



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

Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programme Follow-Up Visit Report

**Bachelor in Graphic Design
College of Arts and Science
Applied Science University
Kingdom of Bahrain**

First Follow-up Visit Date: 12-13 March 2018

Review Date: 9-11 May 2016

HC078-C2-F013

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The Programme Follow-up Visit Overview

The follow-up visit for academic programmes conducted by the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR) of the Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA) in the Kingdom of Bahrain is part of a cycle of continuing quality assurance review, reporting and improvement.

The follow-up visit applies to all programmes that have been reviewed using the Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework, and received a judgement of 'limited confidence' or 'no confidence'.

This follow-up visit Report is a key component of this programme review follow-up process, whereby the Bachelor in Graphic Design (BGD), offered by the Applied Science University (ASU) in the Kingdom of Bahrain was revisited on 12-13 March 2018 to assess its progress, in line with the published review Framework and the BQA regulations.

A. Aims of the Follow-up Visit

- (i) Assess the progress made against the recommendations highlighted in the review report (in accordance with the four BQA Indicators) of ASU's BGD since the programme was reviewed on 9-11 May 2016.
- (ii) Provide further information and support for the continuous improvement of academic standards and quality enhancement of higher education provision, specifically within the BGD programme at ASU, and for higher education provision within the Kingdom of Bahrain, as a whole.

B. Background

The programme review of the BGD programme, at ASU in the Kingdom of Bahrain was conducted by the DHR of the BQA on 9-11 May 2016.

The overall judgement of the review Panel for the BGD programme, of ASU was that of '**Limited confidence**'. Consequently, the follow-up process incorporated the review of the evidence presented by ASU to the DHR, the improvement plan, the progress report and its supporting materials, and the documents submitted during the follow-up site visit and those extracted from the interview sessions.

The external review Panel's judgement on the ASU's BGD programme for each indicator was as follows:

Indicator 1: The learning programme; '**satisfied**'

Indicator 2: Efficiency of the programme; '**satisfied**'

Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates; '**not satisfied**'

Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance '**satisfied**'

The follow-up visit was conducted by a Panel consisting of two members. This follow-up visit focused on assessing how the institution addressed the recommendations of the report of the review conducted on 9-11 May 2016. For each recommendation given under the four Indicators, the Panel judged whether the recommendation is 'fully addressed', 'partially addressed', or 'not addressed' using the rubric in Appendix 1. An overall judgement of 'good progress', 'adequate progress' or 'inadequate progress' is given based on the rubric provided in Appendix 2.

C. Overview of the Bachelor in Graphic Design

The Bachelor in Graphic Design programme was first offered by the Department of Design and Arts in the academic year 2005-2006. The Programme is delivered in Arabic to attract the greatest number of students in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Gulf Arab countries, where Arabic is used as the language of communication, in addition to using English in some courses that are relying on computer software. The first cohort of students has graduated in the academic year 2008-2009, which includes (12) students. The total number of graduates since inception is (98) students. Currently, there are (54) students registered in the programme, according to statistics provided by the University during the follow-up visit, and the programme is delivered by (4) full-time academic members.

1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BGD programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2016, under Indicator 1: The learning programme; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 1.1: *revise the contents of the BGD courses to eliminate similar contents, reduce the number of credit hours of history courses, and introduce specialised courses (compulsory and elective) to enrich the programme.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the programme has been benchmarked with a number of universities accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). Based on the benchmarking, the study plan and course specifications have been revised, resulting in a reduction in the number of history courses from five courses (15 credit hours), to four courses (12 credit hours). These courses are: 'History and Theory of Art and Design I' (ADE 1101), 'History and Theory of Art and Design II' (ADE 2102) and 'History and Civilization of Bahrain' (HBH105), which is taught as a compulsory university requirement. Moreover, the 'Graphic Design History' (GDE222) course was kept because the benchmarking process proved its importance. According to faculty interviews, the Panel was informed that the elective courses have been increased to (16) courses, from which the student chooses five courses (15 credit hours) instead of (6 credit hours), as in the previous plan. Despite this increase, the Panel is of the view that it is possible to have more diversity in these courses, in a way that reflects the fast and frequent development in the graphic design discipline. Examples of the courses that can be added include the 'Design of Mobile Applications UI/UX' course, as well as the 'Info-graphic' course, the 'Motion Graphic' course that can enhance the creative and technical aspect, the 'Graphic for New Media' course, which is used for modern media, and the 'Games Design' course, which is used for electronic games.

