

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



Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

**Bachelor of Communication and Public Relations
Programme**

College of Administrative & Financial Sciences

Gulf University

Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 8-10 December 2014

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Acronyms

ARADO	Arab Administration Development Organisation
ARMS	Academic Record Management System
BCPR	Bachelor in Communication and Public Relations
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GPA	Grade Point Average
GU	Gulf University
HEC	Higher Education Council
HoD	Head of the Department
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
QQA	National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance Education & Training
QAC	Quality Assurance Centre
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
UK	United Kingdom

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 the Gulf University

A Programmes-within-College review of the College of Business Administration 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 8-10 December 2014 for the academic programmes offered by the College; these are Bachelor in Accounting & Financial Systems; Bachelor in Business Administration; Bachelor in Human Resource Management and Bachelor in Communication & Public Relations.

This Report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Bachelor in Communication and Public Relations based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and appendices submitted by Gulf University, the supporting documents made available during the site visit, as well as interviews and observations made during the review site visit.

Gulf University (GU) was notified by the DHR/QQA on 12 May 2014 that that the programmes offered by the College of Administrative & Financial Sciences would be subject to a Programmes-within-College review with the site visit taking place in December 2014. In preparation for the review, GU conducted its college self-evaluation of all its programmes and submitted the SERs with appendices on the agreed date of 3 August 2014.

The DHR constituted a panel consisting of experts in the academic field of Communication, Public Relations and Business Studies and in higher education who

have experience of external programme quality reviews. The Panel comprised five 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 of the results of discussions with various stakeholders (faculty members, students, graduates and employers);
- (iii) analysis of additional documentation requested and presented to the Panel during the site visit.

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

The DHR would like to extend its thanks to GU 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 BCPR programme.

1.3 Overview of the College of Administrative & Financial Sciences

The College of Administrative & Financial Sciences was established in 2003 with the aim of preparing competitive manpower to lead organisation in both public and private sectors in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in various fields such as: management, accounting, journalism, broadcasting, television and public relations. Currently, the College comprises three departments. These are the Department of Administrative Sciences, Department of Accounting and Financial Systems and Department of Communication and Public Relations. The College offers four bachelor degree programmes; namely: Bachelor in Accounting & Financial Systems; Bachelor in Business Administration; Bachelor in Human Resource Management and Bachelor in Communication & Public Relations. The College employs 15 full-time faculty members and four part-time faculty members. The total number of students registered in the college programmes during the site visit was 131 students.

1.4 Overview of the Bachelor in Communication and Public Relations Programme

Admission in the Bachelor in Communication and Public Relations (BCPR) programme in the College of Administrative & Financial Sciences, GU, started in 2007.

The programme aims at 'training, educating and qualifying students in the fields of journalism, broadcasting, television and public relations by providing excellent higher education so that they engage in the labour market in Bahrain and other countries in the region'. The HEC suspended the admission to the programme in the academic year 2009-2010 and the programme was reopened in the second semester of the academic year 2010-2011, to be suspended again in the academic year 2011-2012 but the admission to the programme was resumed in the academic year 2012-2013 until the time of this review. The total number of students who graduated from the programme until the date of this site visit was 10 graduates, whereas the total number of students registered in the programme was 31 students, of whom 28 students are Bahrainis. There are 13 faculty members from different GU colleges who contribute to the provision of the programme.

1.5 Summary of Review Judgements

Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor in Communication and Public Relations

Indicator	Judgement
1: The Learning Programme	Does not satisfy
2: Efficiency of the Programme	Does not satisfy
3: Academic Standards of the Graduates	Does not satisfy
4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance	Satisfies
Overall Judgement	No 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 GU has policies, procedures and academic planning framework for the BCPR programme. This framework demonstrates the programme objectives and the general aim for the offering; namely to prepare graduates who are qualified academically and professionally in the three fields of the programme (communication, journalism and public relations). The programme has five specific objectives aligned with the department objectives to ensure their relevance and consistency. This was confirmed, by the Panel, through the documents provided and interviews conducted with the senior management and faculty members. The Panel appreciates that there is a detailed academic plan for the programme, which identifies the aims it seeks to achieve in line with the university's mission and vision.
- 2.2 The BCPR programme consists of 130 credit hours that are distributed over eight semesters with 118 credits for the compulsory courses distributed between the university requirements, college requirements and the department and specialisation requirements, and 12 credits for the elective courses. Moreover, the minimum number of credit hours students are required to register for each semester is specified at 12 credit hours whereas the maximum number of credit hours is 19 hours. The study load is in line with that of similar programmes. The academic advisor provides advice for students when registering their subjects to ensure that their study load is appropriate to the students' performance level. Interviewed students expressed their satisfaction with this aspect. As mentioned earlier, the programme aims to prepare graduates who are qualified academically and professionally in the three fields of the programme (communication, journalism and public relations). The Panel studied the provided programme specifications and noted that the courses do not cover the basic requirements of the three fields. The courses are divided as follows: journalism (3 courses), broadcasting (3 courses), television (4 courses) and public relations (4 courses). These courses do not satisfy the requirements of each one of these fields. Therefore, the Panel recommends that basic and core courses required for the programme should be added in all the three fields (communication, journalism and public relations). In addition, the programme does not provide sufficient balance between theoretical and practical knowledge, which is due to absence of the needed infrastructure and teaching facilities. The external examiner of the programme submitted good and practical recommendations regarding the development of the programme plan and the need for adding new courses and establishing teaching facilities such studios to realise the learning process of the BCPR programme. Nevertheless, some of these recommendations were not implemented. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College revise the programme curriculum to include adequate practical applications that are appropriate for the requirements of the programme and provide sufficient balance between theory and practice.
- 2.3 There are course specifications, which include course objectives, course contents, Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) and teaching and learning and

assessment methods. The Panel studied these specifications and noted the improvement in some courses and the textbooks used for teaching these courses. However, the Panel noted the need for updating the textbooks of some courses and including references that show the results of recent research studies related to the course syllabi. The Panel also noted the lack of fundamental elements in some course such as 'Introduction to Communication Sciences', 'Introduction to Public Relations', 'Theories of Communication', 'Modern Media, 'Arts of Printed Journalism', ' Planning and Implementing Public Relations Campaigns', 'Crisis Management in Public Relations', 'Art of Convincing and Advertisement', 'International Relations', ' Writing for Public Relation' and 'Organisational Communication'. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College address this issue by revising the references and textbooks used as well as developing and updating course specifications.

