

الهيئة الوطنية
للمؤهلات وصنجان جودة التعليم والتدريب
National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training



Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

**Bachelor in Law
College of Law
Applied Sciences University
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 25-26 February 2015
HC063-C2-R063**

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Acronyms

| | |
|-------|---|
| ASU | Applied Science University |
| BLaw | Bachelor in Law |
| BoT | Board of Trustees |
| CILOs | Course Intended Learning Outcomes |
| DHR | Directorate of Higher Education Reviews |
| HEC | Higher Education Council of the Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain |
| ILO | Intended Learning Outcome |
| PILOs | Programme Intended Learning Outcomes |
| QQA | National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training-Bahrain |
| QQAC | The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre |
| SER | Self-Evaluation Report |
| SIS | Student Information Management System |

1. The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process

1.1 The Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework

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

Programmes-within-College Reviews have three main objectives:

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

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

Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

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

Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

Indicator 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance

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

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

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

Table 1: Criteria for Judgements

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

1.2 The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process at Applied Sciences University

A Programmes-within-College review of the College of Law was conducted by DHR of the QQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place on 25-26 February 2015 for the academic programmes offered by the college, namely: Bachelor in Law (BLaw) .

This Report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Bachelor in Law programme based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and appendices submitted by the Applied Sciences University (ASU), the supplementary documentation made available during the site visit, as well as interviews and observations made during the review site visit.

The ASU was notified by the DHR/QQA on 27 November 2014 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College review of the programmes offered by the College of Law with the site visit taking place on from 25-26 February 2015. In preparation for the review, ASU conducted its college self-evaluation of its programme and submitted the SER with appendices on the agreed date on 11 January 2015.

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

This Report records the evidence-based conclusions reached by the Panel based on:

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

It is expected that the ASU will use the findings presented in this report to strengthen its BLaw programme. The DHR recognizes that quality assurance is the responsibility of the higher education institution itself. Hence, it is the right of ASU to decide how it will address the recommendations contained in the Review Report. Nevertheless, three months after the publication of this Report, ASU is required to submit to the DHR an improvement plan in response to the recommendations.

The DHR would like to extend its thanks to ASU for the co-operative manner in which it has participated in the Programmes-within-College review process. It also wishes to express its appreciation for the open discussions held in the course of the review and the professional conduct of the administrative staff and faculty members in the BLaw programme.

1.3 Overview of the College of Law

The College of Law was established in congruence with the establishment of ASU, in accordance with the Cabinet resolution (W/D/140/2006) on 5 May 2005. The College was established to carry out the University mission of preparing academically qualified graduates, and capable of achievement in the field of Law. The College comprises the Department of Public Law and the Department of Private Law, and it offers one undergraduate programme, namely the Bachelor in Law (BLaw). The study in this programme started in the academic year 2005-2006 and the number of registered students at that time was 123 students, whereas the number of students registered in the programme in the academic year 2014-2015 was 779 students. There are 20 faculty members working in both departments of the College.

1.4 Overview of the Bachelor in Law Programme

The BLaw is offered in Arabic to satisfy the needs of local and regional labour market for BLaw holders. Registration in the programme started in the academic year 2005-

2006 and the number of registered students at that time was 123 students. In the academic year 2014-2015, the number of registered students was 779 students. The first batch of graduates in the programme was 2007 including 17 graduates. The grand total of graduates in the programme till the date of site visit was 886 graduates. There are 20 full-time faculty members contributing to the delivery of the programme, with 7 academic staff working on part-time basis.

1.5 Summary of Review Judgements

Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor of Law Programme

| Indicator | Judgement |
|--|-------------------|
| 1: The Learning Programme | Satisfies |
| 2: Efficiency of the Programme | Satisfies |
| 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates | Satisfies |
| 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance | Satisfies |
| Overall Judgement | Confidence |

2. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

- 2.1 The BLaw programme has an academic framework which illustrates the general aims of the programme and its intended learning outcomes (PLIOs). The aims of the programme include the preparation of a graduate capable of scientific research and lifelong learning, who can handle modern technology, who is qualified to pursue his postgraduate studies, and comply with the ethics of legal practice. The programme also aims at strengthening cooperative ties between the University and local community. During interviews, it became evident to the Panel that direct communication with stakeholders involved in the legal practice is limited. Therefore, the Panel suggests more emphases on the communication with the entities that are directly involved in the legal practice such the Bahraini Lawyers Society and the Judicial Institute, a matter that would support the College's role and the aims of the programme in their aspiration to provide students with practical and applied skills. The aims of the programme have been linked to the College's vision, mission and aims, which in turn reflect the University mission to prepare distinguished graduates capable to compete in labour market. The Panel appreciates that the programme has a clear academic planning framework, which identifies desired aims congruent with the University and College missions and visions and their strategic plans.
- 2.2 The study plan of the programme includes a suitable number of compulsory and elective courses progressing from basic courses to advanced ones, each of which includes a specific number of sills. The programme follows the credit hour system, comprises many levels and is divided into a number of semesters. To earn his/ her undergraduates degree, the student has to successfully complete 135 credit hours distributed over 45 courses with three credit hours for each, including the internship course. The credit hours of the programme are divided into 21 credit hours for the University compulsory requirements and 3 hours for the University elective requirements, 21 credit hours for the College compulsory requirements and 90 credit hours as specialisation requirements. These, in turn, are divided into 78 credit hours for the compulsory specialisation requirements and 12 credit hours for the elective ones. The plan depends on the progression principle by a list of prerequisite courses, where a student for example cannot study courses of the first cognitive level before studying the course 'Introduction to the Science of Law' (LAW111). Also, the nature of the course is considered to balance theory and practice, and knowledge and skills in the courses which have an applied aspect. In the Panel's opinion, this variation of courses to include several legal specialisation leads to broaden the scope of knowledge and the acquisition of required skills in basic fields to earn the Bachelor degree. The programme also includes courses that provide the students with

knowledge and professional skills and cultivate their capability the understanding and analysis of legal practice. Moreover, the Panel notes that the programme incorporates the course 'Scientific and Legal Research Methodology' (LAW201) as a compulsory course, in addition to two other compulsory courses, namely 'Principles of Commercial Law' (LAW121) and 'General International Law' (LAW161), as well other elective courses taught in English. These courses were included as a result of recommendations by alumni, employers and the Advisory Board, which was confirmed during the site visit. The Panel appreciates that the programme has a curriculum organised to provide academic progression from one year to another, and there is a balance between theory and practice, and between knowledge and skills which includes an applied aspect. However, the Panel notes the absence of the 'Professional Accountability and Career Ethics' course, even though some of its content exist within other courses in the programme, and the 'Legal Clinic' course. Therefore, the Panel recommends the College to consider the possibility of introducing these courses when conducting the periodic review of the programme.

