



Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

**Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design
College of Art and Design
Royal University for Women
Kingdom of Bahrain**

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Acronyms

BAFD	Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design
BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
CAC	College Advisory Committee
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEC	Higher Education Council
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
MIS	Management Information System
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PILOs	Programme Intended Learning Outcomes
QAAU	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Unit
RUW	Royal University for Women
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SIS	Student Information System
WVU	West Virginia University

The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process

A. 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 Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA) 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 BQA, 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	

B. The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process at the Royal University for Women

A Programmes-within-College review of the programmes offered by the College of Art and Design of the Royal University for Women was conducted by the DHR of the BQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place on 31 October -2 November 2016 for the academic programmes offered by the College, these are: Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design; Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design; Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design; and Master of Design Management.

The Royal University for Women was notified by the DHR/BQA on 17 April 2016 that it would be subject to Programmes-within-College reviews of its College of Art and Design with the site visit taking place in October/November 2016. In preparation for the review, the Royal University for Women conducted self-evaluation reviews of all its programmes and submitted the Self-evaluation Reports (SERs) with appendices on the agreed date in June 2016.

The DHR constituted a panel consisting of experts in the academic field of fashion design, graphic design, interior design and design management, and in higher education who have experience of external programme quality reviews. The Panel comprised eight reviewers.

This Report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design based on:

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

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

The DHR would like to extend its thanks to the Royal University for Women 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 and administrative staff of the College of Arts and Design.

C. Overview of the College of Art and Design

The College of Art and Design is one of the four colleges of the Royal University for Women (RUW), which was established in 2002. RUW currently offers Edexcel BTEC level 3 Foundation Diploma in Art and Design, four undergraduate programmes along with two postgraduate ones in a range of disciplines. The mission of the College is aligned with the vision and mission of RUW, which seeks to offer students 'a rewarding and challenging multi-cultural learning environment that cultivates strong, well-rounded personalities, encourages leadership, and builds character, social consciousness and community.' Currently, the College offers four bachelor degrees and two Master degrees through two departments: the Department of Design and the Department of Architecture. The statistics provided by the College during the site visit indicate that the total number of academic staff was 22; 17 of them are full-time and five are teaching on a part-time basis.

D. Overview of the Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design

The Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design (BAFD) was first offered in the academic year 2005-2006; its first graduating batch was in 2008-2009 and comprised three students. The BAFD programme was initially designed by Middlesex University in the U.K. and has been revised based on internal and external reviews. The programme is offered through the Department of Design and currently there are six full-time and two part-time faculty members contributing to the delivery of the programme. According to the statistics provided by the institution, during the time of the site visit, there were 36 students registered in the BAFD programme and 30 students have graduated since the commencement of the programme.

E. Summary of Review Judgements

Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design

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

1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

- 1.1 RUW has a clearly stated mission and vision statements that are available online to all students and staff and in the university's catalogue. As stated in its documentations, RUW's mission is 'to offer students a rewarding and challenging multi-cultural learning environment that cultivates strong, well-rounded personalities, encourages leadership, and builds character, social consciousness and community'. Moreover, the College of Art and Design's vision aims 'to become the major regional centre for high-level education and training for women in the arts, design, media and computing industries', which is directly aligned with the university's strategic goal number (3) 'to engage students in a distinctive high quality learning experience and encourage community engagement.' The Fashion Design (BAFD) programme has a thorough academic framework to continually guide the programme aims and objectives which interviewed faculty were well-aware of. The aims and Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) are clearly defined and indicate the inclusion of the college's vision and mission into the programme and its delivery. The Panel appreciates that the aims of the BAFD programme are clearly defined and aligned with the vision and mission of the College as well as the University.
- 1.2 The BAFD programme consists of 132 credits divided into foundation (30 credits), liberal arts requirement (21 credits), general courses (24 credits), major requirements (51 credits) and electives (6 credits). The expansion of the BAFD programme to 132 credit hours over four years gives it good opportunity to cover a wide-range of skills and topics within the fashion design field. The curriculum is well-structured to demonstrate academic progression and all pre-requisites are clearly indicated. Moreover, the course workload for students is appropriate for the programme level and ensures the transfer of skill from the faculty to the student. Interviews with alumnae and students conducted during the site visit confirmed the suitability of the given workload. The Panel appreciates that the structure of curriculum demonstrates academic progression with a balance between theory and practice and appropriate students' workload. Notwithstanding the above, the Panel notes a number of areas that need to be strengthened in the current curriculum to meet the specific needs of the Bahraini market as indicated during interview sessions with alumnae and external stakeholders. For example, the programme would benefit from injecting topics such as applied textiles, fashion forecasting and specialized technical skills like couture and children wear. In addition, during interview sessions, the Panel was informed that a number of the programme graduates are working in the merchandising sector, as there are employment opportunities in this field. Hence, the Panel is of the view that the programme team ought to add more merchandising courses in the BAFD programme.

in the future. Consequently, the Panel recommends that in its next periodic review of the programme, the College should inject topics related to merchandising, applied textiles, fashion forecasting, couture and children wear to further enhance its contextualization of the programme.

- 1.3 The syllabi of the BAFD courses in general have good depth and breadth that are comparable to similar programmes regionally and internationally. All course outlines follow a consistent template that provides the necessary information including course code, course title, pre-requisites, number of credits, description and objectives of the course, course instructor details, Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), resources and assessment methods. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the College has benchmarked the syllabi to one regional and one international university. The Panel studied various course outlines and found them to be relevant and appropriate for the programme type and level and provide the depth and breadth needed for the qualification. In addition, the Panel noted that course specifications include current recognized international textbooks, reference books and academic journals, websites and magazines that would enrich the learning experience of the students. The Panel appreciates that the depth and breadth of topics covered in the syllabi enhance the delivery of the BAFD programme.
- 1.4 The BAFD programme has 14 PILOs that are grouped into four categories (A1-A4, B1-B2, C1-C4, D1-D4) as described in the programme specification. The SER clarifies that ILOs are written as per action verbs used in Blooms Taxonomy. The Panel studied the PILOs and confirms that these are well-written, measurable, aligned with the programme aims and appropriate for the level and type of the degree. Moreover, the Panel was informed by faculty members and senior management that the PILOs were revised to be in line with Bahrain's National Qualifications Framework's level descriptors for a bachelor degree (NQF's-Level 8). Interviews with academic staff members confirmed that each staff member is fully aware of the PILOs and their importance to support programme aims, objectives and its delivery. The Panel notes with appreciation that the PILOs are clearly stated to enable the delivery of the programme and its aims and objectives.
- 1.5 There are clearly stated Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) which are included in the course specification documents. These are drawn from the four main categories of the PILOs which are (1) knowledge and understanding, (2) subject-specific skills, (3) critical thinking skills and (4) general and transferable skills, and according to RUW's norm, each course has a maximum of six CILOs. Course specifications also include mapping of individual CILOs to the assessment tools used, which the Panel viewed to be generally suitable. Moreover, the curriculum skills map shows the alignment of the courses with the PILOs. During Interviews with the programme management, the Panel was informed that a comprehensive review of the