- 2.4 The programme has a set of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), which are classified into knowledge and understanding, programme-specific skills, thinking skills and other skills, and are linked to the aims of the programme. Nonetheless, the Panel noted that there are discrepancies between the ILOs listed in the SER and those included in the programme specifications. Moreover, there is a variation in the accuracy of statements expressing these outcomes. While some outcomes are stated in an accurate way that is easy to measure, other outcomes are stated more as objectives rather than outcomes making their achievement difficult to measure, especially those related to general skills. The Panel reviewed the course specifications and the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) and noted that some ILOs, such as the outcomes 'restate media texts in English', 'design media messages for various means of communication in the field of media and public relations' and 'design measurement scales for public opinion measurement', are difficult to achieve. Restating texts in English requires a high level of competency in this language as well as training and practice for an appropriate time – three or four semesters. Moreover, during the site visit interviews, the Panel noted that the level of faculty members' competency in English is less than expected and that the students' level is even less. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College revise the PILOs to ensure the possibility of assessing their achievement and their alignment with the study plan of the programme.
- 2.5 There is a set of CILOs that are mapped to the PILOs. Moreover, the course specifications include the course objectives, the CILOs and teaching and learning and assessment methods. However, the Panel found that some CILOS are exaggerated, unrealistic, and incompatible with the course level as in (CPR102) 'Introduction to Public Relations'. In addition, the content of the course (CPR2030) 'Public Opinion' is not sufficient to enable students to design questionnaires, analyse opinions and identify public opinion trends. The same can be said about restating texts in English. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College review the ILOs of all courses to ensure their consistency with the course contents and what is expected from these courses, and then revise the matrix of mapping the CILOs to the PILOs to ensure the achievement of the programme outcomes.

- 2.6 The BCPR programme includes a compulsory practical training course of three credit hours. After completing 78 credit hours, students can register in this course where the student has to complete 200 hours of actual training in one of the media organisations or in one of the public relations directorates. Moreover, there is a documented policy and procedures for the training. However, the academic supervisor's role identified in these procedures is restricted to the student's final report evaluation. The internship policy does not explicitly stipulate practical supervision other than maintaining the relation between the student and his academic supervisor as stated in the 'Guidelines for Trainee Students' annexed to the policy itself. The policy does not stipulate that the academic supervisor should visit students during their training period, or directly communicate with the industrial supervisor. Whilst the Panel noted that the training course is included in the skills map of the study plan for the programme, the Panel did not find a detailed course specification for the practical training course that includes the CILOs and their assessment. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College develop clear specifications for the practical training course, which states the course ILOs with evaluation methods to assess students' acquisition of these outcomes during the training period.
- 2.7 The Teaching Manual (2014-2015) includes the teaching and learning methods adopted by the University. The SER also refers to a variety of teaching and learning methods that are used to deliver the programme. Reviewing the course files and from interviews with faculty members, the Panel confirmed that there are clear teaching and learning methods in the study plan of the programme and that faculty members adopt these methods. These include lectures, research writing and training exercises. In addition, the SER as well as interviewed faculty members indicated that students' participate in the teaching and learning process and that self-learning is encouraged. Furthermore, the e-learning platform 'Moodle' is used as a tool to enhance the learning process in GU. Students interviewed during the site visit expressed their satisfaction with the teaching and learning methods used in the programme. The Panel appreciates the use of a variety of teaching and learning methods in delivering the programme.
- 2.8 The BCPR programme adopts a general policy on how to assess students' performance and academic achievements that includes quizzes, reports writing, training exercises, homework, library tasks and class participation activities. In addition, there is a feedback policy and a Central Examination Committee. Moreover, the University applies the internal moderation policy on assessments, where the examination paper is subject to moderation by a faculty member in the Department. In addition, marks distribution is stated in the study plans of the courses and assessment is clearly linked to the ILOs. Furthermore, there is a mechanism that enables students to know their coursework scores. This is achieved through meetings with faculty members or the feedback faculty members provide on the answer sheets of the mid-semester examination. This was confirmed during students' interviews, where they indicated that provided feedback has enabled them to improve their performance in upcoming examinations. There are also mechanisms in place for the management of the mid-semester and final examinations, such as using 'blind marking', which is executed by the university's Central Examination Committee to ensure fairness. These procedures are available in the Teaching Manual. On the other hand, the Panel came to know

during the interviews with the faculty members that course instructors, in addition to using special software, check on students' understanding of the contents of their research papers to ensure that submitted students' research papers are free from plagiarism. Moreover, there is an appeal policy and it was evident during interviews that students are aware of its content. The Panel appreciates that there are documented assessment policy and procedures to assess students' performance, which the faculty members and students are aware of. However, the Panel notes that all courses follow the same marks distribution scheme – as stated in the SER - allocating 10% of the total mark for class participation, 10% for assignments, 10% for quizzes, 30% for the mid-semester examination and 40% for the final examination. The Panel is of the view that in majority of academic programmes, there is some freedom for the faculty member with regard to marks distribution within the scope of the programme objectives. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College revise the marks distribution to be appropriate to the course type and its ILOs.

