



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
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Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programme Follow-Up Visit Report

**Bachelor of Political Science
College of Administrative Sciences
Applied Science University
Kingdom of Bahrain**

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

Review Date: 26-28 May 2014

HC43-C2-F008

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The Programme Follow-up Visit Overview

The follow-up visit for academic programmes conducted by the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR) of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA) in the Kingdom of Bahrain is part of a cycle of continuing quality assurance review, reporting and improvement.

The follow-up visit applies to all programmes that have been reviewed using the Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework, and received a judgement of 'limited confidence' or 'no confidence'.

This Report provides an account of the follow-up process and findings of the follow-up panel (the Panel), whereby the Bachelor of Political Science (BPS), at Applied Science University (ASU) in the Kingdom of Bahrain was revisited on 11-12 January 2017 to assess its progress, in line with the published Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework and the BQA regulations.

A. Aims of the Follow-up Visit

- (i) Assess the progress made against the recommendations highlighted in the review report (in accordance with the four BQA Indicators) of ASU's BPS since the programme was reviewed on 26-28 May 2014.
- (ii) Provide further information and support for the continuous improvement of academic standards and quality enhancement of higher education provision, specifically within the BPS programme at ASU, and for higher education provision within the Kingdom of Bahrain, as a whole.

B. Background

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

The overall judgement of the review panel for the BPS programme, of ASU was that of '**Limited confidence**'. Consequently, the follow-up process incorporated the review of the evidence presented by ASU to the DHR, the improvement plan, the progress report and its supporting materials, and the documents submitted during the follow-up site visit and those extracted from the interview sessions.

The external review panel's judgement on the ASU's BPS programme for each Indicator was as follows:

Indicator 1: The learning programme; 'satisfied'

Indicator 2: Efficiency of the programme; 'satisfied'

Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates; 'not satisfied'

Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance 'satisfied'

The follow-up visit was conducted by a panel consisting of two members. This follow-up visit focused on assessing how the institution addressed the recommendations of the report of the review conducted on 26-28 May 2014. For each recommendation given under the four Indicators, the panel judged whether the recommendation is 'fully addressed', 'partially addressed', or 'not addressed' using the rubric in Appendix 1. An overall judgement of 'good progress', 'adequate progress' or 'inadequate progress' is given based on the rubric provided in Appendix 2.

C. Overview of the Bachelor of Political Science

The Bachelor of Political Science programme is run by the Department of Political Science of the Faculty of Administrative Sciences, which was established with the establishment of the university in the academic year 2004-2005, and the number of students enrolled in the programme in the academic year 2015-2016 was 511, and 151 students out of them were admitted in that year. The majority of enrolled students are from the Kingdom of Bahrain, and some of them are from neighbouring Arab countries. Although the number of male students has continued to increase compared to females, the proportion of female students is steadily increasing to 47% in the academic year 2015-2016. Regarding the Faculty members of Political Science programme, there are 13 professors, including two part-time lecturers. The programme is taught in Arabic.

1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BPS programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2014, under Indicator 1: The learning programme; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 1.1: *Place 'Principles of General Law' course as a prerequisite for 'Constitutional Law' course, and include 'International Economic System' course to replace the 'Economic International course*

Judgment: *Fully Addressed*

The progress report submitted by the university refers to the inclusion of the 'Principles of General Law' course as a prerequisite to 'The Constitutional Law' course, and the inclusion of "The International Economic System" course as per the new academic study plan. The Panel examined the course specification of the 'Principles of Law' course, a grade list of students who studied it during the summer semester 2016; in addition to a list of students' names who studied it in the first semester of the academic year 2016-2017. During the follow-up visit, the Panel also reviewed the file of the 'Principles of General Law' course. During its meeting with faculty members, the Panel learnt that students who have passed the 'Principles of General Law' course as a prerequisite, performed better in the 'The Constitutional Law' course than those students who have studied the course of 'The Constitutional Law' without studying 'Principles of Law' as a prerequisite. The Panel noted that 'International Economic System' course has not yet been taught; as it is one of the fourth year's courses that has not yet been taken by students who were enrolled in the programme after the addition of this course to the programme study plan. By reviewing the course specification, it was evident that it is appropriate to the needs of the programme.