The Panel also noted that six new compulsory courses have been added, including: 'Packaging Design' (GDE338), 'Design and Production of Publications' (GDE335), 'Film and Digital Photography' (GDE331) and 'Topography 2' (GDE337). To ensure the balance between theoretical and practical courses, two theoretical compulsory courses have also been added, namely: 'Theory of Communication' (GDE221) and 'the Psychology and Sociology of Design' (GDE327), in addition to five other theoretical elective courses. According to the provided evidence, the programme resolved the problem of the overlap between the content of some courses by modifying

their specifications. This was indicated in the two courses of 'Computer Design 3' (GDE314), and 'Graphic Design 4' (GRD333), where the contradiction between them was resolved, as well as, for the two courses of 'Graphic Design 5' (GRD431) and 'Graduation Project 2' (GRD433). However, there is still some similarity between courses such as: 'Arabic Calligraphy 1' (GDE113) and 'Topography 1' (GDE113). Moreover, the specification of some courses is not covering all of their syllabi, for example, the specification of the course 'Topography 2' (GDE113) does not include the alphabet design by computer and the implementation of what is known as 'Typography Families' through a computer software like (Font Lab Studio), so that the student can use them more professionally. Additionally, the Panel is of the view that the title of the course of 'External Designs and Symbols' (GDE431) is ambiguous and does not properly reflects its content; thus the Panel recommends that the College should modify the title in order to be more reflective for its content. The Panel notes the efforts made by the programme team to address this recommendation and the implemented adjustments based on it; however, this recommendation has been partially addressed according to those adjustments.

Recommendation 1.2: *provide a larger number of textbooks, references, and teaching resources, and incorporate current research findings and professional practice in the course provision.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The Panel examined the course files during the follow-up visit, and found that the specifications of the courses are supported with recent references (e.g. 'Graphic Design 5' and 'Graphic Design 3'). During the interviews with the faculty members and senior management of the programme, it was also revealed that an audit template has been developed to review the specification of each course, this template is filled by the course instructor, and then revised to ensure that its specification is properly updated. The Panel examined this template and found that it includes the confirmation of the availability of certain requirements within the specification of the course such as, the alignment of the textbook and learning materials with the course topics and outcomes, and the consistency of the teaching and learning methods with the topics and outcomes of the course. The Panel also found that this template allows the internal moderator to write his comments and the aspects that need to be modified, and then, asserting that the instructor of the course has made the intended adjustments. Additionally, during interviews with faculty members and students of the programme, the Panel reviewed the use of modern professional practices and contemporary experiences in teaching the courses. This is also supported by verifying the course files and students' work and projects, during the tour, where the Panel reviewed the recent references added to the Library. Therefore, the Panel recognizes that the modifications made by the programme team to add more learning references

and modern learning resources are appropriate. The Panel also urges the programme team to continually diversify learning resources, update and review the utilized references periodically, and focus on professional practices with different purposes that are suitable to the different fields of graphic design. Hence, the Panel recognizes that this recommendation has been fully addressed.