- 2.3 The course descriptions are documented in special course files which include the course objectives, its content, course intended learning outcomes (CILOs), in addition to distribution of the study plan items over the semester weeks, the references used, available resources, the teaching & learning methods, and assessment mechanisms. The Panel studied a sample of course files and notes that the course contents, their level and outcomes are appropriate in terms of depth and breadth, and their objectives, and they are consistent with curriculum as a whole and satisfy the criteria, standards of the specialisation and the awarded degree. The Panel appreciates that the courses, in general, in terms of their content and level are consistent with academic standards and the degree awarded by the programme. However, the Panel notes the limited amount of course syllabi that are taught in English. The Panel concluded during the site visit that the cause of the limited English syllabi is due to students' weakness in English. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should review and further enrich the content of courses taught in English.
- 2.4 The BLaw programme has intended learning outcomes (PILOs) which are expressed in the programme description and divided into four main categories, namely: understating and knowledge, practical skills, cognitive skills and transferable skills. The detailed PLIOs were linked with programme aims. The Panel studied these PILOs and notes that they are, in general, aligned with aims of the programme and the level of the Degree of the BLaw programme. However, the Panel notes that some of these outcomes are stated in a way that it is difficult to measure their achievement and that there are some overlaps between them. For example, there is an overlap between the outcome '(B-2: presentation skills in the legal practice)' and '(B-6: Ability of presenting the legal advice, negotiating and selecting the best choice from alternatives...'. During interviews with the faculty members and quality assurance

representatives, the Panel came to know that the College has reviewed and updated these outcomes, to decrease their number and improve their clarity, which was achieved through training the faculty member and the development of their ability to formulate and measure intended learning outcomes (LIOS). For example, the two preceding outcomes have been re-stated and merged into one outcome 'B-2: presenting legal advice and negotiation skills...'. The Panel is pleased that the programme includes ILOs which are divided into suitable categories, and linked to the aims of the programme.

- 2.5 There are course intended learning outcomes (CILOs), which are documented in the course descriptions, and they are also divided into understanding and knowledge skills, cognitive skills, course-specific skills, and labour market skills. The Panel also studied these CILOs and notes that they are in general appropriate for the level of the courses and programme. During interviews with faculty members, it became evident to the Panel that there is continuous improvement and review of the programme. The course descriptions are reviewed periodically by the Programme Coordinator, the programme team and subsequently the HoD. Also, there is a clear effort to develop and maintain consistency between the CIOLs and mapping them to the PILOs. Moreover, the faculty members whom the Panel interviewed during the site visit provided several examples of the teaching, learning and assessment methods used to achieve the CILOs. The Panel reviewed the CILOs and notes that they are stated in a measureable form, consistent with the course content and level. The Panel also reviewed the matrix of mapping the CILOs to the PILO. The Panel appreciates that the CILOs are appropriate to the course objectives and level, and they are mapped to the PILOs.
- 2.6 The study plan includes a work based internship course with three credit hours, where the student can register in the course after he/she completes 90 credit hours. Moreover, the Panel was informed during interviews with faculty members that the student has to complete the 'Civil and Commercial Procedures Law' course or the 'Criminal Procedures Law' course before he/she can enrol in internship course. However, these prerequisite courses are not mentioned in internship course description. Therefore, the Panel suggests that the prerequisite courses for the internship course should be documented in the course description. The internship course has its own specific CILOs which are mapped to the PILOs, and it has clear follow up and supervision procedures. This course is considered as an application of the knowledge and skills that students have acquired during their study in the programme, where the students has to join one of the competent entities such as lawyers office or government entities and to complete 120 hours. In addition, there is a clear assessment policy which requires that the student has to write periodic reports about all duties he/she performs. At the end of the training , the student has to write a final report where he/ she explains the experience and the knowledge and

skills he/she acquired, to be discussed with the student by a three-member discussion board including the supervisor. In addition, the industrial supervisor participates in the student's evaluation by filling a form specially designed for this purpose. From interviews with faculty members, students and alumni, it became evident to the Panel that there is a positive impact for practical training in cultivating students' legal skills and acquainting them with practical skills expected in the market, and that it also contributes in achieving the programme PILOs. The Panel appreciates that there is a work-based learning component within the curriculum, and it contributes to the achievement of the programme PILOs.

2.7 The SER and faculty members' interviews indicate that there is a clear teaching, learning and assessment policy, which specifies the philosophy of learning and the teaching and learning methods used by the University. These methods are clearly differentiated. Moreover, the programme description and the course syllabi illustrate the link between teaching and learning methods and the ILOs. The teaching methods used involve students' participation in the learning process and encourage independent learning. Also, there is a variation in the teaching techniques used in the programme, which include lectures, brainstorming, home assignments, self-learning and practical and applied exercises, in addition to the use of modern teaching technologies such as the smart board. The Panel also reviewed evidence which indicates that students make industry visits, as well as the use of external lecturers in order to enrich students' learning experience. The Panel is of the opinion that the programme follows clear teaching and learning techniques, in a way that ensures the achievement of the course CIOLs and aims. Furthermore, the review of course files of some course offered in the programme during the site visit and interviews with students and graduates confirmed the use of the aforementioned techniques. However, it became evident to the Panel from course files and meetings with faculty members and students that that even though the programme encourages independent learning it mainly depends on lectures as the main teaching technique. The Panel is of the opinion that that there is a need for more emphasis on interactive and independent-learning, due to the impact of these modes of learning on the cognitive aspects and skills, more that the theoretical lectures technique. The Panel recommends that the College should enhance students' participation in the learning process, and develop individual responsibility towards independent learning, to meet the requirements of the programme PILOs.

2.8 There are clear policy and procedures for student's achievements assessment, and marks distribution is illustrated in the University Manual. These procedures include both summative and formative assessment, as well as the mechanisms of connecting the assessment tools with the outcomes whose achievement needs to be measured. There are also transparent mechanisms and clear criteria for marking and grading which are conducted fairly and rigorously. The assessment policy stipulates the use

of various assessment tools, which include written and oral exams, research papers and assignments and students' participation in debates through the e-learning forum of Moodle. In general, mark distribution is governed by the University Policy, which stipulates a unified system for all courses of the programme, where 30% is allocated to mid semester exam, 10% for research papers and assignments, 10% to students' participation and 50% to the final exam. Moreover, the Panel notes that this distribution was developed in some courses according to the course contents and its CILOs, which was done as a result of the feedback from faculty members and course coordinators. The Panel encourages the College to continue the use of feedback to ensure the consistency of mark distribution with the nature and level of the course. Also students are provided with necessary information about assessment techniques and marks distribution through the programme description, and this was confirmed during interviews with the students. Moreover, there are mechanisms to provide students with written and oral feedback about their progress and performance, which helps them during the learning process. During interviews with faculty members and students, it became evident to the Panel that this feedback is provided to the students in written and oral form. However, the Panel notes from the course files provided during the site visit that the written feedback is limited. The Panel is of the opinion that the comments on students' work should be written and to be elaborate with as much details as possible, considering that the provision of model answers and oral feedback cannot replace written feedback which provides better feedback to the student. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should enhance the mechanism for providing students with feedback on their assessment where the assessor's comments in the student's answer sheets should be written, and detailed as much as possible. In addition, there is internal and external moderation of exams, which contributes to ensuring the connection of programme objectives with the ILOs, and it also contributes in the revision and development of assessment techniques. There is also an appeals system which ensures the transparency and fairness of assessment, and it was evident that students are aware of this system. Moreover, the Panel had the opportunity to review a sample of students' appeals and the results of those appeals. In general, the Panel finds that the assessment policy followed by the College appropriate and clear to both students and faculty members. It was also evident to the Panel during interviews that students are satisfied and pleased with policy and procedures for assessment. The Panel appreciates that there are documented assessment policy and procedures, which ensures fairness and transparent of assessments, and faculty members and students are aware of them.

