

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



# **Directorate of Higher Education Reviews**

## **Programmes-within-College Reviews Report**

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

**Date Reviewed: 26-28 May 2014**  
HC039-C2-R039

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## Acronyms

ASU	Applied Science University
BA	Bachelor in Accounting
BAF	Bachelor in Accounting and Finance
BBA	Bachelor in Business Administration
BIPA	Bahrain Institute of Public Administration
BMIS	Bachelor in Management Information Systems
BPS	Bachelor in Political Science
CAS	College of Administrative Sciences
CILOs	Course Intended Learning Outcomes
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEC	Higher Education Council of the Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain
HoD	Head of Department
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
MAF	Master in Accounting and Finance
MBA	Master in Business Administration
MHR	Master in Human Resources
MIS	Management Information Systems
PCRC	Programme and Curriculum Review Committee

PILOs	Programme Intended Learning Outcomes
QA	Quality Assurance
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre
QQA	The National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SIS	Student Information 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 <b>Indicator 1</b> is not satisfied	

## 1.2 The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process at the Applied Science University

A Programmes-within-College review of the College of Administrative Sciences (CAS) was conducted by the DHR of the QQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place on 26-28 May 2014 for the academic programmes offered by CAS, these are Bachelor in Management Information Systems (BMIS), Bachelor in Accounting and Finance (BAF), Bachelor in Accounting (BA), Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA), Bachelor in Political Science (BPS), Master in Accounting and Finance (MAF), Master in Business Administration (MBA), and Master in Human Resources (MHR) programs.

This report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Bachelor in Management Information Systems based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and appendices submitted by the Applied Science University (ASU), the supplementary documentations made available during the site visit, as well as interviews and observations made during the review site visit.

Applied Science University (ASU) was notified by the DHR/QQA on 24 October 2013 that it would be subject to Programmes-within-College reviews of the academic programmes offered by the College of Administrative Sciences. On 3 March 2014, ASU was informed that the exact date of the site visit will be on 26-28 May 2014. In

preparation for the review, ASU conducted its self-evaluation of all its programmes and submitted the SERs with appendices on the agreed date in 27 February 2014.

The DHR constituted a Panel consisting of experts in the academic field of Business Administrations, Accounting, Finance, Political Sciences, Management Information Systems, and in higher education who have experience of external programme quality reviews. The Panel comprised 10 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 documentations requested and presented to the Panel during the site visit.

It is expected that ASU will use the findings presented in this report to strengthen its Bachelor in Management Information Systems. 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 faculty in ASU.

### **1.3 Overview of the College of Administrative Sciences**

The College of Administrative Sciences is one of three colleges within ASU. The Programme Handbook 2013-2015 of the College states that the College was established in 2005 with the mission to meet the needs of Bahrain community and the region for specialised and qualified cadres in administrative sciences, business administration, accounting, finance, MIS and political sciences.

The College currently comprises four departments, namely: The Business Administration, the Accounting and Finance, the Management Information Systems, and the Political Science departments, and offers five undergraduate programmes (Bachelor in Business Administration, Bachelor in Accounting, Bachelor in Accounting and Finance, Bachelor in Management Information System, Bachelor in

Political Science) and three postgraduate programmes (Master in Business Administration, Master in Human Resources Management, Master in Accounting) across the four departments .

The College employs 34 teaching staff members of which 30 are full-time faculty members. The SER indicate that the total number of students registered in the College during the academic year 2012-2013 was 1,137.

#### 1.4 Overview of the Bachelor in Management Information Systems

The Bachelor of Management Information Systems is managed by the Department of Management Information Systems and was first offered in the academic year 2005 – 2006. The programme has gone through a number of reviews the last of which has resulted in a revised curriculum implemented in the academic year 2013-2014.

Currently there are 106 students studying in the programme, and to date the programme has graduated 60 students. There are five full-time faculty members in the MIS Department; three Ph.D. holders; one of whom is ranked associate professor, two are assistant professors, and two lecturers with M.Sc. degrees. Faculty members from the Computer Science Department also contribute to the teaching of the programme.

#### 1.5 Summary of Review Judgements

**Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor in Management Information Systems**

Indicator	Judgement
1: The Learning Programme	Satisfies
2: Efficiency of the Programme	Satisfies
3: Academic Standards of the Graduates	Does not satisfy
4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance	Satisfies
<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Limited Confidence</b>

## 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 Bachelor in Management Information Systems (BMIS) programme has a well-structured academic framework and clearly identified aims, objectives and Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs), which are well linked to the university and college mission and vision statements. The currently adopted programme structure constitutes a noticeable improvement over the old version and is better suited for a more institutionally-aligned Bachelor degree in Management Information Systems as evidence from the conducted studies. The programme clearly meets the norms, which would be expected for the discipline. The Panel appreciates that the programme aims are clearly stated and well aligned with the mission and vision statements of the University and the College.
- 2.2 The BMIS programme adopts the American credit hour system. It comprises 135 credit hours distributed as follows: 24 credit hours (8 courses) university requirements, 27 credit hours (9 courses) college compulsory requirements, 78 credit hours (26 course) programme compulsory requirements and 6 credit hours (2 courses) programme elective courses. During the academic year 2012-2013, the programme team conducted a major revision for the curriculum, which resulted in significant improvements that were implemented on the academic year 2013-2014. These improvements address problems associated with the programme structure, its PILOs and Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) and course content. The revised curriculum was also consulted by external reviewers to ensure alignment to international norms for similar bachelor programmes in MIS. Moreover, the programme team has benchmarked its curriculum to the ACM IS 2010 guidelines to ensure the curriculum covers all required MIS areas. The Panel met with members of the senior management team who provided clear explanation of the improvements that were incorporated in the BMIS programme and its relevance to regional and local needs. Moreover, students interviewed during the site visit indicated that these improvements have enriched the curriculum with useful topics, such as Simulation Systems, Information Analysis, and Database Systems. In general, the BMIS curriculum is well designed and ensures suitable workload and year-on-year progression. A typical semester workload is 18 credit hours, which is in line with international practice. Upon studying the curriculum, the Panel noted that there is a structured academic progression through the set of prerequisites and that knowledge and skills are appropriately balanced within the programme and course specifications, and that, within course contents, there is balance between theory and practice. The Panel appreciates that the BMIS curriculum is relevant to regional and

local needs and is well designed to ensure suitable workload, year-on-year progression and a balance between knowledge and skills and theory and practice.