Recommendation 1.3: *map the course intended learning outcomes to the programme intended learning outcomes and review these learning outcomes to avoid duplication, and meet all the requirements to achieve the intended learning outcomes at the programme level.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The BQA review report of 2016 indicated the Courses Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) were not mapped to the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs), and there was a duplication in some courses, which led to the repeated achievement of certain programme outcomes rather than the others. To address this recommendation, the programme team linked the CILOs to the PILOs through a new matrix, which was developed and implemented, starting from the academic year 2016-2017. The matrix was developed after adjusting the study plan by eliminating some courses and adding new ones, as explained in (Recommendation: 1.1), to avoid the duplication in achieving specific PILOs rather than the others. In addition, another matrix was developed to link the CILOs to course assessment, as revealed in the provided evidence, to ensure that the achievement of the intended learning outcomes is aligned with the level of the programme. However, by examining the evidence and as indicated in (Recommendation: 1.1), the Panel found that there is still a duplication of achievement for some PILOs rather than the others, because of the similarity between some courses, as well as the rapid development of the graphic design discipline. Consequently, it is essential to continuously review and update the list of courses to keep pace with this development and achieving the outcomes: B5 'design the visual mission with a vision that keeps up with the updates in the specialization and the professional ethics', C4 'develop graphic ideas that are consistent with the updates of print production, quality and marketing', and D2 'use modern communication technologies to interact with the society and environment'. Therefore, based on the above and (recommendation 1.1), the Panel considers that this recommendation has been partially addressed.

2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BGD programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2016, under Indicator 2: Efficiency of the programme; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 2.1: *conduct aptitude tests for applicants as a condition for admission to ensure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the programme.*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

As indicated in the progress report, the admission requirements of the programme have been modified to include aptitude test as a mandatory requirement for admission; in addition, the applicant should pass a personal interview, and a special placement test that measures the applicants' capabilities and their readiness to study the discipline. The Panel noted in the supported evidence a model for placement test and other assessed models. Moreover, the admission policy allows applicants, who pass the admission test with a minimal score to register in the first semester of the programme. However, they are not allowed to register in the second semester unless they submit a portfolio at the end of the first semester, with a minimum score of (65%). If he/she does not achieve the anticipated score, he/she may repeat one or more of the previously studied courses, or re-submit the portfolio again before being allowed to continue studying in the second semester. Additionally, it was revealed, during interviews with faculty members that this policy is already in place, as two students did not get the minimal score in the admission tests for the first semester of the current academic year, and after they submitted a portfolio, only one of them was accepted. The Panel examined the aptitude tests and found that its level was not appropriate to measure the skills and capabilities of the student, as it measures superficial information and does not measure skills needed for the study in this programme. However, during interviews with the faculty members, they asserted that there are arrangements to modify the test and make its level more difficult, to allow the selection of the best students. In addition, the Panel found that the admission aptitude test is the same one in the two disciplines of Graphic Design and Interior Design, although the Panel considers that the skills required to be measured in both of these disciplines are different. The Panel, therefore, recommends developing the aptitude test model with an appropriate difficulty level that measures the intended skills for each discipline separately. Thus, the Panel considers that this recommendation has not been addressed.

Recommendation 2.2: *review the appraisal form to give more emphasis on the aspects related to research, and add those elements that need to be considered for the purpose of faculty promotion, in line with the mission of the College and the goals of the University.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the College, in cooperation with the University, has re-designed the appraisal form of the faculty members. This form has been developed to include all issues related to promotion, such as scientific research and community service. The Panel reviewed a copy of this form, as well as a description indicating how evaluation elements are related to promotion requirements. The evidence indicates that this evaluation has been implemented since the academic year 2017-2018, and during interviews with senior management of the programme, it was revealed that the current appraisal form was designed after benchmarking with a number of regional universities. They also expressed their satisfaction toward the development of the appraisal form of the faculty members. The Panel noted that if any decrease in an aspect of performance is noted, the Department suggests taking appropriate actions to address this aspect, and some training workshops have already been held for faculty members to strengthen some aspects of their performance. In all cases, the faculty members are always notified with the result of the evaluation, as soon as, it has been issued. Accordingly, the Panel recognizes that actions taken to address this recommendation are in place; however, it is still early to judge their effectiveness in supporting the promotion of the faculty members and achieving the university's mission and objectives. Thus, the Panel considers that this recommendation has been partially addressed.

Recommendation 2.3: *expedite the construction of the additional floor in order to provide more offices, appropriate spaces, and more privacy for faculty members and students especially during marking and research.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The BQA review report of 2016 included some observations concerning the college facilities, including the fact that some faculty members share one office; which affects the required privacy between the faculty member and the student on one hand, and the required privacy and confidentiality for correcting examinations and conducting scientific research, on the other hand. Furthermore, during the follow-up visit, the Panel toured the offices and found that the College has provided appropriate offices for faculty members in order to achieve the necessary privacy between the student and the instructor, and enable them to perform their academic duties properly. Accordingly, the Panel considers that this recommendation has been fully addressed.