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

- The programme has clear aims which are consistent with the College and University visions and missions.

- The programme has a curriculum that is organised to provide academic progression from one year to another, and there is a balance between theory and practice, and between knowledge and skills which includes an applied aspect.
- Courses, in general, are consistent in terms of their content and level with the academic standards and the degree awarded by the programme.
- The Course Intended Learning Outcomes are appropriate to the course level and objectives, and they are mapped to the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes.
- There is a work-based learning component within the curriculum, and it contributes to the achievement of the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes.
- There are documented assessment policies and procedures, which ensure assessment transparency and fairness, and both faculty members and students are aware of them.

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

- Consider the possibility of introducing to the curriculum the 'Professional Accountability and Career Ethics' course and the 'Legal Clinic' course when conducting the periodic review of the programme
- review and further enrich the content of courses which are taught in English.
- enhance students' participation in the learning process, and develop individual responsibility for independent learning, in line with the programme Intended Learning Outcomes
- enhance the mechanism for providing students with feedback on their assessment where the assessor's comments in the student' answer sheets should be written and detailed as much as possible .

2.11 **Judgement**

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

3. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

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

- 3.1 The admission policy in the BLaw programme is clear and includes procedures for admitting new students as well as those transferred from other universities. The policy is based on the student's high-school GPA, which should not be less than 60% for the student to be admitted in the programme, unless he/she has at least three years work experience. This category is limited to 5% of the total number of admitted students in each semester. The admission policy was revised during the last review where no student is admitted with a GPA of less than 60%. Furthermore, the new admission policy which was implemented starting from the second semester of the academic year 2014-2015 requires that the student who's GPA is between 60%- 70% should successfully pass a personal interview. Students should also sit an English Language test, unless he/she has passed the TOEFL exam with a score of 550. The admission policy and procedures are available on the University website and the University Manual. The students whom the Panel met were aware of these procedures. With regards to transferred students, courses with a score of no less than (C) grade are subject to equivalency and the total number of equated hours should not be more that 66% of the total hours of the programme. The Panel appreciates the presence of a clear admission policy which is appropriate to the level and type of the programme, and it is subject to review and amendment in line with the programme objectives.
- 3.2 The College follows a number of techniques to ensure that the admitted students' profile is consistent with the objectives of the programme, and as such the levels of admitted students satisfy the minimum entry requirement for the programme (60%). Furthermore, student with a minimum of three years work experience are excepted from the aforementioned requirement provided that the percentage of this category of students is not more than 5% of the total number of admitted students and that the student has to pass the personal interview conducted by the College. Only one student was admitted under this exception in the first semester of the academic year 2014-2015 out of 264 students. In addition, the students whom the Panel interviewed did not mention any difficulties to complete their course. Furthermore, the statistics that were provided to the Panel indicated that students were able to graduate in the programme within an appropriate period of study. The Panel notes that based on students' performance in the English language test, they are required to study some remedial courses in English or register in one or two courses in English, before registering in Law courses that are taught in English. However, the Panel notes the weak level of registered students in the English language, which leads to the content of the courses taught in English being weak. Therefore, the Panel recommends that

the College should assess the rigour of the English language test, and review the content of the English remedial courses, to ensure that the students of the programme are competent in the English language.

- 3.3 There are clear lines of responsibility in the management of the programme, which are distributed among administrative staff and faculty members, as illustrated in the organisational structure chart of the University. The Programme coordinator, in collaboration with the HoDs of Private and Public Law Departments, conducts the daily management of the programme, whereas the Dean supervises this process. The Programme Coordinator and the HoDs follow-up the performance of staff in collaboration with course coordinators, who are directly responsible for all issues related to courses. Moreover, the Department and College Councils discuss academic issues related to the programme and its management. It also became evident to the Panel that there are many committees with various tasks, which contribute to the management of the programme. During interviews with academic and administrative staff it became evident to the Panel that they are aware of their responsibilities and their assigned tasks. The Panel appreciates that there are clear lines of responsibility in relation to the management of the programme, starting from the course instructor reaching the Dean and the President, and are clear for all parties.
- 3.4 There are 20 faculty members, specialised in various legal disciplines, teaching in the programme. Also, there is an appropriate variation in their qualifications and ranks; there are 2 Professors, 4 Associate Professors; 13 Assistant Professors and one lecturer. In addition, there are 7 part-time faculty members. The Panel studied the CVs of faculty members and notes that their number, specialisation and expertise are appropriate for the requirements of the programme. The University has a policy to encourage scientific research by faculty members, which include the provision of financial allowances for publications and conference participation both locally and internationally. During interviews, the Panel knew that many faculty members have benefitted from this policy and took part in local and regional conferences. Moreover, the Panel reviewed samples of staff publications, and notes that there are many publications in local and regional journals and periodicals. However, the Panel notes that they do not have publication in international journals and periodicals. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College investigate the reasons behind this, and develop a plan to encourage faculty members to achieve research publications in international journals and periodicals, in line with the College vision to be a local and regional centre of excellence in legal research and study.
- 3.5 There are clear policies and procedures for academic staff recruitment, appraisal, promotion and retention, which systematically and transparently applied. The Human Resources Office addresses the recruitment needs of the academic

departments. Accordingly, the College develops an annual plan of the programme requirements by calculating the expected number of students and the faculty specialisations needed. The Dean convenes a committee to interview the applicants and submit its recommendations to the Department, then to the College, and finally to the President for endorsement, where Human Resources office takes necessary actions for recruitment afterwards. During the interviews, it was evident to the Panel that academic and administrative staff are aware of these procedures and their application. In addition, the Panel notes that there are arrangements in place for the orientation of newly recruited academic and administrative staff, which include the introduction of newly academic staff by the HoD's to the University bylaws and regulations, the department programmes, in addition to a tour of the University facilities and introducing the new staff members to the current staff. The faculty members' appraisal includes a self-evaluation by the faculty member himself/herself, the HoD's evaluation in addition to the results of student evaluation questionnaire. Furthermore, there is a promotion policy for faculty members, which comprises three main components, namely teaching, research and community service, which are assessed at the College and University level. The Panel reviewed samples of promotion files that were submitted by faculty members, and notes the consistency in applying the procedures and decisions taken in this regard, with one faculty member being promoted to an Associate Professor rank in 2014. In the Panel's view, the procedures related to faculty members in terms of recruitment, evaluation, promotion and new staff orientation are clear, transparent and contribute in supporting faculty members and organising their affairs. During interviews with the faculty the Panel noted their satisfaction about the aforementioned procedures and the orientation day. The Panel appreciates the presence of clear procedures for faculty members' recruitment, evaluation, and promotion.