- 2.3 There is a syllabi for all courses, most of which are well presented and follow a standard template. The samples of course specifications presented to the Panel detail, in general, the information related to the content and delivery of the course (the ILOs, the course structure, the teaching materials and assessment method), which meet the norms and standards of the MIS discipline. The Panel scrutinized the course files provided for the BMIS programme, and studied the available course portfolios and noted that the breadth and the depth of courses are appropriate to the level of the BMIS programme. The textbooks and references used in the BMIS programme courses are updated and recent, and there are copies available in the ASU library. There are also evidence of regular revision of course portfolios by the course coordinators. However, the Panel notes that the detailed syllabi of a number of the new courses that have not been offered yet (e.g. MIS332, MIS356, MIS363, MIS445) are not developed. The programme team informed the Panel that the syllabi of these courses are in progress and will be completed by the end of 2013-2014 academic year. The Panel recommends that the College urgently develop the syllabi of all courses within the offered version of the programme to ensure completeness and consistency.
- 2.4 The programme has clearly stated Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) which are stated in the programme specifications. The Panel notes the BMIS programme administration's effort to review the PILOs and benchmark them with other universities and align these with the programme aims. There are 13 programme ILOs divided into four categories: Knowledge and understanding (A1-A4); subject – specific skills (B1-B3); critical thinking skills (C1-C3); general and transferrable skills (D1-D3). The Panel studied the PILOs and notes with appreciation that these are aligned with the college's mission and the programme aims and are appropriate to the degree type and level.
- 2.5 Programme specifications indicate the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) for each course in the programme. These are mapped to the programme ILOs. The mapping process is managed by the Head of Department (HoD), the Programme Coordinator and the Quality Assurance Unit. From the interviews conducted during the site visit, the Panel notes that faculty members are knowledgeable about both the procedures for the developing and mapping ILOs and the rationale for the approach adopted. The Panel acknowledges the effort exerted in ensuring that the CILOs are appropriate for the programme through the mapping with the PILOs, and the internal and external revision. The Panel scrutinized the CILOs in the course files and the mapping matrix provided, and notes that in general the CILOs are appropriate to the course syllabi and are mapped properly to the PILOs.

- 2.6 The BMIS programme includes a compulsory three credit-hours course on internship (MIS454) that all students must undertake once they have completed at least 90 credit hours of their 135 credit hours degree plan. There is a defined internship policy in place, which stipulates the roles and responsibilities of the supervisor and the student. The internship requires the completion of a minimum of 120 work hours and is considered a good practical addition to the student learning experience. During interviews with staff, the Panel learned of the operation and running of this course and its assessment policy which is consistent with the course outline and its learning outcomes. There is an internship coordinator for the entire College, who manages and facilitates the internship course for all students. The Panel notes with appreciation the revised internship rules and procedures that are comprehensive and are implemented consistently to ensure a complete follow-up from both the industry and the academic supervisors. Out of the total marks, 50% is assessed by the industry supervisor and 50% by the academic supervisor using a pre-developed rubric. There is evidence of a follow-up mechanism to assure that the internship experience enables students to achieve the learning outcomes and address any further challenges for the students during the internship periods. During interviews with the internship coordinator, the Panel learned that the coordinator ensures that a site visit is conducted for all students in the training field. The Panel suggests that the College increase the number of the site visits, and hence the number of faculty members involved, to meet with the industry supervisor and the student for in depth discussion of any problem arise or areas for improvements.
- 2.7 There is a clear policy for teaching and learning, which encourages the usage of a wide range of teaching and learning methods to achieve the desired learning outcomes. The Panel notes from the interview sessions conducted during the site visit that the policy is well communicated to the faculty members and the students of the programme. From the submitted course files and interviews during the site visit, the Panel notes that lectures are the primary way in which courses are delivered. However, the way lectures are delivered in most courses in the BMIS programme show some level of students' participation in the learning process. The use of in-class exercises and case studies whenever appropriate is evident in some of the course files. Moreover, there is evidence from the course files that BMIS courses encourage group-work through group projects. During interviews, students expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the teaching methods currently being used in the BMIS programme. The Panel notes that the range of teaching methods used and the level of students' engagement in the learning process is acceptable.
- 2.8 The Panel notes that almost all learning takes place *via* an effective – lecturer-led type mechanism. There is an implemented Moodle system in place for almost all courses. However, the Panel found no effective usage of Moodle as a learning management system that can encourage independent learning. The current usage is limited for

uploading course materials and important announcements. The Panel recommends that the College investigate ways to incorporate independent learning in the curriculum through the usage of Moodle.

