



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
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Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programme Follow-Up Visit Report

**Bachelor in Management Information Systems
College of Administrative Sciences
Applied Science University
Kingdom of Bahrain**

First Follow-up Visit Date: 11-12 January 2017

Review Date: 26-28 May 2014

HC039-C2-F007

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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 & 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 Report provided an account of the follow-up process and the findings of the follow-up panel (the Panel), whereby the Bachelor in Management Information Systems (BMIS), at Applied Science University (ASU) in the Kingdom of Bahrain was revisited on 11-12 January 2017 to assess its progress, in line with the published Programmes-within-College Reviews 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 BMIS since the programme was reviewed on 26-28 May 2014.
- (ii) Provide further information and support for the continuous improvement of academic standards and quality enhancement of higher education provision, specifically within the BMIS programme at ASU, and for higher education provision within the Kingdom of Bahrain, as a whole.

B. Background

The review of the BMIS programme, at ASU in the Kingdom of Bahrain was conducted by the DHR of the BQA on 26-28 May 2014.

The overall judgement of the review panel for the BMIS 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 BMIS 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 26-28 May 2014. 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 Management Information Systems

The Bachelor of Management Information System (BMIS) was first offered in the academic year 2005-2006 by the Applied Science University (ASU). The programme is managed by the Department of Management Information Systems (MIS Department) at the College of Administrative Science. The Programme has gone through a number of revisions by the institution, last of which was in preparation for this follow-up visit. The progress report indicates that there are a total number of 121 students enrolled in the programme and that the Department employs four academic staff (three PhD holders and one MSc) whom are responsible for the delivery of the programme.

1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BMIS programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2014, 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: *Develop detailed syllabi for all courses within the offered version of the programme to ensure completeness and consistency within the programme.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The report of BQA's 2014 review indicated that the detailed syllabi of a number of new courses that had not been offered at the time (e.g. MIS332, MIS356, MIS363, MIS445) were not developed and recommended for their development. To address this recommendation, the programme team developed detailed syllabi for these courses, which in turn were approved by the relevant college committees and the College and University Councils. The Panel studied the provided syllabi and the course files for all these courses and verified that the syllabi have been completed and approved through proper channels. The Panel is therefore satisfied that this recommendation is addressed.

Recommendation 1.2: *Investigate ways to incorporate independent learning in the curriculum through the usage of the available e-learning platform.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The progress report states that to address this recommendation, the programme team has introduced additional activities on its e-learning platform 'Moodle'. Evidence provided indicates that new web-based learning resources – URL's, YouTube Videos, software applications – are now made available on the 'Moodle' platform, which the Panel was able to confirm during the follow-up visit. Moreover, a demo of a course (Mobile Computing) on the 'Moodle' platform for the BMIS programme illustrated evidence of independent learning as students were asked to develop mobile applications using resources that were available through the 'Moodle' platform. The output of students' work is also posted on 'Moodle' as well as further interactions with faculty members. 'Moodle' usage statistics are clear evidence that staff and students are actively using it to support the learning process. During interview sessions, students confirmed that a variety of independent learning activities, including video-based tutorials and exercises, take place in several BMIS courses. Hence, the Panel is satisfied with the progress made towards fulfilling the recommendation.

Recommendation 1.3: *Revise the current grade distribution policy and develop more flexible policy based on the course level and nature.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

At the time of the 2014 programme review, all courses offered in the BMIS programme followed the university's generic grading system, which allocates 20% for the course work, 30% for the midterm examination and 50% for the final examination. To address this recommendation, the assessment policy was amended and approved in July 2016. As a result, a revised distribution of grades for five courses was proposed. The changes were further approved by the Curriculum Committee and the Department, College and University Councils and were implemented in the first semester of the academic year 2016-2017.