programmes offered at RUW is performed every four to five years during which the CILOs and PILOs are revised. The Panel studied the course specifications and notes with appreciation that the CILOs are, in general, suitable for the type and level of the courses and support the achievement of the PILOs; and there is a provision for these to be reviewed periodically.

- 1.6 The University has an internship policy and procedure to govern the internship programme (DES496) which comprises of three credit hours, translated to 200 hours for actual onsite training. The internship has become compulsory after the revision of the BAFD programme in 2013-2014. Students are allowed to register after completing a minimum of 66 credits as per the SER. The internship has clear documented course specification that covers the aims of the course, duties of the site supervisor, internship coordinators, course instructor and secretary. The assessment of the internship consists of employer's evaluation, student report and student presentation. Students' performance is monitored by an assigned faculty member and there are specific forms developed for reporting and assessing these components, which interviewed staff were well-informed of. During interview sessions, students were informed of what is expected from them and how the internship contributes to their learning experience. The Panel appreciates that there is a work-based component which is compulsory and is used to achieve specific learning outcomes of the programme.
- 1.7 RUW's Teaching and Learning policy encourages the use of a diversified set of teaching methods and strategies; as well as encouraging lifelong learning; the use of blended learning and students' responsibility of their own learning. During interviews with staff, the Panel was informed that the College offers both lecture-type and studio courses to allow for a one-on-one type of mentorship. This was reflected in the academic staff's efforts to use a variety of methods such as individual assignments, group projects, presentation, class discussion, case studies, problem solving, hands on practical experience and field visits. All these teaching methods are documented in the programme and course specifications, showing how they contribute to the achievement of the CILOs. Interviewed students expressed their satisfaction with the teaching methods utilized in different courses. Moreover, the introduction of CILO achievement matrix is a good step to ensure the effectiveness of the teaching and learning methods adopted in course delivery. The Panel appreciates the implementation of the teaching and learning policy to ensure the diversity of the learning methods that enable the achievement of the learning outcomes. Notwithstanding the above, the Panel notes that the e-learning component is not well-integrated into the courses and their delivery, and should be factored into specific projects and assignments in conjunction with the resources in the library. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should place more emphasis to further integrate e-learning into the programme.

- 1.8 The University has a well-developed assessment policy with clear procedures that are suitable and followed by the BAFD's academic staff members. The policy includes summative and formative assessments with generic rubrics to guide the marking. This information is uploaded on the Self-service which is the management information system used by both staff and students. Examples of assessments include essay writing, presentations, assignments and final year projects. Interviewed staff clarified that as per RUW's regulations, all course specifications should include details of assessment as follows: type of assessment, assessment weight, CILOs assessed, criteria of evaluation, and assessment schedule. According to the assessment policy, staff are obliged to give their feedback for all assessments either verbally in class or during face-to-face meetings or by posting it on the Self-service. Interviewed students confirmed that they receive both verbal and written feedback on all their assessment tasks. Furthermore, students indicated that there is a mechanism to challenge their grade through RUW's appeal policy and the Panel was provided with evidence showing its implementation. The Panel appreciates that there is a comprehensive assessment policy and procedures that are transparent, well-documented and available to staff and students. Interviewed students confirmed their full awareness of the appeal procedure and the use of 'Turnitin' before submitting their work. During staff interviews, they confirmed that students ought to check their assignments, essays and reports against plagiarism through 'Turnitin' before submitting it with the originality report. Nonetheless, interviewed faculty and students did not have a shared understanding on how to evaluate the originality of the students' final submitted practical work. Due to the nature of the programme where practical stitching skills are assessed, the Panel recommends that the College should develop clear guidelines – similar to the plagiarism policy of theoretical courses- to assist the programme team to detect cases of plagiarism that are related to assessing students' practical skills when submitting their final garments/products.
- 1.9 In coming to its conclusion regarding The Learning Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- The aims of the BAFD programme are clearly defined and aligned with the vision and mission of the College as well as the University.
 - The structure of curriculum demonstrates academic progression with a balance between theory and practice and appropriate students' workload.
 - The depth and breadth of topics covered in the syllabi enhance the delivery of the BAFD programme.
 - The programme intended learning outcomes are clearly stated to enable the delivery of the programme and its aims and objectives.
 - Course intended learning outcomes are, in general, suitable for the type and level of the courses and support the achievement of the programme intended learning outcomes; and there is a provision for these to be reviewed periodically.

- There is a work-based component which is compulsory and is used to achieve specific learning outcomes of the programme.
- The teaching and learning policy is implemented to ensure the diversity of the learning methods that enable the achievement of the learning outcomes.
- There is a comprehensive assessment policy and procedures that are transparent, well-documented and available to staff and students.

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

- inject topics related to merchandising, applied textiles, fashion forecasting, couture and children wear to further enhance the contextualization of the programme
- place more emphasis to further integrate e-learning into the programme
- develop clear guidelines – similar to the plagiarism policy of theoretical courses- to assist the programme team to detect cases of plagiarism that are related to assessing students' practical skills when submitting their final garments/products.

1.11 **Judgement**

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

2. 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.