In order to maintain the number of the credit hours adopted for compulsory courses (25 courses), the 'Gulf Political System' course was merged into 'Arab Political Systems' course. However, when examining the course specification of 'Arab Political Systems' course, the Panel noted that it was widely tackling the Arab regional systems, which is considered as one of the topics of the international relations and not of the comparable systems. Interviewed faculty clarified that it was intended to address only the regional environment of the Arab political systems. In order to achieve this intention without exceeding, the Panel approves the proposal of the external reviewer in his report which is dated to 10 January 2017 to exclude the topic of Arab regional systems; as it is not included in the of 'Arab Political Systems' course. Hence, the Panel supports the changes that have been integrated into the programme's study plan and

the specifications of the courses, as they are appropriate to address the recommendation.

Recommendation 1.2: *Review the content of 'Bahrain Political System' course to ensure that it addresses the political system in Bahrain with more details*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The progress report submitted by the university referred to the integration of the 'Bahrain Foreign Policy' course into the 'Bahrain Political System' course. During the visit, the Panel examined the old and the new specifications of the course of the 'Bahrain Political System', as well as the course files which included details of what has been taught, in addition to examination papers, and samples of student work. The Panel noted that it has now addressed the Bahrain political system topic in a more comprehensive manner. This was also confirmed through interviews with faculty members and students during the site visit. Hence, the Panel is of the view that the College has implemented this recommendation.

Recommendation 1.3: *Enrich the content of the remedial English courses and include English readings in most courses, especially those in the third and fourth levels*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report submitted by the university indicates that in order to address this recommendation, the programme team has reviewed and deepened the 'Political-Readings' and 'Diplomatic-Readings' courses which are delivered in English. English Readings have been added to five other courses, and it was decided to teach "Contemporary International Issues" course in English instead of Arabic. Thus, the number of courses taught in English within the programme became five. The Panel noted from the course files reviewed that the mid-term and end-of-semester examinations contained questions on the most important terms used in each course in English. The programme's Advisory Council, during the Panel's meeting with some of its members, appreciated the department's response to the council's view on the selection of topics and courses that are taught in English, and the efforts of academic staff in simplifying the scientific material for the students. Interviewed students appreciated the addition of English readings to some of the courses which are taught in Arabic to help them meet the demands of the labour market, especially students who are looking forward to work in the private sector or abroad. There is no doubt that all of the above contributes in implementing the recommendation, though the number of courses containing English readings is still limited as well as the number of courses taught in English. In addition to the issue of the limited number of English courses, there is another issue concerning the selection of the academic staff who teach these courses according to specific criteria such as the university from which they got

their degrees, or their ability to write and publish their research in English. When the programme and faculty members are asked about the selection criteria, the Panel did not receive a clear answer. The Panel is also of the view that readings should be identified within the specifications of the course, which has not been achieved in the 'Political Readings' course and in 'Contemporary International Issues' course. In general, it was impossible for the Panel to assess all procedures taken to intensify the content of the English courses; as some of them were not put into practice. For example, 'Political Readings' and 'Diplomatic Readings' courses have not been taught according to the new specification, and also 'Contemporary International Issues' course has not been introduced in English; as these courses are taught for students in the fourth year. Finally, the experience of intensifying the English language content of the programme will not be assessed by the department or by the academic staff until the end of the current academic year; which means after the completion of its first year, as stated by the programme team in its interview with the Panel. Therefore, the Panel is of the view that the recommendation has been partially addressed.