The Panel studied the documents provided and the course files and noted that while there has been a differentiation of the grading system between some of the courses and the changes introduced are in line with the type of the courses selected, there is no clear basis for the selection of these courses and changes made. For instance, one could argue that the 10% allocated for the programming project is low. Moreover, it is common for system analysis to have a project component. However, as the grade distribution for this course was not reviewed, no changes were introduced. In its meetings with the programme management team and faculty members, the Panel investigated the process and rationale used to introduce such changes. Invariably, benchmarking and professional judgment were mentioned. However, no documented benchmarking was shown for how the new grade distributions were set. Therefore, it is likely that changes were mostly based on the professional judgment of the programme's faculty. The Panel is of the view that the programme can benefit further from a more systematic approach to selecting which courses need to have their grade distribution changed and use justification for the changes made that is beyond professional judgments. Hence, the Panel is of the opinion that while actions exist to fulfil the recommendation, it is only partial.

2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BMIS programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2014, 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: *Revise the English language placement test and the remedial English language courses to ensure their effectiveness.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

ASU adopts a standard English placement test (Oxford English Placement Test) to assess the competencies of its admitted students which is acknowledged to be suitable. Nonetheless, the report of BQA's 2014 review included a concern that the cut off score used by ASU to decide whether the students are eligible to enrol directly into the programme or undertake the English remedial courses (ENG097 and ENG098) was not suitable. Nonetheless, during follow-up visit interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the cut off score was not changed. Instead, English remedial courses and compulsory courses within the programme have been revised and strengthened to better serve the needs of the programme. Interviewed students indicated their satisfaction with the current English courses. The Panel studied the new course specifications and noted the improvement. However, the Panel is concerned that the changes are not to the level needed to ensure that the students acquire appropriate English language skills needed for a programme taught in English. Moreover, during interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the University does not conduct an exit examination to ensure that students attending the English remedial courses are brought to a level equivalent to those granted direct access to the programme. Hence, while the Panel acknowledges the college's progress in addressing this recommendation, further work is needed.

Recommendation 2.2: *Further enhance the admission requirements in relation to mathematics, which is particularly important for the BMIS programme.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

To address this recommendation, the MIS Department, led by the College, in collaboration with a part-time faculty specialized in mathematics revised the mathematics remedial course content and as a result developed a new course that is specifically designed for students enrolled in the BMIS programme (Mathematics for MIS Students - MIS099). During the follow-up visit, the Panel was informed that the

content of the course is geared to the BMIS programme needs and includes specific topics, such as binary mathematics, that is needed for the proper delivery of programming courses. The remedial course is approved by the University Council and was delivered in the first semester of the academic year 2016-2017. The Panel studied the revised course content and noted the changes that support the needs of the programme. Nonetheless, the Panel was not provided with clear justifications for introducing a mathematics course specific for the BMIS students nor was the Panel provided with evidence of how students graduating from non-science stream high school performed in this course. Hence, while the Panel acknowledges the college's efforts, the Panel recommends that the College should benchmark its remedial course and further study the impact of the revised course on the performance of the students.

Recommendation 2.3: *Expedite the implementation of the department's recruitment plan to ensure that the programme is staffed adequately with qualified MIS faculty members.*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

The BMIS programme is currently delivered by five faculty members, four of whom are employed by the MIS Department on a full-time base. Studying the faculty's profile, the Panel notes that it is still inclined towards computer science rather than MIS. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the University has invited an MIS specialist, on a sabbatical leave from a regional university, to chair the Department and contribute to the delivery of the programme. The Panel was also provided with evidence on the university's attempts to recruit new faculty members that was not completed because the Department was not satisfied with the level of the candidates. During the follow-up visit, the Panel came to know that a faculty member who was teaching core courses in MIS had left and is yet to be replaced. While the current Head of Department can teach these courses, he is on sabbatical leave and might not be with the Department for a long time. The Panel is concerned that without having identified candidates for recruitment in sight, this raises a major concern and risk. Interviewed senior staff informed the Panel that due to high demands for MIS specialised faculty members across the higher education sector, the Department is facing challenges in executing its recruitment plan. The Panel acknowledges that the university senior management is aware of the issue and is discussing improving the recruitment packages by adding incentives that would enable the College to attract MIS specialised faculty members. In addition, as a long-term plan, the Department is discussing the possibility of appointing a graduate assistant who could be supported to complete his/her studies in the field of MIS and serve the Department in the long term. Nonetheless, the Panel is concerned that no evidence was provided to indicate that these initiatives are acted upon and that next year's staffing outlook in the MIS

Department is not all reassuring. Hence, the Panel considers this recommendation not addressed.