2.9 The BMIS programme has a written policy for assessments and feedback which is well communicated to the faculty and students. There are clear guidelines that organize students' attendance in the class, and policies and procedures for examinations and grading mechanism. The Panel also notes the documented policy for plagiarism and copyrights protections. There is also an appeal procedure in place that ensures fairness of students grading which students are informed of. Moreover, there is evidence from the submitted examination papers and graded assessments in the course files that students are provided with feedback on their work that helps them improve their performance; in particular the feedback on the midterm examination. From meetings with the teaching staff, it is evident that they are well aware of the assessment policies and current assessment methods and the role these policies play in assessing the students' achievements. During interviews with students, the Panel found that the students are also aware of the current assessments methods used in the programme and their implications. The Panel appreciates the clearly stated and communicated assessment and feedback policy. The Panel studied the assessment policy and noted the heavy weight assigned to the examination form of assessment. The Assessment Policy stipulates that the grade distribution is uniform for all courses. In all courses, 30% of the grade is allocated for the midterm examination, 50% for the final examination and 20% for all other methods of assessment. During the site visit the Panel was informed that this grade distribution is set by the University, thus the Department cannot change it. However, the policy of having the same grade distribution applied across all courses is not justified. This may not be appropriate for all types of courses – especially, the courses with heavy practical aspects, such as programming. The Panel recommends that the College revise the current grade distribution policy and develop a more flexible policy based on the course level, and nature. This will maintain the academic freedom needed to decide what is the best weighting of assessment to a given course content and learning outcomes.

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

- The programme aims are stated clearly and aligned with the mission and vision statements of the University and the College.
- The BMIS curriculum is relevant to the regional and local needs and provides suitable workload, year-on-year progression and a balance between knowledge and skills and theory and practice.

- The programme intended learning outcomes are stated clearly, aligned to the college mission and the programme aims and are appropriate to the degree type and level.
- There are clear rules and procedures for the internship programme to ensure appropriate delivery and achievement of relevant learning outcomes.
- There is a clearly stated assessment and feedback policy that faculty members and students are aware of.

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

- develop detailed syllabi for all courses within the offered version of the programme to ensure completeness and consistency within the programme
- investigate ways to incorporate independent learning in the curriculum through the usage of the available e-learning platform
- revise the current grade distribution policy and develop more flexible policy based on the course level and nature.

## 2.12 **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 ASU has a clear admission policy, which stipulates a provision of a 60% high school score as a minimum requirement for all its undergraduate courses. Hence this applies to the BMIS programme. Students with less than 60% score may be admitted to the programme if they have at least two years experience. Moreover, the University has a clear policy for accepting transferred students from other institutions. The admission policy and procedures are published on the university website and in the University Catalogue, and in the Programme Handbook. The Panel notes the clear admission policy for newly admitted and transferred students. Applicants have also to set an English language placement test and take different English language remedial courses depending on their performance in the test. However, the Panel noted that there is inconsistency in the level of the students' English language skills. This is a concern especially that the BMIS degree is meant to be taught in English. The Panel recommends that College review its placement test to ensure appropriateness of students on the BMIS programme and provide an appropriate remedial programme to bring the students' English language skills to an appropriate level.
- 3.2 The current student cohorts show a variation in students' profile. The Panel notes that transferred students in general have higher high school score and those from Art secondary school background have lower averages. Students are admitted to the BMIS programme from all high school streams. Students admitted from arts, vocational and commercial high school stream are requested to take introduction to statistics mathematics (MATH 099) as a remedial course. However, the Panel is of the view that this is not sufficient to bring these students to the same level of students entering the programme from science routes. The Panel notes that the College is aware of this short come as stated in the submitted documents. The Panel recommends that the College revise the admission criteria and placement tests for the BMIS programme to ensure that admitted students, in particular those with arts, commercial and vocational backgrounds have the mathematical skills needed, which is particularly important for the BMIS programme.
- 3.3 The programme management lies between the Head of Department (HoD) and the Programme Coordinator. There are clear roles defined for the Programme Coordinator and the HoD. Furthermore, individual courses are managed by the assigned course coordinators who coordinate the teaching and learning activities. There is also a functioning academic committee structure comprising University, College and Department Councils, Programme and Curriculum Review Committee,

Teaching and Learning Committee, Research and Ethics Committee, University Strategic Planning Committee, and the Quality Centre, among others, at the university-wide level. The SER further lists a number of parallel committees at the College and Departmental/ Programme levels, such as the Examinations Committee. The Panel found sufficient evidence of the functioning of the academic committee meetings. The Panel notes with appreciation the active engagement of students within the programme management. A student representative attends the Department Council meetings and is encouraged to participate in the discussions relevant to students' affairs and require students' views. The Panel notes that the HoD is also the programme coordinator and the quality officer of the College. The Panel is concerned that the multi positions assumed by the HoD and the long list of responsibilities attached to all of these positions might overload the HoD and prevent him from exercising an effective leadership. The Panel encourages the College to address this issue.

- 3.4 The BMIS programme is delivered by three staff members with PhDs in computer science and two staff members with MSc in MIS bringing the student to staff ratio to 21:1, considering the relatively small number of students at this stage. However, these faculty members contribute also to the delivery of other programmes offered by the University, increasing their actual load. The Panel studied the faculty CVs and the relevant submitted documentations, and noted that the published work by staff has an inclination towards computer science rather than pure MIS, which is expected when taking into consideration the faculty profile. Furthermore, the Panel has concerns that the administrative work required from most of the faculty members is relatively high including the two faculty members with MSc degrees. During the site visit, the Panel was informed that the College has developed a plan to recruit new faculty members with PhD in MIS. This is particularly needed for the delivery of the latest BMIS study plan with the newly introduced courses. The Panel recommends that the College expedite the implementation of the recruitment plan to ensure that the programme is adequately staffed.
- 3.5 There are well documented policies related to recruitment, appraisal and promotion of staff members. The recruitment process involves the Department, the College and a centralized recruitment committee at the university level. The process start from the vice-president for academic affairs who communicates with the Department for its future requirements. The requirements are published on local and international newspapers, and electronically. After receiving the applications the Department Council studies all applicants, conducts interviews, and prepares a report for the College Council for approval, before forwarding it to the centralized committee for final approval. The Panel appreciates the transparency of the recruitment process and the fair policy on recruiting applicants. There is an annual appraisal process for all faculty members including the HoD. The appraisal sheet covers most of the

faculty activities during the academic year including research activities, teaching load, development of the learning process, contribution to students support activities and community services, and professional consultation. Recently, ASU has developed a promotion policy that stipulates the roles of the Department, the College and the University in the promotion decision. Submitted promotion files are reviewed by three committees at different levels. Faculty members are assessed based on their achievements and performance in teaching, research, university services and community services. During interviews with staff members, the Panel learned that there were no promotions in the last years and one staff member is currently applying for promotion. The Panel recommends that the University implement its newly developed staff promotion policy to ensure the retention of the highly qualified and experienced faculty.