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

- The programme has an academic planning framework that identifies the programme aims in line with the university's mission and vision.
- A variety of teaching and learning methods is used, and students participate in the teaching and learning process.
- There are documented policy and procedures for assessing students' performance, and the faculty members and students are aware of these policies and procedures.

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

- revise the programme curriculum to include adequate practical applications that satisfy the programme requirements and provide sufficient balance between the theoretical and practical components of the programme; in addition to adding fundamental and core courses in all fields of the programme
- revise the course contents, textbooks and references to ensure the coverage of the main topics of each course in accordance with the programme objectives and courses relevance
- revise the programme intended learning outcomes to ensure their achievement and alignment with the programme study plan
- review the course intended learning outcomes to be consistent with the course contents and what is expected from these contents, and then revise the matrix of mapping the course intended learning outcomes to the programme intended learning outcomes to ensure the achievement of the programme outcomes
- develop an accurate course specifications for the practical training course, which specifies the course intended learning outcomes along with assessment methods to evaluate students' acquisition of these outcomes during the training period
- revise the current marks distribution according to the type and level of each course and its intended learning outcomes.

2.11 Judgement

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme does **not satisfy** 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 GU has an admission policy, which is adopted by the BCPR programme. The admission requirements include that a student should have 70% as a high school Grade Point Average (GPA); however, this was lowered to 60% by the University Council decision held in 25 July 2014. The programme management explained that this decision was made to attract new students and to avoid the decrease of enrolment due to the programme suspension during the period 2009-2011. If the high school GPA is less than 60%, the student is also admitted, but only after passing specified orientation courses. The Department also organises placement test in English, Computer and Arabic language. Although the admission criteria is in line with the HEC requirements, the Panel notes that the admission policy is open in the sense that it allows for admitting any applicant, either directly to the BCPR programme or in the orientation programme. Therefore, it could be said that the new admission policy contradicts with one of the department's objectives; namely, attracting distinguished students'. The Panel recommends that the College review the admission policy in accordance with its aims, and ensure that admission criteria are appropriate for the programme needs.
- 3.2 By reviewing the SER, examining the additional evidence documents and faculty members interviews, the Panel found that the profile of admitted students is generally consistent with those applying to join the programme, and that the average of the length of study ranges between 4.2 to 5 years, which is acceptable. However, the Panel noted a high students dropout rates (61%). During site visit interviews, the programme management and faculty members explained that this could be attributed to recurrent suspension of the programme by the HEC. Nonetheless, the Panel recommends that the College conduct a study to verify the reasons of this high dropout rate.
- 3.3 The SER refers to clear lines of responsibility and accountability regarding the management of the programme. The decision-making process starts from the Department Council, then to the College Council, and finally reaches the University Council for approval. The Head of the Department (HoD), in collaboration with the programme coordinator is the person-in-charge of the programme management, whereas the Dean is responsible for following up the HoDs' performance to assure the effectiveness of the educational process in the College. During the site visit, it was evident that the hierarchy and lines of responsibility are followed by the Department, with some flexibility due to the small size of the institution. This was confirmed by the reports, minutes of meetings, and decision-making processes. This hierarchy and the small size of the institution have contributed to the smooth run of the management process, especially with a large number of the academic staff having administrative and academic responsibilities at the same time, enabling them to understand the procedures. The Panel appreciates the organisational structure adopted in managing the College and the programme as well as the evaluation and accountability systems followed.

- 3.4 There are 13 faculty members who contribute with different portions of their teaching loads to the delivery of the BCPR programme. The Panel examined the CVs of the faculty members and noted that only three faculty members are specialised in fields related to the programme; yet, they do not cover all the specialisations required for delivering the programme, which include delivering courses in journalism, broadcasting and television, in addition to public relations. Moreover, on examining the teaching load of the faculty members, the Panel noted that the majority of the faculty have teaching loads that are very close to the maximum load prescribed by the HEC (5 courses). This is because the faculty members teach in other programmes as well and students are scattered over teaching sessions spreading throughout the week days, with some of them attending in the morning, others in the afternoon and a third group are weekend students, in addition to the courses required for some of the graduating students. It was also found that some faculty members teach courses in all specialisations. The Panel also noted a weakness in faculty member's scholarly output and participation in specialised international conferences. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College develop and implement a clear plan to attract qualified faculty members whose ranks and academic qualifications are suitable for the programme different fields and cover the diversity of the programme courses.
- 3.5 The SER indicates that the University has clear and approved recruitment procedures for full-and part-time staff appointment .These are carried out in consultation between the Department Council and the President based on a recommendation made by a committee composed of the Dean, HoD and a faculty member in the Department. Vacancies are advertised on the university website or through recruitment agencies. Applicants can also apply directly to the University. The Panel had the opportunity to examine the tables of applicants' evaluation and the attached recommendation reports on their appointment, and it was evident that there are clear procedures that are implemented regularly; however, this did not lead to appointing faculty members appropriate for the specialisations of the programme. Therefore, as stated earlier, the Panel recommends that the College develop and implement a clear recruitment plan for recruiting new staff, whose degrees and academic qualifications meet the academic specialisations required for the programme and cover the various courses and fields of specialisation of the programme. Faculty members' performance is evaluated by the HoD and students, who provide their feedback on the quality of teaching through the 'Course Evaluation Form'. From the site visit interviews and evidence provided, the Panel confirmed that these procedures are understood by all concerned parties and they are actually implemented. Moreover, there is a stipulated policy for promoting faculty members, which includes a set of criteria including research and community service, in addition to teaching and learning activities. This policy was developed based on the promotion policy of a local university. However, this policy was not in effect up to the date of this review visit, and the Panel encourages the College to implement it.
- 3.6 GU utilises the Academic Record Management System (ARMS) to manage its academic profile and data. This system was developed in-house by a GU technician and demonstrated to the Panel during the site visit. The ARMS system includes all basic practical and educational students' data that makes it possible to generate

various types of reports to inform administrative activities and decision-making. In addition, the system includes all data and information that faculty members or the administration may need; for example, the academic advisor can get an 'overview' about the student's progress in the curriculum, which assists him in the academic advising process. The Panel noted that the ARMS system does not include the financial system of the University, as is the case in most of comprehensive systems. However, the Panel was assured by the concerned staff members that a mechanism in place to allow transferring data across both systems. The Panel appreciates the ARMS system that has the provision to provide reports needed by the University to improve management and inform the decision-making process.