Recommendation 2.4: *Expedite the implementation of the newly developed academic promotion policy in order to retain qualified and experienced faculty*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

ASU has a promotion policy that was formally approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2015. The policy clearly stipulates the requirements for faculty members to be promoted from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor and from Associate Professor to Professor and the procedures to be followed at the department, college and university levels. Interviewed staff were well aware of these requirements and procedures. Moreover, evidence of one faculty member being promoted in 2015 from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor was provided to the Panel. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that, in their effort to support faculty in this regard, the Deanship of Research in collaboration with the Department of Faculty Development are conducting a series of workshops to strengthen faculty members' research outcomes. Moreover, seminars are conducted on a department level to discuss current research activities of the faculty members. The Panel was informed that it is expected that these activities would enable faculty members to meet the promotion requirements, especially with regard to research as it is identified by the institution to be the most challenging part of the requirements stated in the policy. However, at the time of the site visit, no new faculty members had applied for promotion. The Panel acknowledges the college's efforts and recommends that the College should further investigate ways to support its academic staff to be promoted.

Recommendation 2.5: *Establish a comprehensive resource tracking system to track usage by students and staff and utilize its outcome to support decision-making*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

The progress report states that the IT Department at ASU is responsible for tracking the different resources available and provide the programme with reports needed for decision-making. The Panel was provided with evidence of separate reports produced on the utilisation of the library resources and 'Moodle', and minutes of meetings of departmental discussions of these outcomes. Moreover, during interview sessions, the Panel was informed of examples of where these reports were utilised for decision-making. Nonetheless, the Panel was not provided with evidence indicating that these reports are utilised collectively to support decision making at a more holistic level as recommended in the BQA's 2014 review report. Hence, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is not addressed and recommends that the College should

establish a comprehensive tracking system that evaluates and acts upon the utilisation of the resources in a more holistic manner.

3. Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates

This section evaluates the extent to which the BMIS programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2014, 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: *Develop and implement a mechanism to ensure that graduate attributes are properly assessed through valid and reliable assessment tools*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The BMIS programme specification includes clearly stated graduate attributes that are imbedded within the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs). The programme specification also stipulates the teaching and assessment methods used for delivering and assessing these outcomes. Moreover, the programme team has reviewed all course specifications and revised the documents where needed to ensure that the assessment is properly linked to the specified Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs). The Panel studied the provided evidence and was satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that the MIS Department has critically reviewed the assessment plans for the courses to ensure that collectively they cover all of the PILOs and thus attainment of the graduate attributes could be achieved. However, the Panel noted that there is no evaluation of the degree of achievement of the CILOs once students complete the assessment tasks. Moreover, the CILOs are not mapped explicitly to the PILOs. During the follow-up visit, the programme management team informed the Panel that the College has recently adopted a mechanism to address this issue and that the mechanism was piloted and reported for two courses during the last semester. The Panel studied the evidence provided and was satisfied with the mechanism adopted. The Panel was informed by the programme management and the Quality Assurance (QA) team that the measurement of CILOs' achievement and their integration within an overall score at the level of the PILOs will be generalised to all courses starting the second semester of the academic year 2016-2017. The Panel acknowledges the progress achieved to date and recommends that the College proceed with its plan of expanding its mechanism for evaluating the achievement level of the CILOs and PILOs to be implemented for all the programme courses.

Recommendation 3.2: *Carry out a comprehensive formal and periodic benchmarking that covers graduate attributes and students achievements.*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

To address this recommendation, the progress report states that the College has integrated the benchmarking of the graduate attributes in other activities, such as by subjecting final examination papers to the scrutiny of the external examiners employed from Al Yarmook University in Jordan. Nonetheless, as indicated in Recommendation 3.1, the assessment methods of all courses (except the two pilot courses) are currently linked only to the four main categories of the CILOs and not the PILOs or the graduate attributes. Moreover, external examiners do not comment on the level of students' achievement in comparison to students from specific institutions. Instead, they assess students' achievement using their general professional knowledge and appreciation, which is heavily influenced by their own institution and is not supported with objective evidence as would be the case with formal benchmarking exercises.