Recommendation 2.4: *provide adequate number of learning resources, textbooks, references, specialised leading journals and periodicals.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The progress report shows an increase in the library holdings, in the field of design and arts, by (50%) for Arabic references and (44%) for the total books, in addition to subscription in several foreign journals, as well as, in the Avery Index database. The College is tracking the use of e-resources regularly. During the visit, the Panel toured the Library, and found an adequate collection of books and hardcopies of modern scientific references provided for the discipline. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel learned that the Library was always ready to purchase any books required for the specialization and that their suggestions for its development and updating resources were always taken into account. Hence, the Panel considers that the recommendation has been fully addressed

3. Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates

This section evaluates the extent to which the BGD programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2016, under Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 3.1: *reconsider the methodology used to measure the achievement of the programme intended learning outcomes.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The progress report states that there is a mechanism that has been developed to measure the achievement of the PILOs to ensure, through assessment, that each outcome is achieved separately, and this is implemented through a matrix mapping the assessment methods and the CILOs. At the beginning of each semester, this matrix is reviewed and evaluated, to ensure its consistency with the course type and level; and then the assessments of each CILO at the course level are gathered within another matrix that measures the achievement of each CILO at the whole level of courses. Finally, these results are gathered into a matrix at the level of the programme to measure the achievement of each outcome, independently. Moreover, during interviews with faculty members, it was revealed that they have used this matrix in each semester to measure the achievement of outcomes. They also take into consideration the results of questionnaires and meetings with employers, as well as the evaluation of the satisfaction of internship institutions and alumni, in order to introduce the required improvement and adjustments to the courses, which are also based on the reports examining the achievement of outcomes. Therefore, the Panel of the follow-up visit is of the view that the mechanism used to determine the achievement of the intended learning outcomes is clearer and the results are used to improve the quality of the programme. Thus, the Panel considers that this recommendation has been fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.2: *use the benchmarking policy in a more professional way, benchmark the programme officially with the standards of professional bodies and leading graphic design programmes, and expand the scope of benchmarking activities to include admission criteria, learning resources, and the methods used in assessing and measuring the learning outcomes.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

According to the progress report and the provided evidence, the programme team implemented the formal benchmarking policy of the University with two universities

in Jordan: Al-Ahliyya Amman National University, and Philadelphia University. Furthermore, during interviews, the senior management of the programme referred to the difficulty of implementing formal benchmarking with many universities, as most of them refused to cooperate with the College, and thus, one of the reasons for choosing these universities, particularly, is their acceptance- rather than other universities- to conduct formal benchmarking with the College. The Panel reviewed two benchmarking reports, prepared by the programme team in January 2018, about these two universities, and found that the benchmarking was implemented against the learning methods, the learning resources and the assessment methods. Moreover, the programme team conducted a number of informal benchmarking processes with regional universities to benchmark the content of the courses, and it has prepared a report about the results. The PILOs and the CILOs have been updated based on the benchmarking results with NASAD in 2017. According to the progress report, and by examining the supporting evidence, the Panel noted - in general - that there were adjustments to the programme based on these benchmarking processes. Although, the Panel notes that the benchmarking is covering many aspects of the programme, and there is an emphasis on conducting it within a formal framework, alongside the informal processes. The Panel is of the view that the formal benchmarking process will lead to better results if it has been conducted against more distinguished universities in the field of Graphic Design, which have more updated programmes and study plans. Thus, the Panel finds that this recommendation has been partially addressed.