Recommendation 1.4: *Pay more attention to teach students research writing skills as an element of a course assessment tool whenever appropriate to the nature of the course and its content*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The university's progress report indicated that research element has been included as an assessment tool for all courses, taking into account the different degree of depth according to the level of study, which the Panel found in the course files that were reviewed and at least 10 marks have been allocated for research in each course. Moreover, the courses have been rearranged, so that 'The Research Approaches' course is offered in the first year then 'The Political Science Approach' course is offered in the second year, leading to the applied research in the fourth year. The Panel studied the criteria for injecting the research element in the first and second years, and also the criteria for its preparation in the third and fourth years. However, the Panel found that some of the terms contained in the provided document need to be explained, so that the students would comprehend them well, such as (relying on reliable sources) and (systematic documentation of sources). The Panel is of the view that this could be done by including some examples, so they are properly absorbed and applied. The Panel was also informed during the site visit that the number of the research pages has now become the only standard adopted, but the Panel has noted through the available samples of students work in the course files that the size of research is sometimes measured in words. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should look into monitoring the volume of the expected research in a reasonable and suitable manner. Based on the above, the Panel is of the view that the recommendation has been partially addressed.

Recommendation 1.5: *Follow the University regulation and conduct the internship programme during summer only*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The old regulations of student internship programme were ambiguous regarding the issue of its date. The Panel was informed of the university's explanation of these regulations, the new internship regulations and the new internship policy. The Panel is of the view that this ambiguity has been eliminated and the programme has been committed to the university's policy with respect to the internship programme. During the visit, the Panel was also informed of the internship programme file and the reports it includes for interns, university supervisors and the training organizations/institutions. Through interviews with faculty members and with students who have completed the internship programme, it was found that there is no difference in doing the internship programme in summer or during the first and second semesters. The report of the external reviewer of this course appreciated also the arrangements made by the department. Therefore, the Panel is of the view that the level of progress achieved by the College in addressing this recommendation has been convincing.

Recommendation 1.6: *Review marks distribution of various assessment tools utilized in individual courses to be more flexible and appropriate to the course type and level.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The university's progress report indicates that the College has revised the marks distribution of 13 out of 25 courses offered in the programme which have been available in the files of these courses reviewed by the Panel. The revision aimed to increase the marks of classroom work, which was advocated by the external reviewer and the majority of students interviewed by the Panel during the visit. However, the Panel noted that nearly half of the course assessments remained unchanged; and the Panel found through examination of the course files that the total score of the midterm and final examinations ranged from 65% to 80% out of the overall score of these courses which is considered to be on the high side and this in turn does not motivate students to improve their performance in the classwork, as it was confirmed by most of the students during the follow-up visit. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the programme team is seeking to change the distribution of marks of the assessment tool gradually and studying the results of this experience after a year of its completion, before applying it to the other courses. Although the Panel acknowledges the efforts of the College in addressing this recommendation; yet it is recommended that the College should continue to increase the marks of classwork for all courses in such a manner to suit the type and the needs of the programme.

2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BPS programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2014, under Indicator 2: Efficiency of the programme; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 2.1: Review English language courses that are offered as remedial courses in terms of number, allocation and depth of content to improve the level of admitted students' in the English language

Judgement: Partially Addressed

The progress report indicates that the Directorate of English Language Studies has reviewed English courses throughout the university, and as a result the remedial course 'ENGO99', in addition to the two English language courses which are included in the programme plan (ENG101 and ENG102) of the Political Science programme. The university uses the English language test (Oxford Online Placement Test) to determine the level of students in English when they are admitted to the programme, where students with a score less than (42) have to enrol in the remedial course 'ENG099', as a preliminary course with three hours per week for 15 weeks with no barring credits. Those with a score of (42) or more are able to enrol in compulsory English courses in the programme. In interviews with faculty members, it was found that there was a cooperation between the Department of Political Science and the Directorate of English Language Studies to introduce changes to the compulsory and remedial English language courses. In their meeting with the Panel, students expressed their satisfaction with the recent modifications to the remedial course 'ENG099', and requested to continue in developing this course, to assist them in building their language skills and preparing them to meet the requirements of the courses introduced in English. Academic staff members who teach political science courses which contain readings and topics in English, have indicated an improvement in the level of students and their increased participation in the discussion sessions in the classroom.