Furthermore, interviewed programme team and faculty members were not very clear about the type of benchmarking beyond 'catalogue-like' type of benchmarking, which exclusively compares programme inputs and not outputs or outcomes. Indeed, the benchmarking report submitted as evidence to the Panel stipulates comparisons made with the University of Sharjah, the University of Jordan, and the IS 2010 model curriculum. The report indicates similarities in the aims, admission requirements, degree requirements and courses descriptions between ASU and the above mentioned universities. During the interview sessions, the Panel was informed that no outcomes were compared because corresponding data was not accessible by the programme team. Moreover, the Panel is concerned that the programme team did not conduct serious benchmarking of its requirements for cumulative grade point average and course pass rates in comparison with those of local, regional and international institutions adopting the American credit-hours system. To this end, ASU was very selective in choosing the institutions it benchmarked with. Therefore, the Panel concludes that this recommendation has not been addressed and recommends that benchmarking should be expanded to include benchmarking of assessment tools and graduate achievements and the course pass rates and cumulative grade point average.

Recommendation 3.3: *Review and develop a more robust mechanism to ensure the consistency and sustainability of the alignment between learning outcomes and assessments at both course and programme levels.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

To address this recommendation, the progress report indicates that the programme team has developed a set of rubrics that cover various forms of assessment, namely; short reports, group reports, case studies, computer laboratory exercises, and individual presentations. These rubrics have been reviewed and validated by an external reviewer and are already implemented, starting the first semester of the current academic year (2016-2017), and their suitability and effectiveness are yet to be assessed. In addition, the revised University Assessment and Feedback policy sets out clearly the process for internal and external moderation of all assessments which ensures that moderators confirm the alignment between the assessment and the learning outcomes that it is designed to test. However, the lack of substance of some internal moderator and most external examiner's reports, which were restricted to filling the checklist part of the template without adding useful comments, do not give much confidence in the alignment between learning outcomes and assessments. Moreover, in the absence of direct measurement of the achievement of each CILO, and not just the category it belongs to, it is not possible to escalate the alignment to the level of the programme. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that ASU has developed some activities and workshops for faculty in teaching and assessment emphasising alignment between learning outcomes and assessment. Moreover, evidence was provided on piloting a mechanism for direct measurements of CILOs and hence assessing the level of achievement of PILOs. The Panel acknowledges the college's progress in this regard and recommends that the College should expedite the implementation of its newly developed mechanism for assessing the achievement of individual CILOs across all taught courses and hence have a proper evaluation of the achievement of the PILOs.

Recommendation 3.4: *Develop a mechanism to measure the effectiveness of the internal and external moderation processes and expand the role of the internal moderation to include the evaluation of the sustainability of assessment instruments other than the examination papers.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the revised internal moderation policy stipulates that 'all assessment (coursework and examinations) are subject to internal moderation'. However, the Panel found no evidence of internal moderation being expanded beyond the mid-term examinations to include other assessments.

Furthermore, the Panel found no evidence that either internal or external moderation were being evaluated for their effectiveness. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the College encourages internal and external moderators to give comments and critical feedback. However, provided evidence indicates that while some moderators did, many did not. Upon further inquiries, the Panel was informed that verbal feedback was communicated. However, with no documented evidence to trace, the rigour and effectiveness of the process cannot be confirmed. Moreover, the Panel is concerned with the absence of direct contact between the programme faculty and the external examiners, which is likely to cause lack of engagement and accountability of external examiners towards their colleagues teaching the courses.