- 3.6 There is a functioning induction process for the newly appointed staff. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel learned that the induction programme for newcomers involves introduction about university services, such as Moodle, the library, and IT services. It also covers presentations about HR and finance, academic, and registration and admission policies. The top management participates in the induction to emphasize the university's vision, mission, objectives, and organization chart. Before commencing teaching classes, both full-time and part-time staff members learn about the teaching and learning, assessment and other relevant academic policies. Current staff members expressed their satisfaction with these arrangements. The Panel appreciates the arrangements in place to prepare newly recruited staff for assuming their responsibilities within the College.
- 3.7 ASU has a functioning Management Information System (MIS) and a Student Information System (SIS) which together provide means for maintaining students records with respect to admissions and registrations, admission profile, faculty time-tabling, examination marks entry and processing of results. The SIS enables academic staff to enter examination marks directly into the system and is used to generate a host of reports for management decision-making. Students confirmed that they have restricted access to the system *via* a secured login protocol and are able to access their examination results and academic records online. The Panel observed a physical demonstration of the SIS during the campus tour and notes that there are sufficient security features to ensure the integrity of the system. Interviews with some support staff and academics confirmed that the reports they receive from the system are adequate for their needs, and allow for effective identification and monitoring of 'at-risk' students. Evidence is provided on how the SIS is used effectively as a communication tool between at-risk students and their academic advisors. The Panel acknowledges the use of the MIS and SIS to support teaching and learning and to aid decision-making and encourages the College seek further enhancement to the utilization of the SIS system by introducing more analytical functionalities to make it

more suitable for supporting decision making in the Department, the College and the University at large.

- 3.8 ASU has policies and procedures in place to ensure the security of the learners' information. This includes having backup copies of records on-site and off-site and data administration arrangements related to authorizations for the different levels of users. There is also a policy in place to ensure security of records through a defined authorization mechanism, storage of data, privacy of information, exchange of information, the usage of anti-virus and security tools, and the security agreements with users. The Panel appreciates these arrangements in place to protect students' records. All marks entered into the system are printed out and reviewed independently by an assigned faculty member before submission to the HoD for approval, and thereafter to the Dean for endorsement. An additional validation is done by the Registration Department through a 'second marks entry'. Marks and results are confirmed then on the system and can be accessed by students. Interviews with academic and administrative staff confirmed the approval and validation procedures. The Panel also learned from the interviews and supporting documents, that ASU has a Disaster Recovery Plan in terms of which data from the SIS is backed up periodically to a remote site to forestall any potential loss of data through disasters such as fire. The Panel appreciates the rigour of the implemented procedures to ensure the security of learner information.
- 3.9 The Panel toured the university campus and visited the teaching halls, laboratories, staff offices, the bookstore, praying spaces, the health clinic, the main food court, the student activity hall and other facilities. There are seven computer laboratories with 154 computers, and 46 teaching halls equipped with data shows. ASU's main library supports all ASU students. In relation to the BMIS programme, the library holds 546 hardcopy titles, 1160 copies, 10 hardcopy journals, in addition to the electronic library and databases. The Panel notes the well-structured library with private study spaces available for students. The Panel encourages the College to continue in increasing the library holdings as related to the MIS specialization. During the touring session, the Panel met with qualified staff in the library, who explained the services that are provided to help and advice the BMIS students on using the library resources. The library is open daily from 8:00am to 8:00pm except Friday from 2:00pm to 8:00pm. In addition, the Panel visited some computer laboratories and noted that technical staff are available to monitor the laboratories during class time. This helps the lecturer to maintain the quality of teaching without concerns about technical problems that can emerge during study hours. The Panel notes that within the laboratories allocation there are free hours that are posted on the door where students can have access to the facilities to perform research and solve their homework. During the site visit, the Panel confirmed that the University provides internet services, Wi-Fi, email services, troubleshooting support, software

installation, and access to the university services to all students and faculty members. The Panel appreciates that ASU has good facilities to support the students' learning experiences

- 3.10 The Panel notes that ASU is using the attendance sheets to track the resources in the laboratories. The ICT unit produces a report on the usage of computers in the laboratories, which is utilised by the Department for resource planning. The library information system provides tracking of usage of library e-resources, and produces reports to the Department and the College to revise the usage of resources. In addition, the e-learning system (Moodle) offers reports on its usage. The Panel notes the availability of the different tracking mechanisms and recommends that the College establish a comprehensive resource tracking system to track usage by students and staff and utilise the outcomes to support decision-making.
- 3.11 As stated earlier, there are arrangements in place to provide support for students in the laboratories, the library, and for the use of e-resources. This is represented by having the technical support unit for the University, staff in the library, the teacher in the laboratory and the teaching assistants in the College. ASU has a social care unit and an academic advisory system for advising on academic issues. During the touring session, the Panel was informed about the services delivered by the social care unit in order to address non-academic students' challenges. The Panel viewed files of some cases where student's problems were resolved through consultation with the social care unit. During interviews, the Panel found that students are grateful for the received support and services. The Panel appreciates these arrangements in place and the support system provided by the library, student care unit, and IT unit by qualified staff.
- 3.12 Orientation is provided for new and transfer students at the commence of each semester. The University has a new student orientation policy that has been developed to enhance the former policy and address the gaps in it. Students Handbook, stipulating all important information, policies and guidelines, is distributed to all students. The Panel is pleased to note the active involvement of the Student Council and senior students, as well as the academic advisors in the orientation process. Training on the use of the library resources is also conducted during the orientation process. The Panel considers that the face-to-face orientation day is very helpful in preparing students for their studies, and is additionally pleased that efforts are made to provide material online for the benefit of those who are unable to physically attend the orientation sessions. Students confirmed the orientation process during the interview sessions, and added that course tutors, in their first contact sessions, demonstrate the use of the web portal to access the requisite course material. There are also arrangements in place for transferred students to prepare them for joining ASU and inform them about the complete

transferring process and the number of transferred credits. The Panel appreciates the arrangements in place for the students orientation programme.