- 3.6 The University has a Student Information Management System (SIS) by which students' admission and registration records and summative results are stored. The SIS allows faculty members enter exam marks directly on the system. Also, students confirmed that they have secured access to the system and that they can view their exam results as well as their academic records via the internet. The University also uses the Digital Campus system for human resources management in the University, providing necessary information and timetables for students and staff, as well as online registration of students. During the tour of the Admission and Registration Office, the Library and IT Centre staff, and in addition to faculty members' interviews, the Panel found out that these information systems are available and implemented which contribute to effective programme management. The academic support staff confirmed that the reports they receive from the SIS are sufficient to their needs. The Panel appreciates the presence of an information management system, and an SIS system, which supports the teaching and learning process, and assists in the decision-making process.

- 3.7 The University has appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure the security of students' information and accuracy of results. From the meeting with faculty members and the visit to the Registration Department, it became evident that marks are entered both electronically and on paper in a way that ensures their safety and accuracy. All marks that are entered into the system are printed out and reviewed independently by the course instructor and the HoD, in addition to further check by the Registration Department afterwards. Interviews with academic and administrative staff confirmed the existence of the approval and verification procedures and their implementation. Moreover, the release of any student information is an official issue that has to be executed solely through the Registration Department only. Also, the University utilises a safety and security system for the protection of student records that includes specific authorisation mechanisms, data storage and the use of anti-virus and security tools. In addition, there is a recovery plan in case of disasters and the backup of SIS data is stored periodically in a remote location to avoid the loss of data in case of disasters. The Panel appreciates that there are appropriate procedures in place to ensure the safety of student records and accuracy of results.
- 3.8 During the tour of the university campus, where the Panel visited the university buildings and the College location, it was evident that the new campus is modern and provides an appropriate learning environment for the students. The campus is equipped with several physical resources such as modern lecture halls with smart boards appropriate for various teaching and learning methods, especially interactive teaching. The Panel also notes that there is a good Mock court hall, in addition to an adequate number of computer laboratories which can be used by students. Also, there is a student activity hall, a clinic and a prayer room. The legal library occupies a section in the University Library, whose area is 1000 m². The library has a sufficient number of computers, a number of journals and academic periodicals and a database in Arabic and English. The library working hours are from 08:00 am to 08:00 pm, except on Fridays from 02:00 pm to 08:00 pm. and it is run by knowledgeable and experienced staff in library management. The Panel notes that the library well equipped with latest technologies, and it has electronic as well hard-copy databases, in addition to Arabic and international periodicals. The library also provides an appropriate environment that supports the programme, in addition to 13 individual reading halls that can be used by students and faculty members, as well as sufficient number of study areas. Moreover, the Panel notes that some important legal encyclopaedias are available, such as Al-Sanhoori Encyclopaedia, which represents a significant reference in the study of Law. The Panel appreciates that the new University campus is appropriate for the nature of the programme and students' needs, and that learning resources are available for students, including lecture halls, laboratories, a library and modern facilities that assist to create an appropriate learning environment.

- 3.9 ASU has clear arrangements and procedures to utilise its resources. Students' use of the SIS and the library are tracked by using certain software, which includes tracking systems to identify the rates of using various recourses allocated to the programme. For example, periodic reports about the percentages of library use and its electronic and other recourses are sent to many entities in the University, including the College administration. Furthermore, the e-learning system provides reports about students' utilisation, which are submitted to the Dean periodically. However, the Panel notes through the interviews with the programme management and faculty members, and as stated in the SER, that utilisation of the system-generated reports are still limited. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College to further utilise these reports in enhancing the decision-making process.
- 3.10 ASU provides a set of student support services through specialised staff in the Technical Support Unit in the University, and through the library staff and laboratory teaching assistants. In addition, all courses of the BLaw programme are available on the Moodle system which is technically supported by the IT specialist besides the course instructors. Faculty members are also assigned to provide academic advice for students throughout the various stages of their academic life, specially At-risk student, and students benefit a lot from their instructors' office hours. This was confirmed by students and graduates as well. Students were complimentary about the advisory and guiding role of their faculty members, as well as the role and quality of the support staff. Moreover, the Deanship of Student Affairs also participates, through its various units, in the provision of effective support in the areas of career guidance and social care for the students of the programme. The Panel appreciates that there are measures for providing appropriate support by qualified staff for the students.
- 3.11 According to the SER orientation programmes is organised for new students on their enrolment in the programme by the Deanship of Student Affairs and the Student Council. By reviewing the documents, and from interviews with students, graduates, administrative and academic staff, it became evident that the University organises an orientation day to prepare newly admitted and transferred students from other universities to introduce them to the University policies and services, the University facilities and how to deal with the programme and the courses. They are also provided with copies of the Student Handbook. The students who the Panel interviewed confirmed the availability and effectiveness of the orientation process. Furthermore, each student is assigned to an academic advisor when joining the programme. There are also arrangements in place to introduce transferred students to the policies and procedures followed in course equivalency and credit hours transfer. The Panel is pleased with the procedures available for the induction of new students and the College's keenness to organise the induction day for these students when joining the programme.

- 3.12 The University and the College have clear policies and procedures to identify At-risk students through the SIS system. At-risk students are identified as those whose GPA falls below 60%. The Panel notes that the SIS system is employed as a proactive step to monitor all students whose GPAs fall below 62%, when their names are forwarded to their academic advisor. Those students are barred from online registration and they need to see their academic advisors to receive remedial intervention to overcome this stage before completing their registration. During student interviews, the Panel noted that students praised the role of their academic advisors and they confirmed that their meetings with their academic advisors helped them to better organise their study plans. Also, the Panel notes that in the case where support is needed for a non-academic issue, the academic advisor refers the students to the Social Care Unit in the Deanship of Student Affairs, for better handling of this issue. The Panel acknowledges the College efforts for early intervention to solve the issue of At-risk students.
- 3.13 The University provides various programmes to support students' informal learning experience by organising scientific and cultural events, Mock court sessions, as well as sports and poetry competitions which are organised by the Deanship of Student Affairs. During the meetings with the students, it became evident that they benefit from these activities and programmes to expand their knowledge and experience. Furthermore, the practical training course, by its nature, provides informal learning opportunity for the students. Also, the Panel notes that the Deanship of Student Affairs organises the annual 'Career Day', where students are introduced to their potential employers, as well as the available training and job opportunities in the market. The physical resources on campus, being: the library, the cafeteria, the computer laboratories and the Wi-Fi service, all create an appropriate learning environment for students. Moreover, the University provides the Moodle programme which helps students to download the teaching resources and references, and provides an interaction platform among students themselves and between students and course instructors. However, it became evident during interviews with students that their benefit from this programme is extremely limited, and it is usually used as a tool for the electronic storage of course contents. Therefore, the Panel recommends to encourage students on further using e-learning resources for the purpose of informal and self-learning by students.
- 3.14 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Efficiency of the Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- There is a clear admission policy which is appropriate for the level and type of the programme, and is subject to review and amendment in line with the aims of the programme .