- 2.1 RUW has a clear admission policy and entry requirements, which are based on the applicants' grades from high school and the spaces available in the programme. Interviewed staff indicated that there is a formal policy in place for transfer students as well as procedures for its implementation. Information regarding admissions, registration, and fee structure is available on the RUW website and in the Student Handbook. RUW's admission policy places a minimum level for English language proficiency (IELTS overall band of 5.5; TOFEL: paper-based 513, Computer-based 183, and Internet-based 65 as stated in the Student Handbook). In the event that the English required score is not met, the University offers a preparatory English programme that students take for one or two semesters, depending on their competency level. During interview sessions, faculty members indicated that while additional admission requirements such as design portfolio and interviews are preferred, these are not mandatory yet. The Panel notes that the admission criteria have been reviewed and advises the College to expedite the implementation of the new criteria and assess their effectiveness in light of students' performance. The Panel appreciates that the entry requirements for the BAFD programme are regularly reviewed.
- 2.2 The profile of the admitted students was provided to the Panel during the site visit and in general, it matches the programme's aims and objectives. The profile document presents information related to students such as secondary education track, nationality, age and their scores/Grade Point Average (GPA) in the high school certificate. The Panel notes from the provided evidence that the cohort of the admitted students is diverse with different nationalities (Bahrainis, Gulf citizens and Arab). The average GPA of the admitted students in the BAFD programme for the academic years 2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 was 3.16, 3.28 and 2.18 respectively. The number of students applying to the programme each year has fluctuated between 7 and 19, from 2011-present. From interviews, the Panel learnt that students consider themselves ready for the needs of the programme and enjoy the BAFD programme in general. Moreover, cohort data shows that students admitted to the programme progress at a suitable rate and meet its needs as detailed in Paragraph (3.9). The Panel is satisfied that the admission policy for the BAFD programme is being applied systematically and the profile of admitted students is suitable for the programme needs.
- 2.3 The organizational chart of the College presents its structure and line of responsibilities. At the management level, the Dean has an overall responsibility for the College and is supported by two Head of Departments (HoDs). From the

organizational chart and interviews, the Panel noted that the HoD for the Department of Design is responsible for six programmes offered by the College of Art and Design; namely the Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design, Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design, Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design along with the foundation diploma and two postgraduate programmes related to the design field. The other HoD is responsible for one undergraduate programme (Bachelor of Architecture). Faculty members contribute in committees at the college level to support the delivery of the programme; and interviewed staff members showed full awareness of their academic and non-academic duties; and interviewed students knew the hierarchy of the College and whom to approach once needed. Nonetheless, the Panel is concerned that the Dean is loaded with academic and administrative duties, in addition to teaching. Furthermore, from interviews, it was obvious that the HoD for the Department of Design has both academic and administrative duties especially when being responsible for programmes scattered over a range of specializations without having a coordinator responsible for each programme. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should revise the load exerted on the HoD to ensure that she/he has sufficient time to manage her/his responsibilities.

- 2.4 There are four PhD holders (two Associate and two Assistant Professors) and three teaching assistants along with two Assistant Professors, who work on part-time basis, contributing to teaching the current enrolment of 36 students in the programme. The ratio of students to staff is calculated by the College to be 20:1. However, these faculty members are also responsible for teaching courses that belong to other programmes offered by the institution. During the site visit, the Panel reviewed the CVs of the faculty and notes that there is a need to expand the faculty's profile by recruiting faculty with practical industrial experience relevant to the profession to further develop students' technical skills such as design, pattern, draping and sewing. The Panel recommends that the College should recruit practice-based faculty with sufficient years of experience to compliment the PhD academics. Moreover, the Panel notes from interviews with staff that there is a high teaching workload assigned to the full-time faculty members, in addition to requiring them to attend professional development seminars and workshops. The institution need to pay attention to this high workload, especially for a demanding profession such as fashion design. The Panel was provided with staff's recent publication and noted that the topics are relevant to the curriculum and are conducted mainly by senior faculty members. The Panel advises that the senior faculty members encourage junior faculty (teaching assistants) to either work on collaborative research with them or conduct individual applied research to be in line with this type of institution.
- 2.5 RUW has very clear and well-documented policies for staff recruitment, promotion and appraisal. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the College communicates its staffing needs for each academic year to the Human Resources (HR)

Department. The recruitment process starts from the college level and ends with the approval of the Appointment and Promotion Committee which is chaired by the President. Interviewed staff members were aware that they stay on a probation period for three months as per RUW's regulations. According to the SER, the average of staff retention rate in the last three years was 91%. All staff must complete a two-day induction programme when they start working and complete a questionnaire about it. However, during interview sessions, the Panel was informed that some staff members did not attend the induction programme as they arrived late in the semester. Therefore, the Panel advises the College to ensure that staff members who missed the induction programme are provided with alternative formal arrangements. From interviews, the Panel learnt that there is an unofficial mentorship programme to newly appointed staff to be mentored by senior staff members to allow for their smooth integration into the University. Interviewed staff showed clear understanding of the promotion processes although none of them were promoted recently. Moreover, the Panel is satisfied with the annual appraisal system which starts with a self-appraisal, Dean and HoD's feedback, academic staff appraisal committee and ends with either appreciation or concern letters from the President. To ensure consistency across the colleges, RUW established the Academic Appraisal Committee in the academic year 2013-2014. The Panel noted from interviews that the staff have a clear understanding of the HR Department processes. The Panel appreciates that all staff members are well-aware of the HR processes adopted by the University.

- 2.6 All RUW's policies, procedures, handbooks, manuals and administrative templates are located on the Document Management System. PowerCampus consists of two systems; a Student Information System (SIS) and the Self-service System. The PowerCampus has been used for online registration and for teaching and learning since 2012-2013; and proves to be comprehensive with evidence of its functionality and usage, from registration, attendance, academic instructional material, grading, communication, academic performance monitoring etc. This was also corroborated during the site visit tour and interviews with senior management, academic staff and students. The Panel appreciates that there are extensive information systems that facilitate informed decision-making and monitor at-risk students for early intervention.
- 2.7 RUW has a clear policy for security of learner records that stipulates the steps taken to safeguard students' records. These steps include maintaining hard and soft copies of these records in secure locations on- and off-campus. RUW's Disaster Recovery Policy also aims to protect essential data at RUW in case there is a damage to its central IT environment in the event of fire or other major incidents. Furthermore, RUW has a Grade Approval Policy, which defines clearly the responsibilities of the instructors, the HoD, the Dean, the Academic Vice President and the Registrar. The Panel acknowledges that there are appropriate policies and procedures that are consistently

implemented to ensure the security of learner records and accuracy of results. The Panel also acknowledges that there is an adequate risk-management plan where backup is stored on multiple platforms including the Cloud as indicated during the interviews and the site visit tour.