- 3.13 At-risk students are defined for the BMIS programme as those with accumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of less than 60%. According to the ASU's Student at Risk Policy, students should be monitored before their GPA reaches 60%. Students with GPA of 62% or less are prevented from registering online and have to seek academic advice. The academic advisor has access to individual student records on the SIS and a form has to be filled. An action plan is developed by the student under the supervision of the advisor in order to identify the challenges faced by the student and the ways to address these. The advisor then follows up with the student on frequent bases and records the progress made, and the results of the discussions. During interviews, students confirmed that these meetings have helped them in better organising their study plan. Students are made aware of faculty members' office hours, which are posted on their office doors. Moreover, the Panel learned during interviews that students meet with their advisors on a regular bases during the semester; in particular during the registration time. The Panel appreciates the mechanism in place to support at-risk students.
- 3.14 Students participate in visits to organisations in the Kingdom of Bahrain in order to learn about MIS disciplines. As part of the Integrated Information Systems course, students are required to attend a 12 hour workshop administrated in the Bahrain Institute of Public Administration (BIPA). The Panel acknowledges the current learning environment and encourages the College to extend its collaboration to other professional organisations for providing more practical experiences for all BMIS students. The Panel notes that the Deanship of Student Affairs conducts annual 'Jobs Fair' day where students are exposed to potential employers. The Department has also introduced industrial visits and field trips to a variety of organizations such as Gulf Air and Batelco to expose students to professional work. Moreover, a number of extra-curricular activities are arranged for students and they have access to recreation facilities on campus with allocated time for female and male students. Other physical environment including the library space with proper seating arrangements, cafeteria, computer laboratories, Wi-Fi access and LEDs monitors are available to support the students learning environment. The Panel notes that there is a conducive learning environment.
- 3.15 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Efficiency of the Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- There is a functioning induction process in place for newly appointed staff members.
  - Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure the security of the learners' records and accuracy of results.

- ASU has good facilities to support the students' learning experiences.
- Appropriate support is provided to the students by the library, student care unit, and IT unit with qualified staff members.
- There is a comprehensive orientation programme that is conducted to prepare new and transferred students.
- Effective mechanism is in place to identify and provide academic support for at-risk students.

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

- revise the English language placement test and the remedial English language courses to ensure their effectiveness
- further enhance the admission requirements in relation to Mathematics, which is particularly important for the BMIS programme
- expedite the implementation of the department's recruitment plan to ensure that the programme is staffed adequately with qualified MIS faculty members
- expedite the implementation of the newly developed academic promotion policy in order to retain qualified and experienced faculty
- establish a comprehensive resource tracking system to track usage by students and staff and utilise its outcome to support decision-making.

### 3.17 **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 The BMIS graduate attributes are clearly stated in the programme specification and mapped to the programme aims, which in turn is mapped to the programme ILOs. The stated attributes emphasise on the knowledge and skills needed for a successful career in the MIS field, ethical and professional practices in MIS, and lifelong learning. The Panel appreciates the clearly stated graduate attributes and the alignment to the programme aims and PILOs. Nonetheless, the Panel notes that the mechanisms used to ensure the attainment of the graduate attributes as indicated from the assessment, validation and moderation systems used are not adequate. The Panel recommends that the College review the effectiveness of the mechanism currently used to ensure that the attainment of graduate attributes is properly evaluated.
- 4.2 There is evidence of the programme being subjected to a number of benchmarking exercises. During the process of developing the updated BMIS study plan, the programme was benchmarked with similar programmes offered by local, regional, and international institutions based on the recently developed benchmarking policy. The SER does not explain the nature, the process, and the scope of the benchmarking; however, during the site visit interview sessions it became clear that the benchmarking was limited to course offerings, and possibly course content, and ILOs. The Panel acknowledges the programme team's effort in including ACM and AIS model curricula in their benchmarking exercise. However, the Panel is of the view that benchmarking should not be restricted only to course offerings and the content of other institutions, and should be expanded to include benchmarking of assessment tools and graduates achievements. The Panel noted that ASU has a formal agreement with the University of Yarmouk in Jordan. However, the Panel found no evidence of such partnership agreement being formalized with all the institutions the College benchmark its programme with. Moreover, it is not clear how the outcomes from the benchmarking are embedded into the periodic programme reviews to improve the academic standards of the students. The Panel recommends that the College carry out a comprehensive formal benchmarking that covers all the key elements of the programme including assessments mechanism and graduates achievements.
- 4.3 ASU has a clearly stated Assessment Policy with supporting procedures for course assessment and grading which both faculty and students are well informed of. The Panel studied the samples of course files provided and notes that the assessment tools used are stated in the specifications of each course and made available to

students. There is evidence from the documentations provided and interviews conducted that assessment policy and procedures are consistently implemented, monitored and subject to regular reviews. In addition, the Panel acknowledges that there is a student appeal system in place, and that student grade distribution is approved by the HoD and the Dean before it is published to students. Moreover, the Panel notes the College efforts to eliminate plagiarism and ensure ethical academic practices. The Panel finds these arrangements helpful to ensure fairness of students' assessments. The Panel appreciates that the assessment policy and procedures are consistently implemented, monitored and subject to regular reviews and that there are arrangements in place to ensure fairness of student assessment.