The Panel reviewed the files of the remedial courses introduced in English and noted the improvement in course content, vocabulary, teaching and learning methods, however, the Panel is of the view that there is still a need to introduce more diverse topics of reading, to raise the level of classroom and extracurricular activities and to diversify assessment tools; in order to improve students communication skills in writing and speaking. This remark was also echoed during interviews with the

members of the Advisory Board of the department and with the External Reviewer. During the follow-up visit, the Panel was informed that the level of performance of students is not assessed upon completion of the remedial course by using English language test (Oxford Online Placement Test) to benchmark their performance upon admission to the university. Consequently, the Panel recommends that the College should review and further deepen the content of the remedial course which is offered in English and measure the level of students' performance after completing of the course and assessing the value added to the course. Accordingly, the Panel is of the opinion that the College has addressed the recommendation, but partially.

Recommendation 2.2: Activate the recently-established Promotion Committee to motivate faculty members engage in research activity

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The university has a formal policy for academic promotions, which was reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2015. This policy clearly stipulates the requirements of faculty members to be promoted from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor and from Associate Professor to Professor, in addition to the procedures that have to be followed at the department, college and university levels. The Political Science Department has recently developed a mechanism to motivate faculty members to carry out scientific research; to help them meet the requirements of promotion, including the requirements of scientific research. The Scientific Research Committee has therefore been formed at the department level, and discussion sessions have been developed to discuss the topics of academic staff research collectively; to learn from each other's experiences and develop research papers. Interviewed faculty members expressed their satisfaction with the discussion sessions that have been developed in the department and confirmed that they have benefited from them in publishing their research. The Panel was also informed about the proposal of the College for small grants for research, and during interviews of the follow-up visit, some faculty members confirmed that they benefited from these grants. While noting the efforts of the College and the department in addressing this recommendation, the Panel noted that only two out of 11 members of the academic staff had submitted their applications for promotion since the previous review visit, and these requests were filed in July 2016 and are still awaiting senior management approval. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should work in a systematic manner to enable its academic staff to submit their requests for promotion.

Recommendation 2.3: *Revise the teaching load of faculty members, and increase the number of academic staff by attracting more specializations that are currently not available*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The College and the Political Science Department follow the university's recruitment policy, where job vacancies are advertised locally and regionally, on the university's website, or *via* recruiting agencies. The department has recruited five new academic staff members to cover the needs of the programme in the various sub-disciplines (political thought, political systems, political sociology and International relations), in addition to the use of two part-time staff members. The Panel reviewed their CVs and considered that the sub-disciplines of the academic staff who are currently involved in teaching the programme, and their practical experience, were aligned and cater to the different needs of the programme. The Panel expressed its satisfaction towards the number of academic staff members to student ratio 21:1 according to the way the university calculates it instead of 30:1 as it was calculated previously. During interview sessions faculty members expressed their satisfaction with their teaching load and the department's commitment to the Higher Education Council regulations concerning the academic staff teaching load. The Panel is of the view that the efforts of the department are appropriate to address the recommendation.

Recommendation 2.4: *Utilize electronic available resources in the University to detect plagiarism incidents.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The College follows the university's general policy regarding the detection of plagiarism incidents. Interviews conducted with academic staff and students, revealed that they are aware that the similarity must not exceed 20% according to the plagiarism detection 'Turnitin'. The Panel was informed, through interviews with the programme team, that all faculty members in the department have obliged the students to submit their research electronically and to attach the report of 'Turnitin'. If the similarity in their research exceeds the (20%). The student is notified to rewrite the research, and then uses 'Turnitin' again to ensure that the percentage of the submitted research is verified, and does not exceed the degree of similarity established by the university. The Panel reviewed a sample of 'Turnitin' reports which confirmed the use of the 'Turnitin' by students before submitting their work. The sample also included other reports which explain the procedures taken against students who had been found plagiarizing. The Panel encourages the department to continue in applying these procedures, with a target to completely eliminate this phenomenon, and urges the College to review its policy to ensure that cases of plagiarism are not tolerated by giving students a second chance to resubmit their work.