- 3.7 There are clear mechanisms to ensure the security and safety of students' records and information for which the University was awarded ISO270001 certificate. Moreover, there are procedures in place for conducting the examinations, recording and changing grade, confirming the academic status of the students and ensuring that graduate requirements are fulfilled, which give confidence to results' integrity and reliability. This was confirmed by the campus tour and the panel's interviews with the relevant university staff, faculty members and students. The Panel appreciates that there are clear procedures in place to ensure the safety and security of information and the results reliability and accuracy.
- 3.8 The Panel toured in the university facilities and noted that the Department suffers from visible shortage of facilities needed for teaching communication and public relation courses such as broadcast studio, television studio and publisher and multimedia laboratories. It is well known that these are basic learning and teaching facilities that should be available for students to be provided with opportunities of continuous training that enables them to implement their practical courses projects. In turn, this creates a conducive teaching and learning environment that ensures the quality of teaching. It is worth noting though that the Department sought- within its limited capacity - to arrange some teaching halls to be suitable for practical courses provision and it is in the process of signing an agreement with an external studio to provide training for students. Nevertheless, these attempts are not sufficient to achieve an outcome that is up to student's expectation, meet the labour market needs and achieve the stated aims of the programme. As for the library, the Panel notes that the library has a limited collection of books, periodicals and journals. Moreover, main titles in the three fields of specialisation do not exist in the library collection. With regards to there is the Arab Administration Development Organisation (ARADO) resource, which is not related to media and communicate sciences as well as public relations and the Barcelona University library, which is all in English, a language students are not competent in and consequently they cannot benefit from the resources effectively. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College furnish the Department with the basic teaching and learning facilities needed for the programme, which will enable the achievement of the CILOs of the practical courses and provide students with the practical skills utilising the necessary studios and laboratories, and provide the required learning and teaching resources.

- 3.9 During interview sessions with the faculty members, students and IT management staff, and on reviewing supporting evidence, the Panel noted that the e-learning platform 'Moodle' is utilised to track the use of some e-learning resources available in the University. However, neither the SER nor the senior management interviewed during the site visit referred to any comprehensive system available to track the usage of resources and other teaching and learning facilities the University provides for students and faculty members. The Panel recommends that the College establish a comprehensive system to track and evaluate the use of all educational facilities and resources in order to evaluate the utilisation of these facilities and resources.
- 3.10 GU provides a number of student support procedures and services. Each student is assigned an academic advisor, who provides continuous and necessary assistance, immediately after their admission in the programme. The university staff members also provide assistance and support to students with regard to the library, e-resources and laboratories. The e-learning Department organises training sessions for students on the use of 'Moodle'. There is also a medical clinic on campus, which provides first aids services to students and staff. The students interviewed during the site visit valued the level of support and care the University provides to them. The Panel appreciates that there are mechanisms in place to provide appropriate support for students.
- 3.11 The SER states that the University has an orientation programme organised by the Admission and Registration Office to prepare and introduce students to the university bylaws and facilities, and they also receive copies of the Student Handbook and the Academic Guidance Manual during this programme. In addition, the President and the college Dean meet the new students and respond to their questions. The students interviewed during the site visit confirmed that they receive appropriate induction and guidance and they are provided with what they need to familiarise themselves with university life. This is also evident in the procedures followed to guide newly admitted students, which are stated in the University Procedures Manual, and their actual implementation was confirmed. These induction sessions also include transferred students, which was confirmed by the Panel through the interviews conducted during the site visit. The Panel appreciates the arrangements the University has put in place to guide newly admitted and transferred students and which are implemented effectively.
- 3.12 The SER refers to the attention and care provided for 'at risk' students, which was also confirmed by relevant University staff. Students' progress is monitored and those at risk of academic failure are identified at an early stage by the Guidance and Advising Centre. This was confirmed during interviews with faculty members, the university staff and student, and by examining supporting evidence. Warning letters are issued to 'at risk' students and academic advisors play a vital role in this respect by following up with low achievers to guide and supporting them to overcome their academic weakness. The students whom the Panel met confirmed the effective role of their academic advisor in following up with them and supporting them when needed. The Panel acknowledges the care and attention the University provides to students at risk of academic failure. .

- 3.13 The IT management provides technical services that encourage self-learning amongst students. These include providing computers and internet service. Moreover, the Communication Department encourages students to participate in relevant academic conferences and activities organised in Bahrain. The Department also organises field trips for students to media organisations and public relations directorates. In addition, there is a newspaper published by the students. The Panel acknowledges the actions taken by the Department to encourage students on innovative learning instead of the traditional learning methods.
- 3.14 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Efficiency of the Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- There is an organisational structure in place to run the College and the programme along with evaluation and accountably procedures.
 - There is an information management system (ARMS), provides reports the College needs to properly manage the programme and inform decision-making.
 - There are clear procedures to ensure the security and safety of information and the accuracy of consequent results.
 - There is appropriate support provided to students with regards to their academic and social needs
 - There are arrangements in place to guide and advise newly admitted and transferred students, and these arrangements are implemented effectively.
- 3.15 In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the College should:
- review the admission policy to be in line with the college's objectives, and ensure that admission criteria are appropriate to the requirements of the programme
 - conduct a study to verify the reasons behind the high dropout rates and measure the fitness of admitted students for the programme requirements
 - develop and implement a plan to recruit new faculty members with degrees and academic qualifications in the required specialisations to cover the various courses of the programme and its different fields of specialisations
 - provide the necessary teaching and learning facilities to enable the Department to achieve the intended learning outcomes of the practical courses and provide students with the practical skills by utilising the necessary studios and laboratories
 - introduce a comprehensive system to track the usage of all university's teaching and learning resources and facilities to evaluate their utilisation.