- 4.4 ASU Assessment Policy calls for the assessment tools used in a course to be linked with the course ILOs. This is clearly indicated in course portfolios. However, the Panel noted that there are no clear assessment rubrics to ensure consistency in the marking of assignments such as projects across various BMIS courses. The SER states that the alignment of assessment with CILOs is monitored and reviewed by the internal examiners, and the BMIS examination committee. Moreover, the Department ensures the achievement of these ILOs through discussing the analysis and reports of the student attainment levels of CILOs presented in each course's evaluation report. The Panel acknowledges ASU's efforts in this regard; nonetheless, the Panel noted from the sample of course files provided that the alignment between assessment and outcomes is not applied effectively across all courses. Evidence presented suggest an inconsistent approach of how an individual ILO is aligned to a particular assessment task. Moreover, in some courses, the range of assessment tasks are not sufficiently wide to accommodate the different forms of learning outcomes. The Panel recommends that the College develop a more robust mechanism that ensures the consistency of these mappings.
- 4.5 An internal moderation process to evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment instruments devised for the programme is in place. Midterm and final examination papers are submitted at least 48 hours before students are scheduled to set the examination to the examination committee. The committee appoints an internal examiner to ensure the relevance of the questions to the course and the appropriateness of the assessment tools to measure the achievement of the learning outcome and the distribution of marks. The internal examiner submits a report to the programme coordinator, who collects all the comments and reports any recommendation for change to the Department Council for approval. However, the Panel has concerns on how the programme team evaluate the effectiveness of the mechanism for internal moderation itself. Moreover, the Panel is of the view that the role of the internal moderation should be expanded to include the evaluation of the effectiveness of assessment instruments other than examination papers. The Panel also has concerns about the quality of the feedback received from the internal

moderation and recommends that the College monitor the process to ensure that the moderations are implemented effectively.

- 4.6 ASU has developed recently an updated external moderation policy contained within a handbook specific to the external examiner role. The external moderation has been implemented on a sample of the courses offered currently and as a result, the Panel could not have a conclusive judgement on the effectiveness of this process in relation to the BMIS programme. However, the Panel studied the external examiner's report submitted as part of the supporting materials, and the external examiner's report within the observed course files. The Panel notes that these reports did not seem to be of much impact. The Panel recommends that the College develop a mechanism to measure the effectiveness of the external moderation process and to show how the newly introduced process is helping in improving the provision.
- 4.7 The Panel examined a range of students assessed work in various courses and found that in many instances the difficulty and the content of the final examinations is inadequate for a Bachelor degree in MIS. In some instances, there is minimal differentiation in the examination question papers. The Panel also noted that the level of achievement as expressed in the samples of student's assessed course work is not appropriate at a Bachelor level similar to other MIS programmes. Moreover, during interviews with alumni, the Panel was informed that most of the assessments used were based on theoretical examination, which was confirmed from the evidence provided in the course files during the site visit. This raises a concern about the accurate measure of the level of students' achievement, especially for those courses with practical learning outcomes. The Panel recommends that the College ensure that the assessment tools used are at an appropriate level and provide proper means to differentiate students' abilities.
- 4.8 The SER states that the Department gauges the level of achievement of graduates through studying the statistics on the graduates grade distributions, the pass rates for the courses and the course evaluation report where each faculty member analyses the grade distribution in his/her course. A second approach is the indirect assessment through alumni and employers' surveys to gather information on the level of satisfaction. However, during the site visit the Panel came to learn that these are not conducted systematically. Interviews with alumni and employees show an acceptable level of satisfaction with the graduates' achievements. The Panel acknowledges the arrangements in place to assess the programme graduates' achievements. However, as stated earlier, the Panel urges the College to ensure the rigour of the assessment tools used and hence, the grades accumulated. Moreover, the Panel notes that whilst the programme follows the American credit system, the pass grade is at 50% score (Grade E) rather than 60% (Grade D) as in most programmes following the American system. The Panel recommends that, in its

benchmarking activities, the College benchmark its requirements for accumulative grades and course pass rates in comparison with those of local, regional and international institutions adopting the American credit system.

- 4.9 The Department submitted its cohort analysis to the Panel to allow for an effective comparison across years. In general, the number of students registered in the BMIS programme is relatively low but has sequentially increased over the last four years (nine in 2010, 25 in 2011, and 26 in 2012, 75 in 2013 first semester). The programme team interviewed during the site visit claimed that this is because of the old curriculum plan, and consequently the number is expected to increase because of the enhanced curriculum adopted in 2013-2014. The programme team also highlighted that the new campus is expected to play a significant role in attracting more students to the University. The submitted SER states that the withdrawal rate from the programme is high, ranging from approximately 21% to 32% and that the length of study of the BMIS programme is drifting upwards over the years. The Panel recommends that the Department conduct a comprehensive study to investigate these matters, and develop and implement a mitigating strategy. Moreover, the Panel was dismayed by the fact that only nine out of the 43 alumni who responded to the alumni office were working in their field of study. The Panel suggests that the College develop a plan for better penetration of its graduates to the various sectors of the economy in the particular area of MIS specialization.
- 4.10 The programme has a mandatory work-based component in the form of an internship course (MIS454), where students spend a minimum of 120 working hours in a real work setting. The internship is governed by ASU student internship policy. Internship is to be pursued following the completion of at least 90 credits towards the degree. The Internship Handbook stipulates the architecture of the internship programme. A dedicated manager follows up students' progress and is responsible for the communication, coordination and documentation of all internships activities within the College. There is a clear assessment mechanism in place, which is implemented consistently as evidence from the submitted documents. Out of the total grade, 50% is allocated for the assessment of the field supervisor at work, and 50% is allocated for the report produced by the students, and the presentation and discussion after completing the internship programme. The Panel acknowledges this important feature of the BMIS programme. However, during interviews the Panel learned that a number of interns do work in activities/processes that are not related to the MIS major. Some of the tasks reported in the internship reports appear to be clerical in nature and not well-suited to an MIS major. The Panel therefore, is concerned about meeting the internship programme learning outcomes in these cases. The Panel recommends that the College develop a strategy to ensure better placement and matching of the internship intended learning outcomes.