Recommendation 2.5: *Increase the number of English and Arabic books and academic periodicals related to Political Science in the library, including key references and updated resources*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the library had been provided with more than 400 new references in the field of political science, and had subscribed to eight electronic academic periodicals in Arabic, and three magazines in English. The Panel toured the library of the university, particularly the section of political science periodicals and books, and had a look at the list of newly subscribed books and electronic periodicals. The Panel has known through interviews with students and faculty members that they benefit from the library both on and off campus through its online services. The students interviewed by the Panel expressed their satisfaction with the references, books and periodicals provided by the University in the field of their specialization, in particular the possibility of making research and reading off campus. The Panel appreciates the efforts of the library team and their cooperation with the department to provide its needs regularly and continually; and encourages the College to continue to provide the library with political science references both in Arabic and English.

Recommendation 2.6: *Enhance all tracking systems and put them under one comprehensive system to get holistic reports to help in facilitating decision-making in an effective manner*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the university has made modifications to the information tracking systems by making all of them under the umbrella of the Computer Unit that provides all the required reports at the university level, including reports on the admission of students ,their number in the programmes and their number in the classrooms, reports from 'Moodle', reports on books and periodicals that have been added to the library list , and the extent to which periodicals are being used for research. The Panel was provided with evidence showing the increased usage of 'Moodle' by the programme team. However, the Panel was not provided with evidence indicating that these reports are used collectively to support a more comprehensive decision-making process as recommended in the review report, despite the efforts made to obtain them. Hence, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation hasn't been addressed, and therefore, it recommends that the College should establish a comprehensive tracking system which evaluates the usage of resources in a more comprehensive manner.

3. Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates

This section evaluates the extent to which the BPS programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2014, under Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates; and as a consequence, provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 3.1: *Extend the benchmarking activity to include admission criteria, assessment policies including the minimum percentage of the passing rate in BPS courses, benchmark course contents and their academic progression*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

According to the progress report submitted by the University, the programme team has conducted benchmarking with similar bachelor's programmes in 10 Arab universities. During the site visit, the Panel reviewed the benchmarking report of the BPS Programme and its courses which was conducted between November 2015 and May 2016. The Panel found that there were benchmarking activities in place with other universities which are different from those referred to in the progress report. According to the progress and benchmarking reports, the benchmarking activity focused on several points, outlined in the previous review report of the Education & Training Quality Authority, namely admission requirements, courses content, academic progression, passing mark in the courses, and the cumulative grade point average of graduates. Furthermore, interviewed faculty members confirmed that they took into account the different environments of other universities compared to the University of Applied Sciences in Bahrain. During the panel's interview with academic staff members, Programme Advisory Board and the External Reviewer, the Panel was assured that almost all academic staff participated in this benchmarking activity and shared the findings with all the concerned stakeholders. The Panel appreciates this effort and is in agreement with the recommendations of the benchmarking report regarding the conditions for admission, the cumulative grade point average, the change in the titles of certain courses, merging and deepening some courses, adding new courses, adjusting the assessment policies, and taking into account the labour market, which was used when reviewing the programme. However, the Panel notes, that university has not expanded the benchmarking range to include the programme outputs. It also noted that the programme team was selective when choosing the universities for benchmarking as they selected the ones that are aligned with the BPS programme presented by the College of Administrative Sciences specifically with respect to the passing mark in the courses and the way the cumulative grade point average is calculated. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should develop its benchmarking activities in several directions: firstly, extend

the benchmarking to include the intended learning outcomes of the programme; secondly, to focus on best practices and avoid universities that are not known for their programme quality or that are in exceptional difficult circumstances, with the focus on a smaller number of distinguished universities to be included in the benchmarking for the intended learning outcomes, so that the selection is based on universities that demonstrate the quality of best practices; finally, develop a clear plan to put recommendations into practice.