- There are clear lines of responsibility in relation to the management of the programme, starting from the course instructor reaching the Dean and the President, and are clear for all parties.
- There are clear procedures for recruitment, appraisal and promotion of faculty member's, with the employment contracts providing reasonable job stability.
- There is an administration information management system and a Student Information Management System, through which the teaching and learning process is supported, and they assist the decision-making process.
- There are appropriate procedures to ensure the security of students' records and accuracy of results .
- The new campus is appropriate for the nature of the programme and students' needs, and learning resources are available for students, including lecture halls, laboratories, library and modern facilities that assist to create an appropriate learning environment.
- There are measures in place for providing appropriate support by qualified staff for the students.

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

- evaluate the rigour of English placement test, and review the content of English remedial courses
- develop a plan to encourage faculty members to achieve research publications in international journals and periodicals, in line with the College vision
- further utilise the reports that are generated by the monitoring systems in enhancing the decision-making process
- encourage students on further using e-learning resources for the purpose of supporting informal and independent-learning by students.

3.16 **Judgement**

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

4. Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

- 4.1 As indicated in the SER, graduates' attributes are specified in the programme description as 'Intended Learning Outcomes' (ILOs) which are connected to the objectives of the programme. The College has also benchmarked the programme PILOs with the academic standards of the BLaw programmes in the United Kingdom (QAA- UK, Subject Benchmark statement–Law) and with the international Egyptian academic standards, in the Colleges of Law sector, to ensure graduates' attributes meet the academic standards of the specialisation and the programme. The PLIOs are related to knowledge and understanding, subject-specific skills, cognitive, practical and transferrable skills which qualify the graduates to engage in the legal market. The Panel reviewed the course files and notes that they include tables for mapping course intended learning outcomes (CILOs) to those of the programme (PILOs). The Panel also notes that there are mechanisms to review the rigour of assessment tools. The Panel is pleased that there are graduates' attributes that are embedded within the PLIOs, and in general, the PLIOs are linked with the assessment tools used.
- 4.2 The ASU has developed a policy for benchmarking in the University, and provided the Panel with the latest draft of this policy dated 3 Sept 2013. This is a general policy applied to all benchmarking projects the University may carry out. The Policy states that there is no specific approach for the benchmarking activities; however, it specifies the core principles of the benchmarking which include that 'the entities involved in benchmarking have to specify the objective of the process, and what is expected from the proposed action before the commencement of the project'. The Policy also calls for signing agreement that stipulate the conditions of information exchange, and confidentiality of the benchmarking processes as external entities or partners are involved. However, the SER indicates that this policy has not been officially endorsed to date. Nevertheless, and following the review of the SER, the supporting evidence and faculty members' interviews, it became evident to the Panel that the College of Law has relied on many reference points for the benchmarking of the programme. For example, the programme PILOs were compared against the academic standards of BLaw programmes in the UK and the international Egyptian academic standards for the Colleges of Law sector. Moreover, the College has benchmarked the study plan of the programme, the programme structure and its content, with similar programmes in local, as well regional and international universities, and used the results of these benchmarking activities in the development of the programme. However, the Panel is of the opinion that the benchmarking procedures do not explicitly specify the purpose behind benchmarking, select what is to be benchmarked, the management of the

benchmarking process, and how to use the results of this process. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should expedite the application of the benchmarking policy of the University, and develop detailed mechanisms for these process, and to expand the scope of benchmarking to include the ILOs, teaching and learning, assessment methods, in a addition to benchmarking the rates of progression, retention, length of study, first graduates' destinations and learning resources.

- 4.3 There are clear assessment procedures in the University policies concerning teaching, learning and assessment which is available in the Student Handbook. Details, such as dates and mechanisms of assessment are specified in each course description. During the site visit, the Panel came to know that faculty members discuss the course description and assessment policy with students at the beginning of each semester, and this was confirmed by the students who the Panel interviewed. Moreover, there are mechanisms to ensure that faculty members comply with the published assessment policies through the course coordinator. In addition, the internal and external examiners provide feedback on the extent that faculty members are complying with the assessment policies. Marks distribution is approved by the HoD and the Dean, to ensure fairness of grading and marks distribution before announcing them to students. The Panel also notes, from the discussion with faculty members during the site visit, that assessment policies are subject to review, and these reviews have resulted in amending some of these policies such as the amendment of marks distribution in some courses in order to be more aligned with the course CILOs. Furthermore, the University has developed follow up mechanisms and relevant forms to ensure the integrity and accuracy of assessment processes. The Panel appreciates that the assessment policies are known to students and faculty members, and that there are following up, review and improvement mechanisms.
- 4.4 The SER indicates that there are mechanisms in place that ensure the alignment of the assessment tools and the ILOs whose achievement is to be measured. The course description includes assessment mechanisms and tools, which are linked to the outcome to be measured. During the site visit, the Panel was informed that the external examiners review mid semester and final exams question papers, and complete a form adopted by the University to comment on the extent the exam questions are aligned with the ILOs to be measured. These forms are reviewed by the programme coordinator and the HoD. There is also an external moderation for final exams, where the external moderator is provided with the course description, which includes the CILOs, to check the alignment between the assessments and the outcomes whose achievement is to be measured. In addition, the external reviewer of the programme performs a periodical review of the programme, where he examines samples of students' assessed works and his reports provide feedback on the alignment between assessment tools and the ILOs. During interviews with faculty

members, the Panel was informed that at the end of the semester, the course instructor fills in a special matrix which measures the achievement of each outcome of the course CILOs, comments on the results and proposes improvements. Also the university has revised and amended the special matrix for the measurement of the achievement of each outcome. The Panel appreciates that there are mechanisms in place that ensure the alignment of assessments with the learning outcomes and that measure the achievement of learning outcomes for the courses and the programme.

- 4.5 ASU has a formal policy of internal moderation which is applied in all the BLaw courses since the first semester of the academic year 2014-2015. At the beginning of each semester, the HoD assigns an internal moderator for each course in the programme. During interview, faculty members confirmed that the internal moderator reviews the question paper of the mid semester and final exams, to ensure that questions are aligned with the LIOs whose achievement to be measured, and that the examination paper is appropriate to the level of the programme, and that the distribution of marks is appropriate. Furthermore, the internal moderator reviews samples of students' marked papers to ensure fairness and accuracy of marking by using clear rubrics and marking schemes. The Programme Coordinator and the HoD examine the internal moderator's report and they follow up its recommendations. By examining the course files, it became evident that the College implements the internal moderation policy since the first semester of the academic year 2014-2015, and the Panel advises the College to continue the implementation of the internal moderation policy and to measure its effectiveness. However, the Panel notes that the internal moderation policy is limited to mid semester and final examination. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should review the internal moderation policy to include all assessment methods used and to develop a mechanism to measure the effectiveness of the internal moderation of the assessment tools.
- 4.6 There is a policy for external moderation by which an external examiner is appointed to moderate the final examinations of courses, according to a special template adopted for this purpose. During the site visit interviews, the Panel was informed that the external moderator is sent the course description, which includes the course syllabus and the course CILOs, to make sure that the questions are alight with the CILOs, in order to achieve the course objectives, and consequently the programme aims. The external examiners whom the Panel met were pleased that the College has utilised their comments for amending some of the questions. The Panel also notes that the College makes use of the periodic reports of the external reviewers of the programme, which include reviewing and commenting on samples of assessed students' works. The Panel viewed the minutes of the Department Council meetings during which the comments of the external reviewers of the programme were discussed, and necessary decisions were taken to amend the assessments