Recommendation 3.3: *develop a strict policy in relation to plagiarism and the protection of intellectual property rights, implement the procedures related to the detection of plagiarism in all the works submitted by students and raise their awareness about the broad concept of plagiarism.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

According to the progress report, the University has modified its regulations in relation to academic plagiarism, to include a statement of zero-tolerance for academic plagiarism, unlike the previous policy, which allowed (20%) of tolerance in the Turnitin programme. Furthermore, the report indicates that the students' work is subject to verification *via* Turnitin as a compulsory procedure, which is available on the university's website for all users. On the other hand, the Deanship of Student Affairs and the Deanship of the College organized a number of workshops to raise awareness of the academic plagiarism and warning of it. Moreover, the induction day for the new students covers many topics including awareness of the academic plagiarism; the students are also trained to use Turnitin as a major topic within the specification of some courses such as the Computer course offered in the first year. In addition, the external examiner verifies that the students' work is free of any academic plagiarism, and in case of any detected plagiarism, the case is referred to the discipline

and misconduct committee, which recommends the appropriate penalty. Furthermore, during interviews with students and faculty members, the Panel learned that the academic supervisor of the students' projects provides them with solid understanding of the plagiarism policy and such misconduct can be discovered, as the course instructor monitors the students and documents the different stages of their projects, starting from hand drawings until all stages are completed. Additionally, the deadlines for submitting the project in each stage is fixed beforehand to avoid plagiarism from the beginning. However, it was not clear to the Panel how the plagiarism of a projects idea is prevented, and whether there were special procedures for detecting plagiarism from the beginning. Therefore, the Panel considers that the mechanisms adopted by the programme team have partially addressed this recommendation.

Recommendation 3.4: reconsider the methodology employed to ensure the alignment between assessment and the course intended learning outcomes, and ensure that all programme and course intended learning outcomes are systematically and exhaustively assessed.

Judgement: Partially Addressed

According to the progress report, the College QA Unit has developed a mechanism to ensure consistency between assessment tools and the intended learning outcomes of both the programme and the courses, as there is a matrix designed for this purpose. At the end of each semester, the course instructor enters the results of the assessment in this matrix, which feeds another matrix that is managed by the programme coordinator, to ensure the achievement of the PILOs, and allow the measurement of each learning outcome separately at the level of the academic programme. This also enables tracking the results of achieving the outcomes comprehensively. Furthermore, the progress report refers to a moderation process, which is conducted at the beginning of each semester by internal moderators, who are assigned by the programme coordinator, to review each course description. The review includes the learning and teaching approaches, assessment tools and the compatibility of these tools with the intended outcomes, and the infrastructure. It also ensures that the outcomes are written in a measurable and transferable way, and verifies the assessment tools and its consistency with the intended outcomes and the course level, and the quality of the assessment standards. The Panel was confirmed of its achievement through the provided filled forms of the verification of course description updates. The Panel recognizes those modifications and found them suitable for ensuring the compatibility between the assessment and the intended learning outcomes of the courses. However, the Panel found through examining different course descriptions that the weekly timeline for the practical courses, which includes a theoretical aspect, does not include distribution for the theoretical parts, unlike the

practical parts, and other activities, which are all included in the weekly timeline. During interviews with faculty members, they referred to their teaching of the theoretical parts in the practical courses, even though these parts were not included in the weekly timeline. Accordingly, the Panel recommends that the College should include a timetable for teaching theoretical parts of practical courses within the description of these courses, besides identifying detailed weighted standards to evaluate the practical parts. Furthermore, the Panel found that, in some courses, the external and the internal moderators have not been chosen from the highly specialized academics, due to the variety of programme's aspects and tracks. Therefore, the Panel urges the College to take into consideration the relevance between the specialization of the external moderators and the courses being moderated, as well as the variety of grades according to the common performance curves. Thus, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 3.5: *apply internal moderation to all student works, and develop a mechanism to monitor the implementation of internal moderation procedures and its effectiveness.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