- 4.11 There is a policy that governs the BMIS graduation project which clearly states the roles and responsibilities of the supervisor and the student. The Panel carefully reviewed the documentation for the BMIS graduation projects and the samples of projects provided during the site visit and noted that in a number of cases, the project bear more resemblance to class projects than graduation projects. The level and scope of the BMIS graduation projects need to be revisited by the College more carefully. The Panel recommends that the College introduce effective measures of internal and external moderation for the BMIS graduation project that ensure the appropriateness of these projects.
- 4.12 There is an BMIS programme Advisory Board that is governed by clear terms of references. The Advisory Board has representatives from the private and the public sectors, meets regularly, and provides feedback to the programme and evidence were provided on these being considered during programme reviews. The Panel met with members of the Board whom demonstrated high interest in and awareness of the programme and indicated their willingness to assist in increasing the visibility of the programme, curriculum development, recruitment strategies, marketing and even introducing new programmes. The Panel notes with appreciation that the Board is providing advices and feedback on the programme which is reflected into the newly adopted curriculum plan.
- 4.13 The Panel interviewed employers and alumni during the site visit. The employers' feedback was positive and they all expressed their satisfaction in employing BMIS graduates from ASU. The Panel was provided with evidence of some recent employers and alumni surveys that have been conducted by the College. The evidence submitted indicates that both alumni and employers are overall satisfied with the graduates' profile. However, feedback is not sought systematically from the stakeholders. The Panel advises the College to develop and implement a mechanism to systematically gauge stakeholders' satisfaction with the programme and its outcomes. Moreover, the Panel encourages the College, possibly through ASU alumni office, to keep track of the career progression of its alumni.
- 4.14 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Academic Standards of the Graduates, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- There are clearly stated graduate attributes that are aligned to the programme aims and intended learning outcomes.
  - The assessment policy and procedures are consistently implemented, monitored and subject to regular reviews.
  - There is an effective programme Advisory Board with clear terms of reference.
- 4.15 In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the College should:

- develop and implement a mechanism to ensure that graduate attributes are properly assessed through valid and reliable assessments tools
- carry out a comprehensive formal and periodic benchmarking that covers graduates attributes and students achievements
- 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
- 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 suitability of assessment instruments other than the examination papers
- ensure that the assessment tools used are at an appropriate level and provide proper means to differentiate students' abilities
- 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
- develop a strategy to ensure better placement of students on internship programmes and matching the student experience to the intended learning outcome of the internship programme
- introduce effective measures of internal and external moderation of the BMIS graduation project to ensure the appropriateness of these projects.

#### 4.16 Judgement

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme **does not satisfy** 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 ASU management system comprises a range of policies and procedures that are mainly included in the recently developed Quality Assurance Manual to provide a 'one-stop shop'. Examples of existing policies and procedures include the Teaching and Learning and Assessment Strategy, Assessment and Feedback Policy, Staff Development Policy Academic Staff Promotion Policy, Students at-Risk Policy and Programme Review Policy. The Panel met with some academic and administrative staff, including representatives from the department QA Unit, who confirmed that these policies and procedures are effectively applied and well-communicated to both staff and students. Staff interviewed were able to demonstrate many ways in which the policies and procedures have been applied to enhance the quality of delivering the BMIS programme. The Panel appreciates that staff members are familiar with these policies, apply them consistently and are involved in the development of those that are relevant to their duties.
- 5.2 As stated earlier, the BMIS programme is managed by the Programme Coordinator who is also the HoD. The SER states that the structure supporting the Programme Coordinator to manage the programme consists of Department Council, Programme and Curriculum Review Committee, Examination Committee, Course Coordinators, and the Student Council, which has representation at all departmental meetings. Various venues such as University, College and Department Council meetings are utilised to ensure that the responsibilities of all members involved in the delivery of the programme are executed in an effective manner. The Panel appreciates that the BMIS programme is managed in a manner that demonstrates effective and responsible leadership.
- 5.3 The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre (QAAC) has an overall responsibility for ensuring that the programme adheres to the requirements of the ASU's quality assurance system. The quality assurance policy is operationalized at the college and departmental levels *via* the College and Departmental QA Units, which are overseen by a university-wide QA coordinating group consisting of the QAAC director and the College QA Coordinators, among others. For example, the responsibility of the departmental QA Units is to ensure that programme and course aims and learning outcomes are appropriately aligned to the assessment methods. In addition, the programme is evaluated annually within the Department and through a formal review in four year intervals by the Programme and Curriculum Review Committee to assess its effectiveness and relevance. The Panel was provided with

evidence of meetings of the QA Unit and the Department Council to buttress their involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of delivery of the BMIS programme. The Panel acknowledges that the quality assurance management system is clearly specified, implemented, monitored, and evaluated across the College. The Panel advises, however, that the Department develop a clear mechanism of closing the loop to fully benefit from all the data and information available as a result of the quality assurance activities. Particularly, the quality of the programme delivery could benefit from having a clear process by which findings from the assessment and moderation processes are reflected in changes introduced to the assessment process.