- 2.8 During the site visit, the Panel conducted a comprehensive tour of the physical premises of RUW, with a focus on those utilized by the BAFD programme. The Panel toured staff offices, classrooms, design studios, the library, computer laboratories, the exterior of student housing facilities and gymnasium. Staff offices are adequate for them in order to work with students and conduct research. In addition, the number of classrooms and laboratories, including IT laboratories, is adequate for the current number of students. Although the Student Dorm was not toured, interviewed students indicated their satisfaction with the gym and the dorm facilities. The Panel also noted that RUW's facilities provide a source of community engagement as the University allows women in the community to use the gym whether they are RUW students or not. Interviewed students and staff clarified that in general they felt that their facilities were adequate to their needs and that RUW allows them to make suggestions on how to improve their facilities. When touring the design studios, the Panel noted that students in the BAFD programme were working on domestic sewing machines. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should phase out the domestic sewing machines and replace them with industrial ones as well as invest in more specialized industrial machines such as 'coverstitch', 'overlock', 'buttonhole' and 'hemming' machines. Furthermore, the Panel also recommends that the College should develop textile laboratories with dedicated facilities for screen printing, heat transfer and dyeing to support the BAFD programme and impart this important skill to the students. While touring the IT laboratories, the Panel noted that the University provides students with the following software packages: Windows 10, Office Professional 2013, JCreator, DevC++, Visual Studio Community 2015, Graph yEd, Adobe Design & Web Premium CS6, AutoCAD Architecture 2015, Autodesk 3ds Max Design 2015, Avast, Quicktime, and VLC Media Player. Moreover, the Panel toured the library and noted that it could benefit from purchasing more printed periodicals, basic books and journals for the BAFD students. Interviewed staff indicated that the budget was tight and it was hard to justify purchasing certain items because the number of students is small. The Panel advises the College to invest in its library to build the knowledge and research materials for both staff and students. The Panel is of the view that adding online fashion databases, like WGSN and Fashion Snoops, would enhance the students' design aesthetic. The Panel noted also that the fashion journals the library subscribes to are inadequate for both students and staff. Consequently, the College should subscribe to 'trendy' journals such as Clothing Cultures, Fashion, Style & Popular Culture, Critical Studies in Men's Fashion, Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty as well as Film, Fashion & Consumption. Interviewed students stated they would appreciate having periodicals related to jewellery design

since there is a class on this subject. Nonetheless, students indicated that the library provides them with a pleasant place to meet and study. The Panel recommends that the College should enrich its learning resources by subscribing to more journals related to current trends in the field and online fashion design data bases.

- 2.9 There are robust systems in place for tracking usage of resources and facilities. The Self-service is used for tracking registration, attendance, grades, financial hold and other functions. To ensure the implementation of e-Learning, each college submits a report on its usage on a semester basis and the Teaching and Learning Committee has recently developed Guidelines for Blended Learning. The librarian also issues monthly reports to monitor the usage of the library, electronic databases and 'Turnitin'. Outcomes of such reports are used to inform decision-making. For example, the Deans Council and faculty members are working to improve the usage of electronic databases by setting assignments that require research and usage of RUW databases. The Panel appreciates that the tracking system is effectively employed to maximise efficiency on different levels, from registration, academic performance, library resources to students' attendance.
- 2.10 Student support system is evident throughout the institution, including library induction, academic advising as well as career advising. According to interviews with students and alumnae, faculty members are regularly providing academic advice and supervision to guide their students throughout their academic study to fulfil programme aims and objectives. The Panel appreciates that the academic advising procedures are well-integrated at each level in order to offer significant support for students' academic progress. The SER reports that there has been an overall improvement in the advising process in terms of its frequency and lists several proposed initiatives to improve this process. Further, the Panel finds that adequate support is provided through e-library, e-resources, and the office of student affairs. First aid and counselling are offered through the RUW clinic and the social worker. The Panel is satisfied that there is a good student support system that includes a range of options including financial aid. In addition, the Panel notes that there is a clear policy for students with special needs but advises adding a statement on protecting the privacy of students' medical records and conditions.
- 2.11 There are clear, thorough induction arrangements for newly admitted and transferred students. The Office of Student Affairs arranges the induction programme, which is conducted twice a year at the university level. The induction programme includes a tour of the library and other facilities in addition to information about the use of Self-service and RUW regulations. These regulations are clearly stipulated in the Student Handbook, which is distributed during the induction. The College also arranges induction sessions for its students to inform them about its specific requirements and give them the opportunity to meet with faculty members and their advisors. It remains

unclear, however, if the induction programme has been recently evaluated or improved, but the Panel finds the programme adequate with plans in place for students who miss the induction. This was also confirmed during interviews with faculty members and students. The Panel appreciates that the induction programme is thorough and there are adequate alternative arrangements in place for students who missed it.