Recommendation 3.2: *Expand the internal moderation system to cover all forms of assessment tools to ensure that they are suitable for the content and level of the courses; and reconsider the period of 48 hours given to moderate examinations to give sufficient time to incorporate changes as required/needed*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

According to the progress report, the internal Examiner's form was revised to include eight elements used to assess the mid-term and end-of-semester examination questions. The Panel was provided with samples of the internal examiner's forms in the second semester of the academic year 2015-2016, and the first semester of the academic year 2016-2017, in addition to other samples of course files. The university's policy was also revised to state that examinations should be prepared three weeks after the commencement of the semester. During the interviews of the follow-up visit, the Panel sought clarification as to why there were no substantial negative observations in the reports of the internal examiners, and learnt that these reports were written after the academic staff member had adjusted all the comments after receiving the internal examiner's oral feedback. Hence, the Panel recommends that these comments should be documented by the college in order to show the impact of the internal examiner more clearly and to ensure that all major assessment are given to the internal examiner as the Panel has found no evidence.

Recommendation 3.3: *Expand the tasks of the external examiner to include reviewing all assessment forms including midterm and final examinations of all the programme courses*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the department has subjected the midterm and the final examinations of all courses to external examiners from the University of Jordan starting from the second semester of the academic year 2015-2016. However, the external examiner forms reviewed by the Panel within the evidence submitted before and during the follow-up visit, and within the courses files, included only very positive, semi-typical comments, and no modifications for the examinations were proposed, with the exception of one form that indicated insufficient questions but did

not propose modifications. Accordingly, the Panel is of the view that there is no clear role of the external examiner when reviewing examinations. Although this phenomenon may be personal and individual, as stated by the programme team during interview sessions with the Panel, it may also be due to the likelihood that some external examiners have not played the role they are required to do in full. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should assess the effectiveness of the functions of the external examiner, as to formally communicate with him and to determine the tasks required from him. The Panel also recommends that all major assessment tools should be subjected to the external examiner review, as the Panel has found no evidence of this.

Recommendation 3.4: *The department should directly select and appoint external examiners and approach other universities offering the same programme, whenever possible*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the department has selected external examiners from the University of Jordan starting from the second semester of the academic year 2015-2016. During their interview with the Panel, the programme team confirmed that the university intends to continue to deal with those external examiners and to change those who do not perform well. The Panel supports this initiative and recommends to make it effective, especially in the light of the weak role of most external examiners, as stated in the previous judgment. The Panel also recommends that the College should diversify the external examiners and to stop/end the obligation of selecting them from one university only, as emphasized in this recommendation for the need to approach other 'universities' that offer the same programme.

Recommendation 3.5: *Specify the role of each students in group work to ensure that these reports follow and implement the principles of conducting research*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the department has designed a form explaining the role of each student when working in groups, and some of the students interviewed by the Panel confirmed that they filled out this form when participating in a team work. The forms have been signed by the students and explained the distribution of tasks and responsibilities among them. However, other forms reviewed by the Panel in the course files provided during the follow-up visit, indicate to which extent the students are serious in dealing with the form as the data sometimes appears to be detailed but other times very concise. Despite the importance of the form, it is not sufficient to prove that every student in the group has done the work expected from him/her. During the panel's interview with faculty members, it became clear that no

mechanisms had been put in place to ensure that every student had done his/her responsibilities such as asking the student to submit the part which he/she wrote separately as a draft to be reviewed by his/her lecturer or conduct an oral presentation in class in order to make sure that he/she absorbed it. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should take further procedures to ensure that each student is committed to his/her allocated responsibility as per his/her role in the form.