Notwithstanding the above, there was ample evidence of improvement in the internal moderation process. The Panel saw and heard of multiple changes to examinations being made as a result of the moderation process. There were also instances of external moderation leading to such changes. The Panel is of the opinion that the process would be effective and sustainable if the moderation process is expanded to include assessments other than major examinations and is systematically evaluated. Hence, the Panel considers that the recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 3.5: *Ensure that the assessment tools used are at an appropriate level and provide proper means to differentiate students' abilities.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the 'internal and external moderation of assessment instruments are the primary means by which the University and College ensure that assessment tools used are at an appropriate level and provide proper means to differentiate students' abilities. However, the Panel notes that in the absence of proper evaluation of the effectiveness of moderation, the validity of the assessments themselves cannot be asserted as discussed under recommendations 3.2 to 3.4. A thorough examination of course files did however point to a steady improvement of the quality of assessment being at appropriate level and providing proper means to differentiate students' abilities. Interviewed students reported an increase in the level of difficulty of assessment during the last academic year (2015-2016).

During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the programme coordinator looks at the overall distribution of grades, and course evaluation reports included an analysis of grades showing proper differentiation between students, in general. Moreover, interviewed faculty members informed the Panel that the College does not use normalisation of grades within the BMIS programme and upon random check of examination marks and corresponding final grade calculations conducted by the Panel, no indication of such practice was identified.

Hence, the Panel acknowledges the progress achieved by the College and recommends that the College should assess the effectiveness of the internal and external moderation as these are the main mechanisms ASU relies on to ensure that the utilised assessment tools are at an appropriate level and facilitate the differentiation of students' abilities.

Recommendation 3.6: *Review the causes of students' withdrawal and the upward drifting of the length of study of the BMIS programme, and develop and implement a mitigation strategy*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report states that the College has conducted 'extensive study to investigate causes for students' withdrawal'. The Panel was provided with evidence of cohort analysis of the period from 2010 up to the first semester of 2015-2016. The data indicates that there is some improvement in the withdrawal. This, the Panel was informed during the follow-up visit, is mainly related to non-resident students being enrolled in to the programme, who were not as committed to completing the programme; and as students are mainly now residents, the problem has ceased to exist. Nonetheless, the Panel is still concerned with the long length of study with only 60% of the directly enrolled students finishing the programme within the four-year plan and the rest finishing the programme requirements within a period extending to seven years. The Panel also noted that nine students in 2013 and nine students in 2014 were dismissed from the programme because they have exceeded the maximum study period allowed (eight years) without fulfilling the graduation requirements of the programme, which is a considerable number for the size of cohorts enrolled in the programme. Interviewed programme management informed the Panel that this is mainly due to weak students being enrolled in the programme and that this is mitigated by strengthening the admission requirements so that students admitted to the programme better meet the programme needs. Indeed, the latest cohort analysis shows a low level of withdrawal and normal progress for all students. However, it is early to judge the overall progress in the programme as students of this cohort are still at their early years of study. Hence, the Panel acknowledges the college's efforts and recommends that the College should continue conducting its cohort analysis and utilising the outcomes to further improve progression and retention rates.

Recommendation 3.7: *Develop a strategy to ensure better placement, matching, and monitoring of the internship programme*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

To address this recommendation, the College has revised the course specification so that the internship programme would provide students with a more meaningful experience. This is evident in the revised CILOs stated in the new course specification.

From interviews conducted and evidence provided, the Panel confirmed that a number of improvements were introduced at the level of the course, including a tighter follow-up by the academic supervisor and a closer collaboration between the academic and field supervisors. Interviewed students reported that they were visited by the academic advisor, sometime more than once during the two month period of the internship. They also confirmed the enhanced status of the internship over the last two years and the additional efforts made by the University to ensure a positive learning experience.

The internship is managed by an Internship Coordinator assigned at the college level and during the follow-up visit, the Panel was informed that the University is considering the establishment of an internship liaison/office to better handle the placement of students in internships. Moreover, a proposal submitted by a member of the Advisory Board to overhaul the internship process is currently under discussion. The Panel notes all the positive steps taken by the University and College to enhance the management of the internship programme. Nonetheless, the Panel is still concerned that there is evidence from interview sessions and provided documents that there are cases where the activities interns are involved in during their internship are marginally related to the MIS discipline and that the reports submitted by interns are still wanting and are rather descriptive. Hence, the Panel considers the recommendation is partially addressed

Recommendation 3.8: Introduce effective measures of internal and external moderation of the BMIS graduation project to ensure the appropriateness of these projects

Judgement: Partially Addressed

In response to this recommendation, the programme team has developed a new procedure for the evaluation of the graduation projects, which gives more prominence role to the external examiner and uses rubrics for project evaluation. A Project Handbook was also prepared and handed out to students, as confirmed by students interviewed during the follow-up visit, and the course specification has been updated and upgraded. The Panel examined the provided samples of graduation projects submitted by the programme's students over the last three semesters and noted that whilst some projects are of the required standards, others still do not amount to more than class projects.

