilities of the Dean and the HoD and to assist in effective decision-making
  26. ensure the comprehensiveness and the inclusiveness of the annual programme self-evaluation report and that its output is utilized for improvement on both programme and course levels
  27. ensure that the periodic review of the programme is inclusive of all aspects of the programme including admission, facilities, resources, etc.
  28. evaluate the effectiveness of reviewing the implementation of periodic reviews' recommendations, and appropriate and systematic mechanisms be introduced based on the evaluation results
  29. undertake a benchmarking study in compliance with the benchmarking policy of RUW and utilize its results to inform decision-making and, hence, improving the programme.
  30. review and evaluate the mechanisms used to ensure that the programme meets labour market and societal needs.