Recommendation 3.6: *Address marks inflation and control the assessment procedures and methods to reflect normal variation of students' levels.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report indicated that the department's academic staff members are committed to implement the university's marking schemes, and verifying samples of the manuscripts by both the internal examiners and the examination committee. In addition to consulting the Department Council as it is responsible to authorize the results of the midterm and final examinations before announcing them. The Panel was provided with samples of the records of the Department's Council meetings in which the results were discussed, in addition to samples of student appeals of the academic years 2014-2016, the results of discussing them, and the decisions taken by the Department Council. These procedures have largely led to a moderate distribution of grades, as the percentage of graduates having excellent score has declined, while those having other scores, has increased. The progress report also refers to the university's reliance on internal and external moderation to ensure that the assessment procedures used are appropriate to the students' level, taking into account their different abilities and skills. This has been verified by the Panel through the course files that have been reviewed, and it has been found that there has been some progress in the assessment procedures and their diversity to align them to suit the nature of the courses and student levels. While the Panel encourages the efforts of the programme team, it recommends that the College should consistently follow up this area; to ensure that this culture is spread amongst its all faculty members and students.

Recommendation 3.7: *Reconsider the distribution of the allocated marks of each item on the project evaluation rubrics to ensure the academic standards of its evaluation*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

The progress report refers to the design of a new form for the assessment of applied research where the grades provided for the analytical skills of a student exceeding those provided in the previous form, and the grades are distributed among the different skills of the applied research, in order to link them to the required intended learning outcomes. The Panel was also provided with the applied research file course

and its specification handbook for the academic year 2013-2014, which includes useful guidance for the student, but it does not explain criteria for evaluating the research, especially as some of them are overlapping. It is not clear, for example, what is meant by the 'level of presentation', or the difference between the intellectual, cognitive and applied aspects of students' analytical skill, or the difference between excellent research, good, and weak according to each assessment criteria, unlike the integrated marking schemes of the university which indicate that there are a number of levels per criteria. The criteria for assessing the applied research do not contain any clear reference to the aspect of critical analysis within the research, although the development of critical analysis skills is considered as one of the intended learning outcomes for all courses. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should explain the criteria of assessment, define their levels clearly, and integrate some of them; so that the distinction among them does not become difficult or artificial. This also applies to the number of intended learning outcomes that are required in this course or other different ones. The Panel also recommends the College should reduce typographical errors in the research and to pay more attention to the selection of the research topics in order to encourage students to participate in constructive criticism.

Recommendation 3.8: *Expand the range of employers surveys specifically those who recruited programme graduates.*

Judgment: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report did not address this recommendation, but the Panel was informed of the procedures for the design of the surveys and statistical processing of data conducted between the department and the University Quality Assurance Centre. The Programme Advisory Board, in its interview with the Panel, appreciated the transparency of this exercise and confirmed its role in the discussion of the results of all programme-related surveys, including surveys of the internship programme and its placements. The Panel notes the efforts of the College and the department in addressing this recommendation, but during the interviews held during the follow-up visit, it was evident that the department selects the external parties whose views are surveyed and puts the questions of the surveys, which raises the problem of bias. The Panel recommends that the College should develop a clear plan for solving the problems provided by the organization where students conduct their internship including those problems provided in the surveys of employers which were distributed in the academic year 2015-2016. From interviews the Panel learned that the department analysed the results and reported that there is a degree of dissatisfaction with the leadership and communication skills of some students and graduates, as well as weakness in the Arabic and English languages, on which the Programme Advisory Board has issued recommendations about these areas.

4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance

This section evaluates the extent to which the BPS programme of ASU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2014, under Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance; and as a consequence, provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 4.1: *Separate the management of the department from the quality assurance management in the department*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the College has separated the department management from the Quality Assurance Centre, to ensure that the programme's leadership is run effectively in a smooth and integrated manner. In order to address this recommendation, a programme coordinator has been appointed to be responsible for quality assurance in the department, not as previously, when the Head of the Department was the same person who is responsible for quality assurance management in the department along with other responsibilities, which results in a fragmentation of his effort between managerial supervision, academic work and programme quality assurance. The Panel examined the job description of the programme coordinator and the Head of the Department and enquired about the overlap of their functions through the interviews made during the follow-up visit, the Panel was assured that there was no conflict of tasks, and that there was a co-ordination between them. The Panel is of the view that this procedure which has been taken, is appropriate to address the recommendation and to manage the department more effectively.