accordingly. The Panel appreciates that there are mechanisms in place whereby external reviewers' comments on assessment tools are discussed and necessary actions are taken. Also, the Panel reviewed the course files provided during the site visit and notes that external moderation process is restricted to final exams only, and it did not include other procedures such as reviewing the marking of student work. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College reviews the external moderation policy, to include all assessment tools including the fairness of assessment process and its alignment with the learning outcomes.

- 4.7 The Panel viewed samples of students' works in some courses, and notes the variety of assessment techniques (exams, research, assignments, class participation, and others). There are variations in the questions in terms of their topics as well their assessing objectives. The Panel also notes that the level of difficulty of exams included in the course files, in general, is acceptable for the academic degree, except for the courses taught in English, where questions were easy and mainly depending on multiple choice questions, fill in the blanks and short answer questions. Moreover, the Panel notes that the majority of the viewed assessments are not varied in terms of difficulty and depth to measure the subtle differences between students and give prominence for outstanding students. The Panel recommends that the College should further develop the assessment tools for the programme in order to ensure that there are differences in the levels of difficulty, to measure subtle differences between students' performances and give prominence to outstanding students.
- 4.8 The SER indicates that the College ensures the level of achievement of graduates' satisfy the objectives of the programme by measuring the extent that the programme PILOs have been satisfied. This is done by using a learning outcomes measurement matrix, which measures to what extent students' works in exams and course work achieve the CILOs, and consequently the programme PILOs. This matrix has been reviewed and developed to provide more accurate measurement of graduates' achievements. During its interviews with the administrative staff of the programme, it became evident to the Panel that there are efforts exerted to follow up with the programme alumni and to update their data, and to communicate with employers and alumni in the field, to measure the graduates' achievements based on market needs. The Panel also noted during its meetings with the alumni and employers that the level of graduates' achievements, in general, satisfies the objectives of the programme and its PILOs. Moreover, the Panel notes that the graduates' GPAs are appropriate for the programme, where the percentage of those who achieved a distinction were between 8% - 30% and the failures averaged between 13% - 39% for the last five years. The Panel notes that graduates' pass rates in general satisfies the objectives of the programme. However, the Panel is concerned that even though the programme follows the American credit hours system, the pass grade is 50%, which

is a low grade and is not comparable to the majority of similar programmes that follow the credit hours system. The Panel recommends that the College should review the minimum pass grade in the courses in order to conform to similar programmes in local, regional and international institutions.

- 4.9 After examining the SER and the relevant documents submitted by the College, and from the meetings with the faculty members and students, it became evident to the Panel that the numbers of admitted students compared to the numbers of graduates are within comparable rates in other similar programmes. In a similar manner, the academic progression rates, retention and the length of study are also comparable. The Panel notes that there is an improvement in the average length of study, where the length of study for the batches admitted during 2005-2009 was about 6-10 semesters, whereas the highest average of length of study in the academic year 2012-2013 was 8.71 semesters. However, the College does not take into consideration the impact of transferred students on the length of study calculation in the programme. The Panel advises the College to review the method adopted in this measurement to address this issue. The statistics provided to the Panel indicate the programme has witnessed a gradual improvement in the number of admitted students as the number of admitted students in the academic year 2010-2011 was 139 students and increased to be 264 students in the academic year 2014-2015. The Panel notes that the percentage of students who continued their study in the programme in the academic year 2012-2013 was 75.22% and increased to reach 90.2% in the academic year 2013-2014. The results of Alumni Questionnaire implemented in the academic year 2013-2014, which included 136 graduates, indicate that 90% of the graduates of the programme work in legal careers, most of which are in the private sector. Since the College has mentioned in the SER that a large number of the students are working during their study, the Panel advises the College to follow its alumni continuously to measure the added value that the programme provides its graduates. The Panel notes that students progress in their studies appropriately and graduate within the specified period of study.
- 4.10 The curriculum includes a work-based training course with 3 credit hours where the student need to complete 120 hours of actual work-based training. During this period, the student is supervised by an academic supervisor and an industrial supervisor. Also, there are clear procedures in the work-based training policies to manage the programme and evaluate the learning experience acquired by the student. During this period, the student has to attend one of various organisations such as lawyer offices or government departments to acquire the experience of a legal career. In addition, the student has to write periodic reports about all duties and tasks that are carried out during the training. At the end of this period, the student is required to submit a final report showing all experiences, knowledge and skills he/she acquired from the work-based training. The student discusses this

report with a committee of three members including the academic supervisor. The industrial supervisor also participates in the student's evaluation by a specific template designed for this purpose. Moreover, there is a clear work-based training assessment policy which stipulates that 50% of the grade are assigned by the training supervisor at the place of work, 30% are assigned by the academic supervisor and 20% are assigned by the other two members of the assessment committee. The assessment policy has been recently reviewed and modified where grade assignments were changed starting from the first semester of the academic year 2014-2015, as follows: 30% for the training supervisor at the place of work, 40% for the academic supervisor and 30% for the student evaluation committee. The Panel was informed that the marks distribution was reviewed to ensure fairness of assessment. From the interviews with faculty members who took part in supervising work-based training of students or in the student evaluation committee, it became evident to the Panel that they exert a lot of time and effort in this course, which is highly appreciated by students as well graduates. The Panel appreciates that there are clear mechanism to evaluate the learning experience that students get during the work-based training, which are implemented and continuously reviewed.

- 4.11 There is a compulsory course in the study plan of the BLaw programme, namely 'Scientific and Legal Research Techniques' (LAW201), in which the student conducts a research project under the supervision of a faculty member. The policies and course file shows that the procedures followed in this course are clear, and specified for both the student and the supervisor. In addition, the assessment technique is appropriate for the nature of this course and contributes to the achievement of its objectives. During interviews with the faculty members who participated in the supervision of the 'Scientific and Legal Research Techniques' (LAW201) course, it became evident that the student has to visit the library several times to collect data during the preparation of his/her research. The project report has to be submitted through the Turnitin programme to ensure that it is free from plagiarism. The student is supervised by qualified supervisors in the field of specialisation and the evaluation is done by specialised faculty members in the field. The assessment is conducted according to the provisions listed in an evaluation form, where 60% of the marks are granted by the course instructor and 40% by the examining instructor. During the evaluation discussion session, the student presents his/her research to a committee of two instructors or more and in the presence of other students. The Panel suggests including an external examiner in the evaluation committee, as this will achieve a number the programme objectives, including preparing graduates capable of working in the local market and in other countries.
- 4.12 The College of Law has an Advisory Board composed of members from both public and private sectors in Bahrain, including lawyers and consultants, and it has a significant role in the development of the programme. There is also a clear policy

which illustrates the responsibilities and mandates of this Board. During interviews with the faculty members and members of the Advisory Board, it became evident to the Panel that there is increasing attention to the Advisory Board's role and feedback, where recommendations from its meetings have been acted upon in amending the curriculum and programme requirements. The College has applied a number of the Advisory Board's suggestions, such as: increasing the number of practical courses, revising the marks distribution in the assessment of work-based training as well as the increasing courses that are taught in English. The Advisory Board members stated that these suggestions reflect the labour market requirements, and the College is keen to meet these requirements. In turn, these changes were reflected in employers' satisfaction with the graduates of the programme. The Panel appreciates that there is an active Advisory Board and the College makes use of the feedback it provides for the improvement of the programme.