According to the progress report, and as indicated in the provided evidence, the programme team in collaboration with the College QA Unit and the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre (QAAC) at the University has modified the internal moderation policy to ensure that all students' work has been moderated. Internal moderation was expanded to include moderating the course specification before being offered, the examination questions, and ensuring the fairness of grades. The procedures also include the moderation of all students' work, which is done through two stages. The pre-moderation stage ensures the alignment between assessment tools and the intended outcomes, and the post-moderation stage includes final examinations and students' classwork. The results are collected and submitted to the Department Council, which may suggest recommendations that are raised to the College Council for further action in these cases. Furthermore, during the site visit, the Panel has reviewed filled templates of the newly developed forms of pre and post moderation and found that these forms cover many aspects. In addition, a column has been added for the internal moderator's comments, and another column has been added for the course instructor to mention the procedures taken to address the comments or the recommendations made by the internal moderator. During the follow-up visit interviews with faculty members, they confirmed to the Panel the implementation of these procedures on all student works in different courses. The Panel also learned that students' grades are not published unless the internal moderation report is discussed within the Department, and approved by the College. The College QA Unit tracks the adherence to the internal moderator's comments

through the 'Internal Moderation Audit Report', which is a template of one sheet checking whether the course specifications have been verified, as well as, the pre and post moderation. The Panel recognizes that the implemented mechanism and practices to address this recommendation are appropriate and have a positive impact on the assessment process of the students' work. Hence, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.6: *implement the ASU's policies and procedures, especially those related to the selection of external examiners, and ensure that all assessment methods as well as student assessed works by course instructors or different committees are subject to an independent external moderation.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The programme was depending earlier in implementing the external moderation policies and procedures on external moderators, who are all coming from the same university and were not in many cases specialized in the specific specialization they moderate. Thus, the improvement plan included a statement highlighting the necessity of implementing the university's policies related to the selection of the external examiners. Through reviewing the progress report and the provided evidence, the Panel found that the Department implements the university's policy and procedures in selecting the external moderators. The process begins with studying experts' CVs, then nominating the most qualified ones to the College that in turn raises the issue to the University for approval. By reviewing the CVs of the external moderators, the Panel noted that their number has been increased to three moderators from various academic backgrounds; one of them is local, and the others are from Egypt and Oman. However, the Panel found – as previously mentioned in recommendation (3.4) – that the specific specialization of the moderators does not cover all Graphic Design courses. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should expand the selection criteria of external moderators to include various specializations covering different fields of Graphic Design. During interviews with faculty members, the senior management, the Advisory Board and employers, the Panel learned that a committee that includes an external member in its composition who is either a labour market expert or an academic specialist assesses the student graduation projects. Regarding student projects in other courses, the Panel reviewed filled forms of some assessed students' projects and the modified assessment form of the field supervisor, and found that there was a space added to write notices and comments about how to improve examination questions and assess the learning outcomes. The Panel also noted the participation of an external academic member that is clearly shown in the form. The progress report mentioned that all assessment methods and student works are subject to independent external moderation, through reports submitted by the external reviewer of the programme. By examining the external moderation policy

and its implementation in the external moderation report, the Panel found that the external moderator report did not use the template attached to the external moderation policy. The Panel noted that although the external moderation report covers many aspects mentioned in the attached template, it did not completely cover all assessment standards as stated in the template. Additionally, the report did not include a judgment for each standard (excellent– good – satisfied – inadequate) as mentioned in the template. Accordingly, the Panel recommends that the College should ensure that the external moderator is adhered to the university’s external moderation policy and using its template. During the site visit, the Panel examined the meeting minutes of the Academic Standards and Examination Committee, and found that the results and recommendations of the external moderation reports are discussed within the committee, and then the required actions are taken at the level of the Department. Furthermore, the Panel reviewed the proposed improvement plan that is based on the external moderation report and the College annual report. The Panel found that the plan lacks many components, as it did not include any dates for submission or approval, the name of the moderator, the date of the report that the plan was based on, or any signatures referring to reviewing or discussing the plan at any level. In addition, the plan did not include all recommendations mentioned in the moderation report such as promoting scientific research and encouraging the faculty members to publish in scientific journals or periodicals, as well as urging students to conduct intensive research, finding alternatives and suitable design solutions, and extracting ideas, although the later recommendation was mentioned in the department minutes. Thus, the Panel considers that this mechanism needs further scrutiny in implementation. The Panel appreciates the efforts of the programme team in addressing this recommendation; however, according to the provided evidence and what has been noted by the Panel, this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 3.7: *develop and implement mechanisms to ensure the level of student works is appropriate for the type and level of programme.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The programme team implemented a number of mechanisms to address this recommendation, including developing a matrix to link the CILOs to the PILOs, in order to measure student’s achievement level directly, in addition to benchmarking the level of the student’s graduation projects against the level of the students in similar regional universities. The process of benchmarking resulted in detecting some strengths and weaknesses in students’ works. Accordingly, a plan has been developed to improve the weaknesses. The strict implementation of the plagiarism policy also ensures the authenticity of students’ works. Moreover, students’ projects are presented to juries consisting of internal and external members, which monitor the work’s authenticity, and its alignment with the level of each course; this was confirmed to the