3.16 **Judgement**

On balance, the Panel concludes that the programme does **not satisfy** 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 SER states that the academic standards of GU aim at producing distinguished graduates. However, the SER and its appendices did not include a clear description of the BCPR programme graduates' attributes. The SER also states that the programme aims and ILOs are 'stated in way that demonstrate the professional tracks and achievement the programme seeks to achieve through its graduates'. The SER and the faculty members whom the Panel interviewed indicated that the achievement of these attributes is ensured by producing graduates who are competent in terms of the PILOs, namely: knowledge and understanding, programme-specific skills, thinking and other skills. However, the Panel has some concerns because of the lack of rigorous evaluation mechanisms to assess the students' acquisition of the PILOs, and hence their acquisition of the required graduates' attributes. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College develop rigorous and effective assessment mechanisms to verify graduates' acquisition of these attributes.
- 4.2 The GUR has a benchmarking policy that clearly stipulates the scope of benchmarking, the institutions with which GU intends to benchmark itself with, the procedures to be followed, the supporting documents and reporting outlines. The policy encourages the College to conduct benchmarking in collaboration with the institutions against which the benchmarking activities will be carried out. In case of difficulties; however, the policy allows for conducting informal benchmarking by using the information available on the internet. The Panel recommends that the College conduct formal benchmarking processes. The programme was benchmarked with other programmes in some universities such as the University of Bahrain, Richmond University (UK) and Yarmouk University (Jordan). The College - by an informal benchmarking process - compared the number of credit hours in the programme and type of courses offered, by identifying similarities and differences between the courses offered by these universities and those offered by the Communication and Public relations Department in the GU. However, the unclear vision of the Department whether the BCPR is an academic or a vocational programme has made the benchmarking process a process of merely selecting some courses and cancelling other ones, without clear justifications supporting the achievement of the programme aims and vision. Moreover, the benchmarking activities were not broad enough to include the facilities and teaching and learning resources, which suffer from acute shortage in terms the requirements of the programme, teaching, learning and assessment methods, and admission criteria, although these are all included in the university benchmarking policy. Therefore, the Panel recommends that College conduct formal benchmarking activities in accordance with the university policy and these should not be restricted to the programme structure and study plan.
- 4.3 GU has a clear stunted assessment policy, which is available for students and faculty members. The Examination Committee in the University is responsible for controlling and implementing the examination process. The committee has constructed detailed

examination instructions for the academic year 2010-2011, based on the assessment policy and procedures, which is still in effect. These instructions cover examination halls; marks distribution, awarding and entering grades; examination questions instructions and other organisational aspects and it was confirmed that these instructions are put in place, especially with regard to operation mechanisms. The faculty members confirmed that students are informed about marks distribution in each course, as assessment tools and mark distributions are detailed in the course specifications; these include mid-semester and final examinations, class activities and assignments, which was conformed during the site visit interviews. In addition, students' course evaluation includes a question on fairness of assessment. The results of student survey on assessment policies indicate their satisfaction with the examination policies and procedures. During the site visit, the Panel came to know that the Department and College Councils review the marks of all courses of the programme before their approval, and this was verified during the site visit and through the minutes of meetings of the Department and College Councils. The Panel appreciates that there are clear assessment procedures, which are implemented and students' satisfaction with them is measured. Moreover, the SER indicates that assessment policies are subject to regular reviews; for example, the College approved the amendment in assessment methods by eliminating the 5% allocated for attendance and including it within the class participation score. The Panel is of the view that this is a positive step to improve the assessment process. The Panel confirmed by reviewing the course files that this amendment was implemented during the last semester. The SER also indicates that the external examiner reviews the programme as a whole, including the transparency and adequacy of the assessment process in the programme and the Panel noted that the Department has benefitted from the external examiner's recommendations. The University has also developed a policy for internal and external moderation and by reviewing the course files, the Panel confirmed that these policies are implemented in general. However, the Panel has some concerns regarding the effectiveness of these policies, and this will be discussed in the coming sections of this Report.

- 4.4 The SER indicates that examination papers are evaluated internally by the internal moderator and the HoD, to ensure its appropriateness and alignment with the ILOs. The SER also states that the Department and College Councils review and approve the marks of each course. Moreover, the Quality Assurance Centre (QAC) reviews course files to ensure the alignment between assessment methods and the ILOs and submits reports in this regard. The course files also include course plans that map the assessment tools (examinations, projects and home assignments) to the CILOs. Moreover, the University has applied the external moderation policy effective the first semester of the academic year 2014-2015, by which the external moderator evaluates the alignment of the assessment tools with the CILO it should assess. However, the Panel identified some issues with the assessment of the PILOs and CILOs, which were not identified by these mechanisms as indicated in the sample of course files provided during the site visit. Therefore, the Panel is concerned about the effectiveness of the mechanisms used, as will be detailed in the coming sections.