- 5.4 One of the primary objectives of the QAAC is to inculcate a quality culture among both academic and administrative staff. The Panel was provided with evidence on the QAAC conducting regular events and workshops to acquaint staff with best practice approaches in teaching and learning and inviting facilitators from other higher education institutions in Bahrain to exchange good practices. Policies and procedures relating to quality assurance are made available on the university intranet for easy access by staff. Both academic and support staff interviewed showed a clear understanding of the quality management arrangements and their role in ensuring the quality of the provision. The Panel appreciates the commitment of the faculty to the quality assurance of the programme even with the high teaching and administrative load.
- 5.5 The Self-evaluation Report states that ASU has a laid down procedure for the development of new programmes. In terms of the procedure, proposals for introducing new programmes are considered in the first instance by the Programme and Curriculum Review Committee, after which these have to go through the college and university approval processes, and thereafter are submitted to be licensed by the HEC. The Panel notices that no new programmes have been introduced in the last three years. The Panel is satisfied that the procedures ASU has put in place for the development and approval of new programmes are adequate.
- 5.6 The SER states that at the end of each academic year, an internal self-evaluation report for the BMIS programme that includes recommendations for the improvement of the programme and courses is developed and submitted to the QACC. The SER demonstrates a number of ways in which the Department reviews and evaluates the BMIS programme. These include regular course evaluation reports, students feedback, students satisfaction surveys, alumni and employers surveys, regular departmental council and programme team meetings, external examination and moderation, and a functioning programme Advisory Board. During interview sessions, the faculty members explained the mechanism in place to revise the course portfolios, and the cycle to approve the suggestions and changes to the courses. The cycle involves the Programme Coordinator and the Department Council to approve

the changes to the course and align it to programme aims and ILOs. The Panel met with students and alumni who confirmed that they were able to provide feedback on various aspects relating to the quality of provision. The academic staff also confirmed that the process of student evaluation has led to many improvements in the teaching of specific courses. The Panel notes the annual programme review, and encourages the Department to develop a clear follow-up mechanism for ensuring that recommended enhancements are implemented. Moreover, the Panel encourages the Department to revise its programme review mechanism and align its procedure tightly with the ASU curriculum change procedures as specified in the Quality Assurance Manual.

- 5.7 Periodic reviews are conducted by the Programme and Curriculum Review Committee (PCRC), which is responsible for reviewing the BMIS programme in a four-year cycle. The review process requires the PCRC to gather feedback from teaching staff, students and other stakeholders such as employers and alumni to ascertain the relevance and currency of the programme, and to assure alignment of the PILOs to the college and university vision and mission. The Panel notes that the BMIS programme has been subjected to external reviews since academic year 2010-2011. The feedback obtained from external reviewers, the students and the Advisory Board were all incorporated in developing the latest curriculum plan which was implemented in the academic year 2013-2014. The Panel appreciates the frequency and tenacity with which the BMIS programme is reviewed. During its meeting with the Advisory Board the Panel noted, however, that the consultation was at the curriculum structure level, and encourages the department to additionally share the content of future programme enhancements with the Advisory Board.
- 5.8 ASU collects regular course evaluations and student feedback near the end of every semester. In addition, the Panel was provided with evidence of surveys conducted recently to seek feedback from employers and alumni. However, these are not conducted regularly. Moreover, because of the small number of alumni and employers, the collected responses were limited. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that some of the notable findings from recent surveys have been employers' perception that ASU graduates generally lack good writing skills and also exhibit unsatisfactory problem-solving skills, but show a high propensity to learn on the job. The Panel was informed that actions have been taken in terms of curriculum and course reviews to address these shortcomings. However, the Panel did not see evidence of a formal way that is executed systematically to collect and act upon stakeholders' feedback. The Panel recommends that the College adopt more robust procedures to collect, analyse and respond to stakeholder surveys, and provide timely feedback to the stakeholders on actions taken to address the identified issues.

- 5.9 ASU has a Staff Development Centre which oversees the professional development of the academic staff and is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of staff training programmes. In addition, there is an Academic Staff Development Policy that stipulates the basis for an academic staff development budget and specifies some development initiatives and activities that are supported as part of academic staff professional development. These include providing financial assistance for conference attendance and financial support and release time for academic staff to upgrade their qualifications or undertake other scholarly activities. During the site visit, the Panel visited the Staff Development Centre. The Panel learned that the Centre ensures that continuous development for faculty members is in place. This is achieved through, annual workshops, participation in professional training, and memorandum of understanding with professional bodies. The Centre keeps electronic records for every faculty member who attended professional development activities and trainings. The Staff Development Policy is translated to a yearly plan with allocated budget for staff training and development. A number of the interviewed academic staff confirmed that they have benefited from the staff development programme. The Panel acknowledges the arrangements in place to provide professional development opportunities for faculty members. The appraisal system used also includes a section on the staff training needs. However, the Panel did not see evidence of a formal process to link the professional development needs of academic staff to the actual activities conducted. The Panel recommends that the College develop and implement a formal mechanism to link the annual performance review process to the professional development activities attended by individual staff members.
- 5.10 The Department relies on internal and external stakeholders to gather intelligence about the local labour market, one of which is the personal experience of its part-time staff members and the external members of the programme Advisory Board, many of whom have several years of experience in the local labour market. In addition, ASU has links through employers and its alumni to market intelligence. However, the Panel was not provided with evidence of a systematic scoping of the labour market. The Panel recommends that the institution develop and implement a formal mechanism for contentious scoping of the labour market needs to ensure that the programme is up-to-date and meets the market needs.
- 5.11 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- There is a set of defined policies and procedures that staff members are well informed of and are involved in the development of those relevant to their duties.
  - The BMIS programme is managed in a manner that demonstrates effective and responsible leadership.

- Both academic and support staff have good knowledge and understanding of the quality assurance system used and are committed to ensuring the quality of delivery of the BMIS programme.
- There is an effective programme review system that has led to major improvements in the curriculum.

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

- adopt more robust procedures to collect, analyse and respond to stakeholder surveys, and provide timely feedback to the stakeholders on actions taken to address the identified issues
- develop and implement a formal mechanism to link the annual performance review process to the professional development activities attended by individual staff members
- regularly scope the market through a systematic mechanism.

### 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 limited confidence in the Bachelor in Management Information Systems of the College of Administrative Sciences offered by the Applied Science University.**