Panel through reviewing the practical projects assessment forms. In addition, the implemented procedures include pre and post moderation, as well as, external moderation, and the discussion of the advanced courses' projects by external members. The Panel noticed that some courses were supported by external professional workshops, such as 'Graphic Design 4', and 'Printing Techniques' courses, to improve students' performance level. The Panel reviewed a table outlining the plan to host experts to conduct more workshops. However, the Panel noticed that judging final projects in practical courses by juries as a way of assessment and as a part of final assessment is not regulated, as it was not included in the assessment policy. As mentioned in recommendation 3.2, the Panel advises the College to select distinguished universities for the benchmarking of the level of students' work, in order to increase the benefit of benchmarking. Through reviewing the students' works by the Panel, it was revealed that there is a need to improve the areas of innovation and creativity in consistence with the programme level. Based on the above, the Panel considers that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 3.8: *follow the procedures related to the selection and the distribution of internship places, to ensure a balanced and appropriate experience for the students in the programme.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

According to the progress report, the list of the internship places was updated, and the College sought to conduct memorandums of understanding with several professional institutions, which are suitable for the discipline. From the provided evidence, the Panel found that memorandums of understanding were concluded with three institutions in the field of Graphic Design. The Panel noted a diversity in the internship places as has been showed in the provided statistics related to the internship stakeholders and the trainee students for the last three years, which prove that the procedures of the internship student placement are being implemented. During interviews with students, they affirmed to the Panel that the College provides them with opportunities of training in professional places and monitors their training. The Panel notes that the programme team sought to enhance communication with the specialized employers during the previous period, as well as, conducting suitable arrangements to monitor the internship process. Hence, the Panel encourages the College to continue expanding the communication with employers to provide further training opportunities for the students and to develop the internship portfolio by including information about the internship problems, and the tools used in its development, improvement, and assessment. The Panel concludes that this recommendation is fully addressed.

4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance

This section evaluates the extent to which the BGD programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2016, under Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 4.1: *ensure that the Quality Assurance Unit monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the implementation of the policies and procedures relevant to assessments of student works.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The Panel found during interviews that the College QA Unit is managed by a director, who is supported by three faculty members (the three coordinators of the programmes of Graphic Design, Interior Design, and Computer Science); they all undertake their responsibilities in the Unit beside their usual teaching responsibilities. According to the provided evidences, the Unit is convened periodically to monitor and discuss the implementation of the quality policies and procedures, and to develop the required improvement plans, as has been stated in the meeting minutes of the Unit. The Unit monitors and evaluates the implementation of the policies related to assessing students' work through the tracking of the internal and external assessment processes, and then submits a summarized report to the Dean. The work of the Unit is subject to the internal moderation of the QAAC. During interviews, the Panel learned that the Unit has made several developments and improvements, as it has developed new mechanisms and activated others. For example, a number of forms have been developed and tracked electronically (e.g. the Internal Moderation Form, the Verification Form, and the Academic Staff Appraisal Form), as well as checking the students' work through Turnitin to detect any academic plagiarism. According to the progress report, the monitoring process conducted by the Unit had led to exploring some areas that need to be improved, accordingly, the Unit has developed some recommendations to tackle them, and follow up with the Department on how these recommendations have been addressed. The progress report and the supporting materials provided to the Panel offers many examples on how the areas for improvement have been detected and the recommendations have been addressed and tracked by the Unit. The Panel acknowledges the efforts of the College QA Unit and its staff; nevertheless, the Panel is concerned about the heavy workload of its staff, who works in the Unit beside their usual work as teachers, which affects the proper implementation of policies and procedures. Although the University has procedures for assessing and improving its academic programmes, the Panel is of the view that it