- 4.5 GU has developed an internal moderation policy, where the HoD assigns an internal moderator for each course. The internal moderator compares the examination questions with the course specifications and CILOs to ensure their alignment, in addition to determining compliance of assessment tools in terms of quality of questions, their design and clarity, marks distribution and ability to assess various levels of students, utilising a form especially designed for this purpose. The course instructor is expected to implement the required changes in the examination paper, which is approved by the HoD. By examining the course files, the Panel found that they include the 'internal moderation forms'. The Panel noted that the forms indicate that all assessment criteria are met, and that all examination questions are aligned with the proper ILOs in all cases. The Panel enquired about this matter during interview sessions and was informed that the course files include the final checklists, and some amendments are made before reaching the final version of the examination, yet these amendments are not recorded. The Panel is of the view that it is important to record all amendments and changes made based on the internal moderation process; otherwise, the process would be just a formality as it is now. This is of a concern, especially as there are cases where the examination questions were not aligned properly with the outcomes they intend to assess or with the level of the course and these were not identified by the internal moderator. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College document the changes made based on the internal moderation, and evaluate the effectiveness of the internal moderation process applied by the programme.
- 4.6 GU has an external moderation policy according to which an external examiner is appointed to examine the assessment tools and submits his report in light of reviewing samples of graded question papers, to ensure that examinations and marking are rigorous. However, this policy was not implemented until the first semester of the academic year 2014-2015, i.e. during the semester in which this site visit took place. Consequently, the Panel was not able to evaluate the effectiveness of its implementation. Although no formal policy for external moderation existed before the academic year 2014-2015, the College used external examiners for the programme to make sure that examinations are robust, in addition to the evaluation of other aspects of the programme such as the programme structure and content, as well as teaching and learning methods. The Panel encourages the College to continue applying the external moderation policy adopted and put in place recently.
- 4.7 The Panel examined samples of assessed students' work and examination papers and reviewed many course files, which included samples of marked students' works such as assignment responses, examinations and worksheets. The sample revealed that examination questions, generally, cover course materials taught to students and that these vary in type and are well prepared. However, the Panel noted that some of the examination questions are not aligned properly with the learning outcomes the question should assess or the level of the course. The Panel also noted that students' work – in general – is theoretical in nature and lacks the applied aspect, which might be attributed to the shortage in the facilities the programme requires. Furthermore, the Panel noted that some course files are incomplete as they lack samples of students' work and model answers of the examination papers. Therefore, the Panel recommends

that the College ensure that students' achievement, especially in the practical aspects, are appropriate to the type of the programme and its ILOs, and review the course files to confirm that they include all required items, especially the sample of students' marked work.

- 4.8 With the absence of external moderation of all courses and the lack of assuring the effectiveness of the internal moderation of final results, it is difficult judge the level of graduates' achievements and whether they are appropriate to the programme objectives and ILOs. Moreover, during the site visit, the Panel could only meet one graduate who works in the field of the programme specialisation, limiting the value of the graduates' evaluation of the programme and its academic effectiveness. Furthermore, the mismatch between the available teaching and learning resources and the requirements of the programme, which is further detailed under Indicator 2; in addition to the issue of mapping the CILOs to the PILOs, which is explained under Indicator 1, all make it very difficult to verify whether the level of students' achievement satisfies the programme objectives and ILOs. In addition, the Panel notes that the minimum pass score in the courses of the programme is 50%. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College, when conducting the benchmarking of the programme (paragraph 4.2), revise this minimum score to be consistent with the minimum score of pass in similar courses in other universities adopting the credit hours system. The Panel also recommends that the College adopt a robust and clear mechanism to ensure that the level of graduates' achievement satisfies the objectives of the programme and ILOs.
- 4.9 The programme statistics indicate that only 10 graduates graduated from the programme between 2010-2013 with an average length of study of 4.5 years and an average GPA of 2.9. During interview sessions with faculty members and reviewing the supporting materials provided, it became evident to the Panel that the programme was suspended twice (the first time was in the academic year 2009-1010 and the second during the academic year 20111-2012) since it was first offered in 2007. This makes the statistics and the results of comparison statistically insignificant. However, the Panel, as stated under Indicator 2, is concerned that the dropout rates is at 61%. The programme received new intake in the academic years 2012-2015. Hence, the Panel advises the College to follow up these batches and verify the progress levels, retention rates, length of study, and graduates' first destination.
- 4.10 There is an practical training course, which requires students to complete 200 hours of actual practical training in a relevant organisation following the completion of 60% of the programme requirements. According to the practical training policy, student's performance is assessed by a report submitted for discussion and in which the trainee explains the training they received. The report is assessed by the industrial advisor (40%), the academic supervisor (30%) and finally the discussion committee (30%). However, the Panel was not provided with complete documents on this course to review. Nevertheless, the Panel examined samples of the practical training reports, which indicated that the practical training policy and stipulated procedures are implemented. This was confirmed during the Panel's interviews with the faculty members and students conducted during the site visit. However, the Panel notes that

there is no supervision in the real sense throughout the period of the practical training, as the academic supervisor's role is restricted to assessing the student's final report. Moreover, the policy does not explicitly stipulate the supervision role of the academic advisor during the training period except for the communication between the student and the academic supervisor, as indicated in the 'Guidelines for Trainee Students' annexed to this policy. The Panel confirmed during interview sessions with students who finished their training programme that they did not consult with their supervisors to discuss their training activities. In addition, the academic supervisors do not visit the students during their training period or have direct communication with the industrial supervisor. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College revise the mechanism used in implementing the practical training course to ensure real supervision of the content of the course, level of implementation and methods of assessment to ensure that students practice the skills they acquired during their study.