- 2.12 RUW has an Academic Advising Policy and a procedure for academic advising that deal with students at risk of academic failure. Online and offline support systems are also in place to track students' progress and offer support with a close monitoring from registration to graduation. These systems clearly allow for a timely intervention mechanism that signals when the performance of a student drops below the required standards. The student is placed under probation and is not allowed to register more than 12 credits per semester until the status of probation is removed. During interview sessions, faculty members confirmed that they meet more often with students on probation in order to identify the problem and propose solutions. Mid-term results are also discussed at the College Council to identify students that need academic support. The Panel is satisfied that there is a well-implemented academic advising policy and there is a clear course of action for students at risk of academic failure.
- 2.13 The College's 2014-2015 Annual Report and the 2015-2016 Event Report list a number of activities that have been conducted to expand the learning environment such as, conferences, guest speakers, site visits, exhibitions and educational trips to England, Turkey, USA, Spain, and an extensive set of evidence was also provided to demonstrate the commitment of the College to expand the learning experiences of its students. Workshops by artists and designers in particular help to enrich the students' learning experience, as students and alumnae affirmed during the interviews. The Panel was also informed that currently, there are plans to organize events outside of the University such as pop-up exhibitions which will keep students and staff up-to-date of local design practices. Other facilities supporting informal learning and enriching students' experiences include Student Affairs, Student Clubs and Sports Clubs. The Panel appreciates that the environment in the College is conducive to expanding students' learning experience and knowledge through informal learning by conducting a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- 2.14 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Efficiency of the Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- Entry requirements for the BAFD programme are regularly reviewed.
 - All staff members are well-aware of the Human Resources processes adopted by the University.
 - There are extensive information systems that facilitate informed decision-making and monitor at-risk students for early intervention.

- The tracking system is effectively employed to maximise efficiency on different levels, from registration, academic performance, library resources to students' attendance.
- The academic advising procedures are well-integrated at each level in order to offer significant support for students' academic progress.
- The induction programme is thorough and there are adequate alternative arrangements in place for students who missed it.
- The College's environment is conducive to expanding students' learning experience and knowledge through informal learning by conducting a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

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

- revise the load exerted on the Head of the Department to ensure that she/he has sufficient time to manage her/his responsibilities
- recruit practice-based faculty with sufficient years of experience to compliment the PhD academics
- purchase more industrial standard sewing machines to enable students to utilize all types of fabrics and materials
- invest in developing textile laboratories with dedicated facilities for screen printing, heat transfer and dyeing to impart this important skill to the students
- enrich the learning resources by subscribing to more journals related to current trends in the field and online fashion design data bases.

2.16 **Judgement**

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

3. Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

- 3.1 The College has clear mission and vision statements that are incorporated in the Student Experience Strategy, where graduate attributes are reflected in its goals (multi-cultural, encourage leadership, build character, build social consciousness and community, have lifelong habits of learning, creative, confident and forward thinking). From staff interviews and evidence provided, the Panel confirmed that the graduate attributes are embedded in the PILOs and programme objectives and there is a mechanism to ensure the alignment of assessment with the learning outcomes in order to achieve the Student Experience Strategy. The Panel appreciates that graduate attributes are clearly stated and embedded in the PILOs, and their achievement is ensured by using assessment tasks that are valid and reliable.
- 3.2 The SER states that RUW adopted the initial curricula for the College of Art and Design programmes from Middlesex University, UK in 2005-2006 and has further revised its programmes based on feedback received from one international university along with a regional one. Interviewed staff clarified that the BAFD programme was adjusted as a result of this benchmarking exercise. In addition, the programme courses were contextualized by adding emphasis on history of art, middle east fashion and local heritage. Moreover, the programme team has recently contacted Dar Al Hekma University, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to establish a memorandum of understanding that will enable them to conduct a full fledged formal benchmarking, but is still awaiting the HEC's approval. Once approval is received, the programme team will start its formal process. While the Panel acknowledges the current benchmarking efforts exerted by the College; the Panel recommends that the College should identify more art colleges and fashion design programmes that are studio based as part of achieving the objective of its benchmarking policy; 'to drive continuous improvement' for the programme.
- 3.3 RUW has a comprehensive assessment policy that covers main aspects of the assessment such as the purpose of the assessment, modes of feedback, internal moderation, second marking and external moderation. All assessments are scheduled, overseen and documented by the Deans' Council, the College Council and the Teaching and Learning Committee. Moreover, there are clear Assessment Guidelines and rubrics that are communicated to academic staff and students as well as a policy for managing the assessment of courses. The Panel was provided with evidence of a number of policy revisions since its first draft in the academic year 2012-2013. The most recent review to the policy was in the academic year 2015-2016, during which more details about the final year project along with other aspects were considered.

According to the policy, each semester instructors review and revise the assessment tools in the course specifications. Mid-term and final examination papers are reviewed and approved by the HoD and the Dean. From students' interview sessions, it was evident that they are fully aware of the assessment tools and confirmed that they receive information on this at the beginning of the semester. The Panel appreciates that the assessment policy and procedures are implemented and subject to regular reviews; and both staff and students are well-aware of these changes.

- 3.4 Policies and procedures are in place to ensure alignment of assessment to the CILOs. The Assessment Policy requires that assessments are appropriate for the CILOs and grades awarded reflect the academic standards achieved by students. The assessment policy states that each course specification should have a table showing the alignment of assessment with the CILOs. The HoD is responsible to ensure that assessments are aligned with the CILOs. External moderation/verification is an additional method of ensuring proper alignment. There are four categories of ILOs clearly marked in each course (Knowledge and Understanding, Subject-Specific Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, and General and Transferable Skills). The CILOs achievement matrix calculates the percentage of CILOs achieved in each course and the results are analysed and discussed in the College Council. The Panel is satisfied that the assessment tools are aligned with the CILOs *via* the CILOs achievement matrix as indicated in the provided evidence. The Panel notes that the BAFD programme team puts emphasis on Subject-Specific Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, and General and Transferable Skills to strengthen the link between theory and practice. Moreover, interviewed staff confirmed that capacity building workshops on assessment design and rubrics and how to inject employability skills in the curriculum are offered to faculty members. During interviews, students confirmed that all assessment tasks clarify which CILO is being assessed. The Panel is satisfied that there is a transparent approach to ensure the suitability of assessment and that the assessment tools are properly aligned to the CILOs.
- 3.5 The RUW Assessment Policy shows well-documented outlines of internal moderation. Interviewed internal moderators clarified that they check the structure of the assignment, marking rubrics, and make sure that each question covers at least one of the CILOs. Tables in the course specifications illustrate how the CILOs are assessed, and also define the marking criteria. The feedback of the internal moderator is submitted to the course instructor who, in turn, is responsible for incorporating and altering course specifications before distributing them to students. Furthermore, projects and presentations are co-examined throughout the years of study and double marking occurs for written/studio examinations depending on the nature of the course. Both the HoD and Dean review and approve all assessment methods, model answers and rubrics to ensure consistency and alignment with the CILOs and the level of the course. Samples of course folders are also internally checked by the Quality

Assurance Unit. In the BAFD programme all courses with presentations, final examinations, and project evaluations are subject to internal moderation. The Panel acknowledges that the internal moderation covers different types of assessments and is consistently implemented and encourages the College to assess its effectiveness.