Recommendation 4.2: *Regularly scope the concerned stakeholders and develop a mechanism to make use of the results in a comprehensive manner*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report indicates that the University has reviewed and developed the surveys used to obtain feedback from various stakeholders. The Panel was informed, through its interviews with the programme team and the university's senior management, that the surveys used by the department to identify the views of students and faculty members regarding the programme and its courses are regularly set at the end of each semester. The Panel also learnt through the interviews that the last employer survey was distributed in the academic year 2015-2016, and the

department has analyzed its results and produced a report on its results. There was also a previous employer survey in 2014. The Panel recommends that the College should continue to receive regular feedback from the employers. The Panel was also informed that a survey for graduates had also been constructed, however the department and the Measurement and Evaluation Unit were looking into the development of a mechanism to facilitate the access to the views of graduates, because of the lack of response towards such a type of surveys. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should regularly and continuously explore the views of the stakeholders and analyze these surveys in order to make comprehensive use of them in developing the programme.

Recommendation 4.3: *Establish a link between the staff training programmes and the content of the job performance evaluation form for the faculty members.*

Judgment: *Partially Addressed*

The department follows the university's policy with respect to evaluating the performance of the faculty members, identifying their academic needs and their professional development, where two new questions in the academic staff self-assessment form were added to inquire about their academic and professional needs and their commitment to attend training workshops. The Head of the Department sometimes also directs a member of the academic staff to participate in a specific training workshop either verbally or through the academic staff performance evaluation form. The Panel is of the view that this step should be undertaken in a more systematic manner. Through interviews with senior management, faculty members and administrative staff during the follow-up visit, the Panel learnt that senior management is keen to meet their needs and provide training workshops both on and off campus or even in neighbouring countries. The Panel encourages academic staff members to engage in attending the training workshops which they need. Furthermore, the Panel was informed that some of the academic staff members asked the college to offer courses in English language and IT, and the college has responded to their request, and some of them have participated in these courses, and others will take part at the beginning of the next semester. Through interviews with the programme team, the Panel was informed that the Directorate of Training was developing a schedule to meet the needs of academic staff members to provide them with courses throughout the year. The Panel appreciates the efforts of the College in linking professional development needs with the results of the evaluation, and also recommends to examine the effectiveness of the recently implemented mechanism.

5. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own progress report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the follow-up visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/BQA Follow-up Visits of Academic Programme Reviews Procedure:

The Bachelor of Political Science programme offered by Applied Science University has made Adequate Progress and as a result, the programme will not be subjected to another follow-up visit.

Appendix 1: Judgement per recommendation.

Judgement	Standard
Fully Addressed	The institution has demonstrated marked progress in addressing the recommendation. The actions taken by the programme team have led to significant improvements in the identified aspect and, as a consequence, in meeting the Indicator's requirements.
Partially Addressed	The institution has taken positive actions to address the recommendation. There is evidence that these actions have produced improvements and that these improvements are sustainable. The actions taken are having a positive, yet limited impact on the ability of the programme to meet the Indicator's requirements.
Not Addressed	The institution has not taken appropriate actions to address the recommendation and/or actions taken have little or no impact on the quality of the programme delivery and the academic standards. Weaknesses persist in relation to this recommendation.

Appendix 2: Overall Judgement.

Overall Judgement	Standard
Good progress	The institution has fully addressed the majority of the recommendations contained in the review report, and/or previous follow-up report, these include recommendations that have most impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. The remaining recommendations are partially addressed. No further follow-up visit is required.
Adequate progress	The institution has at least partially addressed most of the recommendations contained in the review report and/or previous follow-up report, including those that have major impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. There is a number of recommendations that have been fully addressed and there is evidence that the institution can maintain the progress achieved. No further follow-up visit is required.
Inadequate progress	The institution has made little or no progress in addressing a significant number of the recommendations contained in the review report and/or previous follow-up report, especially those that have main impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. For first follow-up visits, a second follow-up visit is required,