is better for the Unit to ensure the proper implementation of these policies and procedures by coordination with all colleges and administrative circles. The Unit should also use different direct and indirect tools to assess the PILOs, and the effectiveness of the academic programmes and relevant services. This is in addition to developing and improving the academic programme, as well as, closing the quality loop by reaching a tangible evidence of the improvement process, which proves the effectiveness of the quality system and improves the outcomes of the learning process as a whole. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should decrease the academic workload of the staff members who are participating in the College QA Unit, to ensure the accuracy of the monitoring and assessment processes. Thus, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 4.2: *ensure that all the structured comments of relevant stakeholders are gathered, analysed and used for the improvement of the BGD and that the outcomes of the questionnaires and meetings are communicated to the stakeholders on a regular basis.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

According to the progress report, the feedback is collected from different sources including surveys, in which the feedback is collected from students, alumni, employers, faculty members and others. The Panel reviewed samples of those surveys. During interviews with the programme senior management and the faculty members, it was revealed that all the results of surveys, as well as, opinions and suggestions of the faculty members are discussed in the Departments, where the necessary actions are taken to be implemented, and are then submitted – when needed - to higher levels for approval. Examples of the taken actions are the reduction of history courses in the new study plan and the introduction of more specialized courses. The Panel encourages the College to continue monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the implemented policies and procedures related to students' work assessment by the College QA Unit. Moreover, members of the Advisory Board indicated that their opinions and suggestions, which are raised during the board meetings, are taken into consideration and are tracked. However, the Panel found that the mechanism of informing internal stakeholders about the result of surveys and the extent of the achieved progress is not clear. This was confirmed to the Panel during interviews with the senior management, the faculty, the Advisory Board, and the students, whereas their responses were inconsistent regarding the mechanism of informing them with the decisions taken and adjustments. Thus, the Panel recommends that the College should adopt clear and specific mechanisms to ensure the stakeholders' awareness of the achieved progress in relation to improvement suggestions. Based on the above, the Panel considers that this recommendation is partially addressed.

5. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own progress report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the follow-up visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/BQA Follow-up Visits of Academic Programme Reviews Procedure:

The Bachelor in Graphic Design programme offered by Applied Science University has made Adequate Progress and as a result, the programme will not be subjected to another follow-up visit).

Appendix 1: Judgement per recommendation.

Judgement	Standard
Fully Addressed	The institution has demonstrated marked progress in addressing the recommendation. The actions taken by the programme team have led to significant improvements in the identified aspect and, as a consequence, in meeting the Indicator's requirements.
Partially Addressed	The institution has taken positive actions to address the recommendation. There is evidence that these actions have produced improvements and that these improvements are sustainable. The actions taken are having a positive, yet limited impact on the ability of the programme to meet the Indicator's requirements.
Not Addressed	The institution has not taken appropriate actions to address the recommendation and/or actions taken have little or no impact on the quality of the programme delivery and the academic standards. Weaknesses persist in relation to this recommendation.

Appendix 2: Overall Judgement.

Overall Judgement	Standard
Good progress	The institution has fully addressed the majority of the recommendations contained in the review report, and/or previous follow-up report, these include recommendations that have most impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. The remaining recommendations are partially addressed. No further follow-up visit is required.
Adequate progress	The institution has at least partially addressed most of the recommendations contained in the review report and/or previous follow-up report, including those that have major impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. There is a number of recommendations that have been fully addressed and there is evidence that the institution can maintain the progress achieved. No further follow-up visit is required.
Inadequate progress	The institution has made little or no progress in addressing a significant number of the recommendations contained in the review report and/or previous follow-up report, especially those that have main impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. For first follow-up visits, a second follow-up visit is required,