- 3.6 The programme team implements RUW's external moderation system, which is conducted at the end of every semester for each academic programme. Proposed external examiners, whether being local, regional or international, are discussed at the College Council prior to being approved as per the SER. A description of the role of the external examiners is detailed in the RUW's assessment policy. The SER clarifies that at least 30% of the programme courses ought to be externally moderated/second marked each year. From the SER and interviews, the Panel learnt that the role of the external examiners is to assess and verify the marking of the assessments and its alignment to the CILOs, or grade final year projects or presentations as co-examiners. The Panel studied samples of the external examiners reports and acknowledges that there are processes to ensure that external examiners' feedback is disseminated to staff. From interviews, the Panel learnt that Advisory Board members and employers have been brought to examine some of the students' work and give their feedback and judgment as external examiners. Nonetheless, the Panel recommends that the College should widen the scope of the external moderation process to include all forms of major assessments.
- 3.7 Samples of students' assessed coursework such as quizzes, moderated scripts, reports, projects and examinations along with course material from first year to fourth year were provided to the Panel during the site visit. The Panel studied the samples provided and notes that the graded coursework is of an acceptable standard, and is similar to programmes offered regionally and internationally. The Panel is satisfied with students' theory-based work and design concept. However, when touring the facilities, the Panel examined the displayed garments in the studios, exhibit halls and in the hallways; and it was noted that some students are using professional tailors. Interviewed staff clarified that students have to produce the final garment pattern. However, they can use tailors to stitch the final garments as none of faculty is specialized in this aspect. Nonetheless, the Panel is of the view that as graduates of a bachelor degree in fashion design, students should have the basic construction skills and garment assembling. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the College should investigate ways to introduce and enhance students' basic construction skills and garment assembling.
- 3.8 The SER states that to ensure the level of graduates' achievement, staff members make great efforts to fulfil the objectives of the BAFD programme and enhance its delivery. As a direct measure, students' assessment results are utilised to measure the level of the achievement of the CILOs and, hence the PILOs, as detailed in Paragraph (3.4). To

ensure fairness in the grades, these results are discussed with the HoD and the Dean and amongst the programme team to address any area for improvement. Indirectly, alumnae, employers along with exit student surveys are employed to get feedback and their outcomes are analysed and developed into formal reports. Moreover, interviewed employers provided positive feedback about students' performance in the workplace. Another mechanism the College utilises to evaluate graduates' achievement is the external examiners who look at the BAFD programme as mentioned in Paragraph (3.6) earlier, in order to ensure that the level of BAFD graduates is comparable to graduates in regional or international institutions. The Panel appreciates that the College employs both direct and indirect mechanisms for evaluating graduates' achievement.

- 3.9 The College conducts data analysis of its cohorts and provided statistics show that the average length of a study for a student to graduate is between 4-5 years. According to the SER and the statistics provided, the enrolment continues to increase since the programme inception in the academic year 2005-2006. As per the SER, the total number of graduates to date is 30. Out of 30 graduates, five have been employed, six have their own business, two are getting their Master's, four are unemployed by their choice and 13 could not be traced. The Panel met with a few graduates of the programme who stated that many of the students at RUW do not have careers upon graduation as they either get married or stay home due to cultural issues. The Panel notes that the programme is progressing well with a students' retention rate of 100% for the academic year 2005-2010 and 88% during the academic year 2015-2016. The Panel also notes that most of the students graduate from the programme in four years. The Panel is satisfied that the BAFD programme team conducts analyses of its cohort in a consistent manner and encourages the College to investigate ways to improve tracking students' destination after getting their degrees.
- 3.10 The management of the College has made the internship programme (DES496) compulsory for all students with 200 hours of workplace experience. According to the internship policy, students are allowed to register for the course after completing 66 credits in the programme. From interviews, the Panel learnt that there is an Internship Coordinator who ensures that the profile of the company and the expected learning experience are aligned with the CILOs specified in the course specification. However, the Panel has some concerns over the process with which the internship providers are selected as some organizations are not involved primarily in fashion design. Moreover, according to the policy, once the internship is completed, students submit a report and deliver an oral presentation to discuss/share their experience with others. Interviewed students clarified that assessment is based on employer's feedback along with the report and its presentation. During staff interviews, the Panel was informed that site visits are conducted by the course instructor to monitor students' progress. However, the College needs to monitor students' progress more during the internship

programme. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should strengthen the mechanisms it implements for the selection of the internship providers and the monitoring of students' progress to ensure that the actual learning experience is suitable for all interns.

- 3.11 There are clear guidelines for the final year project (BAFD 497) stipulated in the Undergraduate Final Year Project Handbook. The Handbook specifies the roles and responsibilities of the student, supervisor and the jury, which consists of internal and external examiners. During interview sessions with students and staff, the Panel confirmed that they are well-aware of the steps students go through when working on the project, as indicated in the SER. Students have to submit their proposal of the project at the beginning of the semester, meet with their supervisors once a week or whenever needed. Then students prepare fashion illustration, technical drawings, paper patterns and drapes to finalize their garments. Once the garments are completed, students write a detailed project and present it in front of the jury. As mentioned earlier in Paragraph (3.6), Advisory Board members and employers have been brought to evaluate students' final year projects and give their judgment as external examiners. Interviewed staff clarified that the collection of final garments is displayed in the ModaMist fashion show held at the end of the year and is the pinnacle of the BAFD programme. The Panel appreciates the involvement of external examiners to critique final year projects as this practice adds value to the projects.
- 3.12 The College of Art and Design established its College Advisory Committee (CAC) in the academic year 2010-2011 after the approval of the Board of Trustees. The CAC includes Dean, HoD, three members from each specialisation: Fashion Design, Interior Design and Graphic Design along with seven external members as per the provided evidence. However, from the interview with the management team, it seemed unclear how the Committee members were selected in the case of duplicate skills. During the site visit, the Panel was informed that the CAC meets twice per year and overall CAC members seem to be satisfied with their involvement and indicated their willingness to be further involved in the programme development. The Panel encourages the College to further utilize the CAC.
- 3.13 The Panel conducted interviews with both employers and graduates of the BAFD programme. Interviewed employers stated that RUW's graduates are hard workers and creative. During the interview session, some issues were brought up regarding the programme's direction in fashion design and the needs of the Bahrain market. According to employers, the marketplace will eventually dictate more of a merchant focus or even having a focus on fashion and accessory design for jewellery. The Panel encourages the College to listen to its employers and keep an ongoing contact to cater for the needs of the market locally and regionally. From interview sessions, it was noted that alumnae showed positive feedback towards the BAFD programme and