During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that further changes would be made to the process of assessing projects, whereby the selection of topics would become subjected to an academic committee formed of both internal and external members. This would amount to a new form of internal and external pre-moderation of the projects. However, no evidence was provided for this, as it is still in progress

being floated in meetings. This, however, was invoked by a member of the MIS Advisory Board, which indicated wide consultations over the proposal. Hence, the Panel acknowledges the progress achieved to date and recommends that the College should strengthen its internal and external moderation processes to ensure that graduation projects are all at an acceptable level.

4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance

This section evaluates the extent to which the BMIS programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2014, 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: *Adopt more robust procedures to collect, analyze and respond to stakeholder surveys, and provide timely feedback to the stakeholders on actions taken to address the identified issues.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the University has reviewed and developed the questionnaires it uses to obtain feedback from various stakeholders. Through its interviews with the programme team and the university's administrative staff and evidence provided, the Panel confirmed that the questionnaires used by the Department to assess students' satisfaction with faculty members and courses are conducted regularly at the end of each semester.

The Panel also learnt from interview sessions conducted during the follow-up visit that the last employers' evaluation questionnaire was distributed in the academic year 2015-2016 and the Department analysed its findings and reported on them. Moreover, feedback is collated into a single programme evaluation document that identifies areas for improvement. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the Department and the Centre of Measurement and Evaluation consider further strengthening their mechanism of collecting the programme graduates and employers' feedback to ensure that these are consistently sought. Hence, the Panel acknowledges the progress achieved in addressing this recommendation and recommends that the views of the stakeholders should be systematically and continuously collected and analysed to inform the improvement of the provision.

Recommendation 4.2: *Develop and implement a formal mechanism to link the annual performance review process to the professional development activities attended by individual staff members.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The MIS Department follows the university's policy regarding the evaluation of the performance of faculty members and their academic needs and professional

development. Two new questions were added in the self-evaluation form for faculty members to inquire about their academic and professional needs and their commitment to attend training workshops. Moreover, the Head of Department sometimes directs a faculty member to participate in a specific training workshop, either orally or through the faculty member's performance appraisal form. The Panel is of the view that this process needs to be conducted in a more systematic manner. Through interviews with senior management, faculty members and administrative staff during the follow-up visit, the Panel learnt that senior management is keen to meet staff requests and provide training workshops, both inside and outside the University or even in neighbouring countries.

Interviewed staff members confirmed to the Panel that ASU encourages them to take part in training workshops and some reported on professional development opportunities they attended upon their request that were sponsored by the University. Evidence of training needs' analysis and annual staff development plan were provided to the Panel. These support the university's claim of identifying staff professional development needs based on evaluation.

The Panel appreciates the efforts of the College in responding to the needs of its academic and administrative staff, but recommends that questionnaires should be conducted to verify the extent to which they benefit from these training workshops and to explore the possibility of further development.

Recommendation 4.3: Regularly scope the market through a systematic mechanism.

Judgement: Not Addressed

The progress report states that the University collects information about the market needs through employer surveys, the Advisory Boards, and other less formal mechanisms such as internships. While feedback sought provides the College with some information about what is currently needed in the market, it provides only a sketchy picture, and the recommendation is concerned about a more systematic mechanism used to scope the market and analyse its needs; both long- and short-term. To this end, the MIS Department did not change its approach to scoping the market needs from the one adopted at the time of the BQA's 2014 review. Hence, the Panel considers this recommendation not addressed and recommends that the College should complement its current mechanism with a more systematic mechanism such as a formal scoping study to be conducted periodically, every five years.

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 Management Information Systems 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,