- 4.13 The College has mechanisms in place by which it scopes employers' input by conducting surveys that include questions about the compatibility of the programme with the labour market. Analysis of employers and graduates surveys and meetings with alumni and employers indicate that they are satisfied with the level of the graduates of the programme, based on comparisons to similar local and regional programmes. From interviews with the alumni, it became evident that contact is maintained with them through surveys, in addition to the annual meeting the College organises for its alumni. Some alumni whom the Panel met indicated that they visit the University's Career Day, during which time the College takes the opportunity to meet with them and collect their feedback. Also, the alumni whom the Panel met praised the College's attention to their affairs after their graduation, and the positive role the faculty members play in following up with the students and graduates. Employers also expressed during the meetings with the Panel that the graduates of the programme have the skills required in the labour market and they commended the standards of the graduate profiles. The Panel appreciates the satisfaction of employers and alumni with the standards of the graduate profiles.
- 4.14 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Academic Standards of the Graduates, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- Assessment policies are known to students and faculty members, and there are mechanisms for follow up, review and improvement.
 - There are mechanisms in place that ensure the alignment of assessments with the learning outcomes and that measure the achievement of learning outcomes for the courses and the programme.
 - There are mechanisms by which the comments of external examiners and reviewers comments on assessment tools are discussed and necessary actions are taken.

- The College has clear mechanisms to evaluate the learning experience the students gets from work-based training, which are implemented and reviewed continuously.
- There is an active Advisory Board whose feedback is utilised for the improvement of the programme.
- Employers and alumni are satisfied with the standards of the graduate profiles.

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

- expedite the application of the University policy for benchmarking, and expand the scope of the benchmarking to include the Intended Learning Outcomes and the teaching and learning, and assessment methods, in addition to benchmarking the percentages of progression, retention, length of study, the graduates' first destination and learning resources
- review the internal moderation policy to include all assessment methods and to develop a mechanism to measure the effectiveness of internal moderation of assessment tools
- review the external moderation policy to include all assessment tools, including the fairness of assessment process and its alignment with the learning outcomes
- further develop the assessment tools for the programme in order to ensure that there are differences in the levels of difficulty, to measure subtle differences between students' performances and give prominence to outstanding students
- review the minimum pass grade in the courses in order to conform to similar programmes in local, regional and international institutions.

4.16 **Judgement**

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **satisfies** the Indicator on **Academic Standards of the Graduates**.

5. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance

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

- 5.1 The University has a clear framework in which it specifies its main policies and procedures and the College adheres to them in the manage and the provision of its programme. The available policies and procedures include: teaching and learning, assessment and feedback, faculty members development, academic staff promotion, at-risk students and programme review policy. During interviews with the academic and administrative staff, it became evident to the Panel that staff are well-informed of these policies and procedures, and staff confirmed their participation in the development of these procedures. Reviewing the evidence, minutes of department and college councils, and different committees' meetings revealed that these policies and procedures are well communicated to both staff and students, and their implementation is monitored and they are subject to review. The Panel appreciates that the University has clear policies and procedures which are applied consistently in the College for the management of the programme, and that the administrative and academic staff participate in the review of the policies and procedures related to their work.
- 5.2 There is an organisational and administrative structure in the College for the management of the College and the programme. This is implemented by sharing the responsibility of managing the programme between the Departments of Public and Private Law, and under the supervision of the College Dean, in addition to the Programme Coordinator, course coordinators and the various committees which contribute to the effective management of the programme. Also, the minutes of the various committees and councils are documented. The Panel was also informed during the site visit that the Vice President of Academic Affairs has a major role in supervising the programme's academic matters. The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre (QAAC) follows up the implementation of the University polices with the programme team. The Panel viewed the minutes of some of the College Council meetings, the Departments of Public and Private Law councils meetings, and different committees meetings. It was evident from these minutes the programme is managed in a manner that demonstrates the presence of an active and responsible leadership. The Panel appreciates the manner in which the programme is managed.
- 5.3 ASU has a draft for Quality Assurance Manual specifying the quality assurance management system adopted by the University, the staff responsibilities and duties, including the roles of Vice-president for Academic Affairs and Development, the

College Dean, the HoD, the Programme Coordinator and faculty members. The Panel notes that although the Quality Assurance Manual is still a draft, the University, College and the department implement the instructions of this Manual in relation to the programme. The QAAC coordinates with the College Quality Assurance Unit and various committees to implement the various decisions and plans for programme improvement and the implementation of general policies for quality assurance within the University. The President chairs the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Board which supervises all affairs related to internal and external reviews the University and academic programmes are subject to. Quality assurance at the course level is carried out by course coordinators and covered by the annual and periodic reviews of the programme, which are carried out by the QAAC, and by ensuring that the College adheres to the quality assurance procedures. The Panel appreciates that there is a clear quality assurance management system that is being implemented and monitored in relation to the programme. However, the Panel recommends that the College expedites the endorsement of the University Quality Assurance Manual.

- 5.4 According to the SER, the QAAC is the authority responsible for spreading the quality culture among academic and administrative staff of the University. In collaboration with the centre for the professional development of faculty members, the QAAC organises many workshops and courses, about twenty workshops and training course per year, to train the staff on understanding and applying quality standards. These workshops covered subjects such as; design of academic programmes and learning outcomes, the use of modern teaching tools, accreditation, quality assurance, academic advising, and strategic planning in higher education. Moreover, the University provides all the quality assurance policies and procedures on its intranet. It is worth mentioning that some faculty members of the College of Law are members in the Quality Assurance Committee at the University level. From interviews with faculty members and administrative staff, it became evident that they have clear understanding of the arrangements for quality assurance and their roles in this regard. The Panel appreciates that the faculty members and administrative staff are aware of the quality assurance system and procedures, and they have a clear understanding of their roles in this regard.
- 5.5 The Quality Assurance Manual of ASU specifies the mechanisms and procedures to be followed in proposing and developing new programmes to be offered in the University. This includes conducting informal benchmarking, scoping labour market needs and collecting feedback from academic experts. During the site visit, the Panel was informed that the process for proposing new programmes starts at the College where a proposal is submitted to the Programme and Curriculum Review Committee. This committee forwards its recommendations to the Academic Council and then to the University Council and the Board of Trustees (BoT) for approval and

endorsement, before submitting it to the Higher Education Council (HEC) in order to obtain the licence. The Panel was informed that no new programmes were proposed since the commencement of the current programme. Although no new programmes have been offered recently, the Panel finds the aforementioned procedures to be adequate.