expressed their satisfaction towards the efforts of the programme team to facilitate their learning experience which led some of them to establish their own business in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. The Panel appreciates that alumnae and employers are satisfied with the programme and its delivery.

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

- Graduate attributes are clearly stated and embedded in the programme intended learning outcomes, and their achievement is ensured by using assessment tasks that are valid and reliable.
- There are formal assessment policy and procedures that are implemented and subject to regular reviews; and both staff and students are well-aware of these changes.
- The College employs both direct and indirect mechanisms for evaluating graduates' achievement.
- The involvement of external examiners in the critique of the final year projects adds value to the projects.
- Alumnae and employers are satisfied with the programme and its delivery.

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

- identify more art colleges and fashion design programmes that are studio based as part of achieving the objective of its benchmarking policy; 'to drive continuous improvement' for the programme
- widen the scope of the external moderation process to include all forms of major assessments
- investigate ways to introduce and enhance students' basic construction skills and garment assembling
- strengthen the mechanisms for the selection of the internship providers and the monitoring of students' progress to ensure that the actual learning experience is suitable for all interns.

3.14 **Judgement**

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

4. 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.

- 4.1 RUW has a Document Control Register, which includes a comprehensive set of policies, strategies, guidelines and academic handbooks, mandates, programme handbooks, academic procedures and academic templates. The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Unit (QAAU) is the custodian of these policies. Issues related to management and other administrative aspects occur in the Guidelines for Governance and Quality Management documents. The Panel notes that the above mentioned documents are well-formulated and well-organized. Interviewed staff clarified that the policies are reviewed every three years or earlier once needed. Staff explained that at the beginning of each academic year, the QAAU contacts the owner or the concerned body and inquires if any updates/changes are needed. Once all approvals are received, QAAU updates its system and informs all the concerned parties *via* email. From interviews, the Panel notes that academic and administrative staff members are fully aware of all these policies, procedures and guidelines. Interviews with faculty revealed that they are inducted about policies and procedures related to their programme when they are employed. The Panel acknowledges the existence of a comprehensive set of policies and procedures that is generally implemented and revised; and that academic and administrative staff are fully aware of the policies related to their duties.
- 4.2 The Panel was provided with RUW's organizational chart that outlines the structure of the College. The chart clearly outlines the organization of the College and the chain-of-command and demonstrates the cross work of some faculty members who teach in multiple programmes. The management structure within the College includes the Dean and two HoDs. The Panel noted that both HoDs have administrative and academic responsibilities and their work cross over the two Departments namely (Department of Design and Department of Architecture) as mentioned earlier in (Paragraph 2.3). From interviews with academic and administrative staff, the Panel noted that the Dean provide a lot of support to the HoD of Department of Design which leads to having a responsible leadership for the BAFD programme. However, as indicated in Paragraph (2.3), the HoD of the Department of Design is overloaded with academic and administrative duties, which might hinder her/ his ability to provide proper leadership. The Panel urges the College to address this issue (see recommendation in Paragraph 2.3).
- 4.3 RUW has a clear quality assurance management system, which is used to govern the programme and its administration. Moreover, a framework for Academic Quality has been utilized since the academic year 2014-2015 to maintain and monitor academic

standards. The QAAU is supported by different governing bodies in the University along with university- and college-level committees. Evidence was provided to the Panel during the site visit to demonstrate how the Departments fits in the quality assurance system in its daily activities. Interviewed staff confirmed that they are involved in applying all quality processes related to their job and participate in disseminating quality culture to each other and to their students. The Panel appreciates that the system of quality management is well-structured, transparent and facilitate the enhancement of the programme delivery.

- 4.4 From interviews, the Panel notes that academic and support staff have a comprehensive understanding of the internal quality assurance system and the role they play in ensuring the implementation of the quality assurance policies related to their duties. Interviewed academic and administrative staff clarified that several training and capacity building workshops are regularly conducted by QAAU to ensure a shared understanding amongst staff members and that participants' feedback is always collected to measure the level of their satisfaction. Furthermore, as part of disseminating good practices, all staff members are assigned to different committees either at college or institution level. From interviews, the Panel confirmed that staff are well-acquainted with their role in the internal quality assurance system. The Panel appreciates that staff members are well-informed about quality assurance issues related to the programme and its delivery.
- 4.5 RUW has a Programme Proposal and Modification Policy, which clearly outlines the procedures for modifying existing programmes or introducing a new one as per HEC's regulatory guidelines. According to the policy, several parties are involved in the process such as College Council, Department Council, Standing Committees, University Senate, University Board of Trustees and ends with the HEC's approval. It was stated in the SER that the HEC approved two postgraduate programmes, the Master in Design Management and the Master in Drawing and Painting in 2012-2013. Interviews with senior management and staff clarified that these programmes were introduced to cater for market needs. Evidence provided also included the proposal of the Bachelor of Architecture, which indicates the college's adherence to relevant policies and procedures. The Panel acknowledges that there are suitable arrangements for introducing new programmes.
- 4.6 There is a policy for annual internal programme evaluation which includes a review of the course specifications, Programme Handbook, textbooks, references, needed software and human resources. Interviewed staff clarified that the internal programme evaluation considers students and alumnae surveys, external examiners' reports, internship surveys and staff surveys. During interviews, staff clarified that the result of the annual internal evaluation is discussed at the College Council before incorporating any changes in the programme. They clarified that the annual review

for the academic year 2014-2015 resulted in reducing the number of assessments, changing the CILOs in some of the BAFD courses and adding more updated books to the reference list. The Panel appreciates that there is a clear procedure for the annual internal evaluation of the programme that leads to enhancing its offering and delivery.