- 4.11 The university policy stipulates that each department should have an Advisory Board composed of external members who represent of various labour sectors related to the programme and its academic field (including the board chair and students' representative), in addition to some faculty members in the programme. According to the university policy, the Advisory Board has to meet at least once every semester to discuss the programme and contribute to its improvement. However, reviewing the supporting materials provided and from interviews with the faculty members, the Panel was not provided with evidence on how the Department benefits from this board's recommendations and advice. The Advisory Board met only once and the minutes of this meeting indicates that five out of the six external board members were absent. The Department established a new Advisory Board, and the Panel had the chance to meet one of its members; however, the new Board has not met yet, the fact that indicates a considerable weakness in this regard. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College activate the role of the Advisory Board and ensure that it holds regular meetings in accordance with the University policy, considering the significant role it may play in helping the Department carry out its educational and training functions.
- 4.12 The University has distributed a questionnaire to the ten graduates of the programme to measure their satisfaction towards the programme and only nine of them responded to the questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire indicate that most of the graduates believe that the curriculum, in general, is of good level or better, whereas 25% of the graduates indicated that the level is acceptable. In addition, a questionnaire was distributed to five employers to identify their opinion about the level of programme's graduates and their responses in general indicated a high level of satisfaction towards the knowledge and cognitive aspects of the programme while they were less satisfied with the practical aspects. The Panel acknowledges the general graduates' stratification towards the programme; however, the Panel is of the view that these results, because of the small numbers (10 and 5), lack the statistical significance considering that the Panel had the chance to meet with only one graduate who works in the field of communication.

4.13 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Academic Standards of the Graduates, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- There are clear assessment mechanisms that are implemented and students' satisfaction with these mechanisms is measured.

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

- develop rigorous assessment mechanisms to ensure that programme graduates acquire the intended graduates attributes
- conduct formal benchmarking in line with the university policy, which is not limited to the programme structure and study plan, and includes benchmarking of the minimum pass score in the courses
- document the changes and amendments resulting from the internal moderation process, and evaluate the effectiveness of this process
- ensure that students' work, especially the practical ones, are appropriate to the type of the programme and its intended learning outcomes, and review the course files to ensure that they include sample of students' marked work
- adopt a clear and rigorous mechanism to ensure that the level of the graduates' achievement meets the programme objectives and intended learning outcomes
- review and revise internship implementation mechanism adopted for the practical training course to ensure real supervision on its content, level of implementation and assessment methods, and to ensure that students practice the skills they acquired during their study
- activate the role of the Advisory Board and ensure that it meets regularly in accordance with the university policy so that it has an active role in enriching the learning process.

4.15 **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 University has clear policies to manage the programme, and the SER states that hard copies of these policies are circulated to the Deans, HoDs and other stakeholders, in addition to their publication on the university website. The SER also states that the Academic Advising Manual is also published and circulated to all faculty members and is made available on the university website. The University also publishes Student Handbook, which includes the guidelines and bylaws important for students. The Panel confirmed this information by examining the university website, the SER appendices and additional supporting evidences, as well as through interviews with the faculty members and students. The small size of the College made it easy to disseminate these policies and procedures. The Panel confirmed that these policies are in place and that the QAC follows up and issues reports on their implementation. The Panel notes the mechanisms in place to implement the bylaws and policies; however, the implantation of these policies lacks precision and consistency in a few cases, as there is some inadequacy in applying the benchmarking process. On the other hand, other policies, such as those relevant to student services, examination procedures and recruitment are well- implemented. The Panel appreciates that essential policies and procedures for the programme management are developed and that academic and administrative staff are familiar with them, and they are implemented in most areas.
- 5.2 The SER indicates that the HoD, in cooperation with the Department Council and the department's committees, are responsible for the academic and administrative management of the programme. During the Panel's interviews with faculty members and students, it became evident that the programme is managed in a clear manner, the programme team is responsible and the administrative hierarchy of the programme management is clear. The QAC evaluates and issues periodic reports assessing the effectiveness of the department's management. However, the Panel has some concern due to the lack of an effective programme leadership at the university level that would safeguard the programme needs and outcomes to ensure that the programme intended objectives are achieved. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the University revise the programme management and provide the programme with effective leadership.
- 5.3 The University has a Quality Assurance Manual, which was published in the academic year 2012-2013 and was re-published in the academic year 2013-2014. The Manual includes the Strategic Plan of QAC, programme reviews activities, and all appendices required for implementing the quality assurance procedures in the University. The QAC prepares an annual operational plan, which is circulated to the Deans and the coordination between the Centre and other units in the University was evident during the site visit. Moreover, the SER indicates that the college's quality assurance coordinator follows up the implementation of quality assurance activities, which

include assuring the quality of academic programmes development, tracking the purpose of these activities, enhancing the quality culture, collecting data and information, assessing performance and documenting quality procedures. This was confirmed during site visit interviews and through the reports submitted to the QAC by the college's coordinator. The Panel appreciates that there is a comprehensive quality assurance system based on the QAC Manual, which is subject to periodic reviews. The QAC, within the scope of its remit, collects data from all stakeholders engaged in the educational processes including faculty members, students and alumni. The Panel notes that although the quality mechanisms are activated, their effectiveness remains limited, not because of a deficiency in the system itself or in its performance, but because of the limited inclusion at any time; the limited number of students and faculty members limits the value of the conclusions obtained by this system. Moreover, although the University has clear procedures with regard to quality assurance, the application of these procedures is not systematic. This, in the panel's view, is due to the recent implementation of some of the important policies, many of which were not implemented until 2014, with a few before 2013. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College implement the quality assurance policies and procedures more rigorously and systematically.