- 5.6 The SER mentions that the College performs continuous review of the programme and the feedback is utilised by faculty members and other stakeholders, which is done in coordination with the QAAC. During the site visit, the Panel was informed that the programme is subject to annual reviews, where an internal report is submitted to the QAAC, which includes programme and course improvement recommendations. The recommendations in this report also stem from the regular evaluations of courses, the students' feedback about the programme, students' satisfaction surveys, employers' and alumni's surveys, regular meetings of the Department Council and the programme team, external evaluation and moderation and the Programme Advisory Board's recommendations. From interviews with faculty members and course files, it became evident that the efforts applied to update course portfolios and the steps taken during the review of the courses have led to a number of improvements. Moreover, the faculty members confirmed that students' evaluations have resulted in many improvements in the delivery particular courses. In its meeting with students and graduates, it became evident to the Panel that they were able to communicate their viewpoints regarding various aspects of the quality of teaching and effectiveness of the programme. The Panel appreciates that there are appropriate arrangements for annual internal evaluations of the programme which utilise feedback from different stakeholders for the improvement of the programme. However, the Panel notes that even though these mechanisms are known to faculty members and the programme management, and that the general lines of review are specified in the Quality Assurance Manual and included in the University's and College's decisions, no evidence was available on the existence of an official document which specifies the timeframe of reviews and the necessary implementation procedures. The Panel recommends that the College should document the procedures of the annual internal programme evaluation.
- 5.7 The Quality Assurance Manual indicates that the University performs periodic reviews of its programmes every four years. This review includes setting up a timetable of reviews by the QAAC in coordination with the College, and identifying the review committee which performs the review process and then submitting its report to be approved by the Academic Council. This process leads to an improvement plan and its implementation is followed up by the QAAC in coordination with the College. However, the Panel did not find evidence of detailed procedures for the periodic programme review process that includes clear mechanisms for this process, as well as its inputs and its outcomes. Nevertheless, the

Panel notes that there are guidelines for conducting internal reviews, and that the College has conducted comprehensive reviews of the programme, in 2010, 2012 and 2013, which resulted in improving the programme structure, its syllabi, PLIOs, teaching and learning methods, and assessment methods. Most of these amendments were the result of feedback from external reviewers of the programme, the Advisory Board, benchmarking reports and recommendations of quality assurance reviews reports. The Panel notes that these detailed reports resulted in the programme improvement, but they were irregular and inconsistent, and in instances mix between annual and periodic reviews of the programme. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should document the procedures of periodic reviews of the programme.

- 5.8 The College collects feedback through surveys filled in by students, alumni and employers. By reviewing the documents and from interviews with academic and administrative staff and employers, it became evident to the Panel that there are various survey templates according to the entity whose input to be surveyed. The comments and opinions collected from students and other stakeholders are analysed and the results are utilised to inform the decisions related to programmes with improvement mechanisms, and stakeholders are informed of these decisions. However, the Panel notes that the entity responsible for conducting these surveys and the method of their analysis change from one year to another and from one questionnaire to another with no clear reasons. In addition, the analysis process is not done in a systematic way to utilise the results of these different surveys systematically. The Panel recommends that the College should develop a clear mechanism for the analysis of the information it receives from the used surveys in order to collect important feedback and to use the results of the analysis effectively in the decision-making process.
- 5.9 During the site visit, it became evident to the Panel that there is a Staff Development and Training Centre with its own policies for governing its operation with regard to academic staff development. In addition, the human resources department is also in charge of the professional development of administrative staff. The development areas and topics are identified based on the feedback received for the HoDs and the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Office. Following that, the workshops or lectures necessary for academic staff development are identified in cooperation with the departments, the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Office and the QAAC. The Panel viewed evidence on organising training courses related to teaching and learning, such as a course on standardising course descriptions and a course on the use of PowerPoint presentations and new teaching aids. Furthermore, the faculty members confirmed that they benefitted from the courses organised by the Academic Staff Development and Training Centre and they commended the regular courses and workshops organised by the University to further develop their

professional performance. Financial support is also provided to faculty members wishing to attend conferences. In addition, sabbatical leave is granted to academic staff to upgrade their academic qualifications or to perform scholarly activity. The Panel appreciates that the College and the University implement training workshops that meet the professional development needs of academic staff and encourage the use of modern teaching techniques as well as enriching the learning experience.

- 5.10 By reviewing the documents, it became evident to the Panel that the College has depended on some studies to identify the labour market needs in the field of Law. One of these studies was conducted by the University in collaboration with INFURA organisation, the results of which were published in 11 January 2013. The study explores the labour market needs in different areas including legal practice. Another conducted study explores the labour market needs in the Arab region, the results of which was published in February 2012. In addition, the College depends on the Advisory Board input, as well as alumni and employers surveys. It was also evident during interviews with members of the Advisory Board that the market has needs for such Law programmes in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the GCC countries. The Advisory Board also confirmed that the market need an Arabic Law programme enhanced by English courses. However, the Panel did not find evidence that the College officially communicates with the professional bodies in the Kingdom of Bahrain, such as the Bahraini Lawyers Society and the Judicial Institute, which would enrich the programme and provide information on the legal fields in demand. The Panel recommends that College should communicate with the official professional bodies to better scope the labour market and to be informed about the legal careers in demand in Bahrain.
- 5.11 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- The University has clear policies and procedures which are applied consistently in the College for the management of the programme, and that the administrative and academic staff participate in the review of the policies and procedures related to their work.
 - The programme is managed in a manner that demonstrates the presence of an active and responsible leadership.
 - There is a clear quality assurance management system that is being implemented and monitored in relation to the programme.
 - The faculty members and administrative staff are aware of the quality assurance system and procedures, and they have a clear understanding of their roles in this regard.
 - There are appropriate arrangements for annual internal evaluations of the programme which utilise feedback from different stakeholders for the improvement of the programme.

- There are arrangements for implementing training workshops that meet the professional development needs of academic staff and that encourage the use of modern teaching techniques as well as enriching the learning experience.

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

- expedite the endorsement of the University Quality Assurance Manual
- document the procedures of the annual internal evaluation and the periodic review of the programme
- develop a clear mechanism for the analysis of the information the college receives from the implemented surveys in order to collect important feedback and to use the results of the analysis effectively in the decision-making process
- communicate with the official professional bodies to better scope the labour market and to be informed about the legal careers in demand in Bahrain.

5.13 **Judgement**

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

6. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own self-evaluation report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the site visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/QQA *Programmes-within-College Reviews Handbook, 2012*:

There is confidence in the Bachelor in Law programme offered by the College of Law in Applied Sciences University.