- 4.7 RUW has a Periodic Programme Review Policy that was approved in 2015 to formalize the internal periodic review process. According to the policy 'the University will carry out external and internal periodic reviews of all its taught programmes at a minimum once every 4 years'. As per the SER, the periodic review aims to utilize different kinds of feedback received from course evaluation, faculty members' personal reflections, external examiners and external verifiers, College Advisory Committee and subject experts to improve the programme. This process is overseen by the QAAU. From interviews with staff and senior management, the Panel learnt that all programmes offered by the College, including the BAFD, were reviewed by West Virginia University in the academic year 2012-2013 and actions were discussed at the College Council and implemented across all the programmes. The Panel was informed that currently, the College is working on embedding employability skills in the curriculum of all its programmes. The Panel acknowledges there is a process for the periodic review of the programme and encourages the College to ensure its continuity.
- 4.8 Interviews with senior management and staff verified that RUW has a policy called 'Survey Policy (OS)' which stipulates the formal mechanisms for collecting structured comments from internal and external stakeholders. Examples include student survey, alumnae survey, undergraduate exit survey, employers survey. In addition, CAC's feedback and the reports of external examiners are used to inform decision making. Students' interview sessions verified that 'Course and Teacher Evaluations' surveys are received for every single course at the end of the semester and the Panel was informed that once a semester, students go to a Q&A session with the President. The Panel notes the analysis of the alumnae and student surveys and acknowledges the college's response to the alumnae and employers' comments. However, during interviews, members of the CAC raised their concern that they are passionate about recommending improvements to the BAFD programme but there is no opportunity to share their input during the CAC meetings due to the limited time of the meetings and the pre-set agenda. Moreover, they were not fully aware on how their input feeds into the improvement of the programme. The Panel recommends that the College should implement formal mechanisms to ensure that all the comments collected from meetings and surveys are analysed effectively; and that the outcomes are used to inform decisions and stakeholders are informed about actions taken.
- 4.9 RUW has a clear Professional Development Policy, which aims to encourage the career progression of its faculty members and enhance their capabilities. During interviews, senior management clarified that there are two means for professional development

activities. The first is through workshops conducted in-house where RUW organizes these workshops according to identified staff's needs and the second is when staff members attend conferences or present papers outside Bahrain. Interviewed staff members indicated that according to the policy, any faculty member is sponsored to attend two professional development activities outside the university each year but if the staff member is a new recruit then he/she has to wait for one year before being eligible to be sent to any conferences outside the country. Interviewed staff stated that most of them had at least attended one conference last year and shared their experience with their colleagues during the research forum. Interviewed senior management and staff clarified that the approval of staff's professional development activities is managed through various committees in line with the general themes selected by the College Council. However, the Panel notes that the policy does not clearly specify how the 'general themes' are 'selected by the College Council'. Therefore, the Panel suggests to add clear criteria to the policy to ensure equity and transparency. Moreover, the Panel was informed during the site visit that QAAU is very active in organising and conducting regular workshops throughout the academic year to fulfil individual staff needs related to either their specialization or their personal development skills. Examples include workshops on blended learning, embedding employability skills in the curriculum, teaching methods, assessment, giving feedback, mapping assessment methods to CILOs and topics related to women's studies. From interviews, the Panel learnt that the QAAU collects participants' feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of these workshops and seminars and staff members showed their high satisfaction towards these organized activities. Moreover, staff clarified that an international conference was organized last year and delegates from Kuwait, West Virginia University and Dar Al Hekma in Saudi Arabia attended the conference and were pleased with its outcome. Furthermore, staff indicated that they are always encouraged to attend all the seminars and invite guest speakers to address topics related to their field and students find these activities beneficial to enhance their learning experience. Furthermore, class observation and research forum have recently been introduced to the professional development plan to exchange good practice and encourage innovative ideas amongst RUW's staff members. The Panel appreciates that there is an implemented professional development policy for academic staff and the process is monitored and evaluated regularly.

- 4.10 The SER states that the College depends on its internal and external stakeholders to scope labour market needs. The SER also highlights the programme team's effort to embed employability skills in the programme syllabi and PILOs to ensure that the programme graduates meet the market needs. Furthermore, the CAC members, alumnae and employers are all consulted *via* surveys. From interviews, the Panel learnt that outcomes of the surveys provide clear guidelines on the labour market needs. Data collected on graduates' destinations indicate that a number of the BAFD alumnae have established their own fashion design organizations with good

experience in the Bahraini and Saudi markets. Moreover, the Panel was informed during interview sessions that a feasibility study for the BAFD programme was conducted in 2016 and evidence was provided on the outcome of the study. The feasibility study was conducted specifically for the fashion design programme by a consultant who tackled the local and regional needs for this type of programme. The Panel appreciates the feasibility study that was conducted to strengthen the future of BAFD programme.

4.11 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- The system of quality management is well-structured, transparent and facilitate the enhancement of the programme delivery.
- Staff members are well-informed about quality assurance issues related to the programme and its delivery.
- There is a clear procedure for the annual internal evaluation of the programme that leads to enhancing its offering and delivery.
- There is an implemented professional development policy for academic staff and the process is monitored and evaluated regularly.
- A feasibility study was conducted to strengthen the future of BAFD programme.

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

- implement formal mechanisms to ensure that all the comments collected from meetings and surveys are analysed effectively; and that the outcomes are used to inform decisions and stakeholders are informed about actions taken.

4.13 **Judgement**

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

5. 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/BQA *Programmes-within-College Reviews Handbook*, 2014:

There is confidence in the Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design, College of Art and Design, offered by the Royal University for Women.