- 5.4 The SER indicates that the QAC disseminates and explains quality assurance concepts to the faculty members by various means including workshops and seminars, in addition to the university website publication. This enables stakeholders to access the necessary information related to the quality assurance system and its application. Through the website and the workshops organised by the QAC, GU has provided the opportunity to its academic and administrative staff to familiarise them with the application of the quality system within the scope of their duties. The Panel noted, during the interviews with faculty members and senior management, the wide spread of the culture of quality assurance, staff recognition of its importance and their contribution to the process. The Panel appreciates that the administrative and academic staff are well aware of the quality assurance concepts and its procedures in the College and their role in this regard.
- 5.5 The SER indicates that a system is followed for offering new programmes, which starts by the academic department's recommendations based on labour market needs, the Advisory Board and external examiner's recommendations and the results of employers, students and graduates' surveys. However, no new programmes have been offered yet, due to the admission status of the University. During the site visit interviews, it became evident to the Panel that faculty members are aware of this system. Nonetheless, the Panel advises the College to document these procedures.
- 5.6 The QAC Manual for the academic year 2013-2014 stipulates the programme review arrangements including the procedures, templates and lists of stakeholders. The SER states that GU has been conducting annual reviews of its programmes since the academic year 2010-2011. The SER also indicates that the Department of Communication and Public Relations has conducted an annual programme review, which resulted in developing an improvement plan that was implemented in the second semester of the academic year 2013-2014. The Panel was provided with

evidence on annual programme reviews being conducted regularly by the College in cooperation with the QAC. The Panel encourages the College to continue implementing its annual programme reviews.

- 5.7 The SER indicates that there is a policy that stipulates that the programme should be reviewed every five years. The BCPR programme was reviewed based on the feedback received from the internal and external entities such as faculty members, students and benchmarking activities. The external examiner's reports were also used in for this purpose, although to lesser extent. The Panel noted that the BCPR programme development from its old plan to the new one and its application at the beginning of the academic year 2014-2015 was conducted in accordance with the stipulated procedures. This was documented in the minutes of meetings of the Academic Programme Review Committee, which was formed for this purpose. The Committee issued its final report on this issue in 2014. However, the review process was restricted to the learning programme and did not include the learning resources and infrastructure, despite the significant of these aspects to the BCPR programme. In addition, the benchmarking process remains a mere formality and superficial to some extent, as well as being irregular and of little value, as it was mainly restricted to the number of hours and the content of some courses only. Moreover, there was no regular or effective communication with the employers or the Advisory Board to make use of their input in the programme development. Furthermore, the late implementation of the internal and external moderation policy affected the quality of the review. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College benefit from the internal and external feedback more effectively when conducting its periodic review of the programme.
- 5.8 The SER refers to the use of students, faculty members, graduates and employers' views, in addition to the Advisory Board and the external examiner recommendations to ensure the quality of provision. The SER also indicates that relevant stakeholders are informed of their feedback results during different meetings (Dean's meetings with students and the Department Council, Advisory Board and College Council meetings). Moreover, students' course evaluation results are posted on the university website. The Panel examined evidence indicating that that the College collects feedback from various stakeholders such students and graduates surveys and internal and external examiners' reports. The Panel also met with external examiners, and confirmed the use of this feedback in the programme review, course files, and quality assurance tools, albeit not on a regular basis. Moreover, the Panel notes that feedback was formally sought from employers once only and that the College does not communicate with them systematically. This can also be said about the Advisory Board. Moreover, the Panel encourages the College to explore other practical methods to collect alumni's feedback so that this is not restricted to surveys, especially with the small number of graduates.
- 5.9 The SER indicates that GU - usually - identifies the training needs of its academic and administrative staff by means of surveys. The SER refers to the provision of a number of professional development programmes and workshops. The faculty members of the College of Administrative & Financial Sciences participated in the workshops

organised by the Guidance and Counselling Unit in collaboration with the QAC. The e-learning Unit also provides training sessions on e-learning to enhance its use as a teaching tool including the website design and the utilisation of the e-library (digital), in addition to workshops on the e-learning platform 'Moodle', as well as providing training on the use of smart boards. Moreover, faculty members participate in conferences and workshops inside and outside the Kingdom of Bahrain. In addition, the University provides financial awards for academic publication. Therefore, the Panel appreciates that the University organises workshops and training institutions for its academic and administrative staff and adopts policies and procedures to enhance their professional development.

- 5.10 The SER indicates that the University is well informed of the labour market needs through the Advisory Board feedback, employers and graduates' surveys, and available publications. . For example, the BCPR programme has benefitted from these resources by introducing new courses such as 'Language Skills', 'Principles of Politics', 'English for Media' and some other elective courses. The University also makes use of the 'Career Expo', which is organised annually, to enhance its relation with the labour market. However, there are no detailed studies or reports on the labour market needs and what changes have to be made at the programme level. When the Panel inquired about this aspect during site visit interviews, the reply focused on the role of the Advisory Board, which – in the panel's view - is not sufficient, especially that the programme Advisory Board for the programme is inactive. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College verify its resources for collecting inputs on the labour market needs by adopting more scientific and formal methods.
- 5.11 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- There are appropriate policies and procedure to manage the programme, which are available for academic and administrative staff and students, and are implemented in most areas.
 - There is a comprehensive integrated system for quality assurance system stipulated in the Quality Assurance Manual, and it is subject to regular reviews.
 - Academic and administrative staff are aware of the quality concepts and procedures in the College and their role in implementing them.
 - The University organises training workshops for academic and administrative staff, and there are policies and procedures in place to enhance their professional development.
- 5.12 In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the College should:
- revise the programme management and provide an effective leadership at the university level
 - implement quality assurance policies and procedures in a more regular and accurate way
 - utilise internal and external feedback about the programme in more depth when conducting the periodic review of the programme
 - adopt more scientific and formal methods to scope the labour market needs.

5.13 Judgement

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

6. Conclusion

Considering the institution's 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 no confidence in the Bachelor in Communication and Public Relations programme offered by the College of Administrative & Financial Sciences, Gulf University.