



هيئة ضمان جودة التعليم و التدريب
Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training

Higher Education Review Unit

Programme Follow-Up Review Report

Bachelor of Law
Applied Science University
Kingdom of Bahrain

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Table of Contents

1. The Programme Follow-up Review Overview.....	1
2. The Institutional and Programme Context of the Review	1
3. Indicator 1: Curriculum Follow-Up Review	4
4. Indicator 2: Efficiency Follow-Up Review.....	7
5. Indicator 3: Follow up Review of Academic standards of the graduates.....	9
6. Indicator 4: Follow-Up Review of Effectiveness of quality management and assurance	11
7. Overall Conclusions.....	13

1. The Programme Follow-up Review Overview

The site follow-up visit by the Higher Education Review Unit (HERU) Programme Review is part of a cycle of continuing quality assurance, review, reporting and improvement by the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET) in The Kingdom of Bahrain.

This follow-up review process applies to all programmes that have been reviewed in 'Cycle -1' of the programme reviews undertaken by HERU, and that received a 'limited confidence'. Whilst those that received a 'no confidence' judgement are subject to a full new review.

The subsequent sections of this report have been compiled as part of Phase 2 of the HERU/QAAET's programme follow-up cycle highlighted in the HERU Programme Review Handbook, and associated with the on-going process of Institutional and academic quality and enhancement review of Higher Education Institutions located in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

1.1. The aims of the follow-up review are to:

- (i) Assess the progress made in quality enhancement and improvement (in accordance with the four QAAET indicators) of The Applied Science University's, Bachelor of Law (BL) since the original programme was assessed in October 2010 and its Report published in February 2011.
- (ii) Provide further information and support for the continuous improvement of academic standards and quality enhancement of higher education provision, specifically within the BL degree at the Applied Science University (ASU), and for higher education provision within the Kingdom of Bahrain, as a whole.

2. The Institutional and Programme Context of the Review

The original programme review of the Bachelor of Law Programme, at the Applied Science University, (ASU) in the Kingdom of Bahrain was conducted by the Higher Education Review Unit (HERU) of the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET) in October 2010 and its report published in February 2011.

The overall judgement, in accordance with the HERU/QAAET Programme Review Handbook of the original Review Panel was that of '**limited confidence**' in the Bachelor of Law Programme. Consequently the follow-up review process incorporated the review of the evidence presented by ASU to HERU/QAAET, the Improvement Plan, the second Self-

Evaluation Report SER(2) and during the follow-up site visit and other key documents relevant to the review.

The original External Review Panel's judgement on the ASU's Bachelor of Law Programme for each indicator was as follows:

Indicator 1: Curriculum; '**did not satisfy**' the indicator

Indicator 2: Efficiency of the programme; '**satisfied**' the indicator

Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the graduates; '**satisfied**' the indicator

Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance '**satisfied**' the indicator.

As a result of the above, most of the time during follow-up visit, was focused on re-examining the programme and the quality assurance and enhancement processes associated with the Indicator that did not satisfy the minimum HERU/QAAET standards at the time of the original site visit in 26-28 October 2010, (*i.e. Indicator 1: Curriculum*) and determining the extent to which the original Review Panel recommendations for this indicator had been demonstrably reflected in the revised Improvement Plan and were adequately implemented in the Bachelor of Law (BL) at the time of the follow-up site visit.

It should be noted, however, that the indicators for Efficiency of the Programme, Academic Standards of Graduates, and Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance were also considered in relation to the recommendations made by the original Review Panel in 2010 during the site visit of February 2012 with regard to the recommendations given by the original review Panel in February 2011.

The aim of the following sections of this follow-up Review Report is to evaluate the progress made in ASU's BL Programme since its original review, and to determine the extent to which the Programme's Improvement Plan has been applied in a manner which satisfactorily demonstrates that the recommendations of the original review report have been adequately implemented.

2.1. The External Reviewer's Overarching Comments on the Progress Demonstrated for University of Applied Science's Bachelor in law Programme

Sections 3-6 of this report discusses the extent to which the ASU's BL Programme Team has adequately addressed the Review Panel recommendations stipulated in the Programme Review of October 2010 and published in the review report in February 2011.

This evaluation is based on the evidence contained in the SER submitted in December 2011, the relevant appendices of the report, the original QAAET Programme Review report, the Programme Improvement Plan, the institutional review report and a considerable amount of

supplementary material submitted to the Panel up to 6:00 pm on Wednesday 22 February 2012.

The considerable effort the institution and the programme team put into providing the requested Supplementary Evidence requested by the Panel since the original submission of the Improvement Plan to QAAET till the end of the review is appreciated.

3. Indicator 1: Curriculum Follow-Up Review

This section evaluates the extent to which the Bachelor of Law programme, University of Applied Science, has complied with the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of February 2011, in terms of curriculum, the teaching and the assessment of students' achievements; and as a consequence contributes to the Panel's decision regarding the level of implementation of recommendations for this Indicator and whether the programme has met or exceeded the implementation thresholds as outlined in "Appendix 1: The Five Implementation Threshold for Delineation of Recommendation Implementation Progress" of this report.

3.1 In coming to its conclusion regarding curriculum the Panel notes with appreciation that

- The College's vision and mission were revised taking into consideration that the College' objectives are aligned with its mission.
- According to the study plan of the BL Programme 2011, the number of credit hours required for graduation became 132 credit hours (with an addition of three credit hours). These are divided into university requirements, college requirements, and compulsory and elective specialisation requirements.
- The number of credit hours allocated for university requirements was decreased to 18 credit hours instead of 21 credit hours. College requirements are allocated 24 credit hours, whereas specialization requirements are allocated 90 credit hours, 78 credit hours of which are compulsory and 12 credit hours elective.
- Some elective courses were added to the programme to be taught in English. These are: Communication and Information Technology Law (Eng 601121) Competition and Monopoly Law (Eng 602114).
- It was decided to deliver some compulsory and elective courses in English; previously they were taught in Arabic. These are: Principles of Commercial law (Eng 601121– compulsory), International Public Law (Eng 602152 –compulsory), International Trade Law (Eng 601329-elective), and International Organizations (Eng 602452- elective).
- This resulted in the increase of elective course to 19, and consequently increased the students' opportunity to choose the courses they like. A plan was developed considering the offering of all elective courses during the academic year.
- A number of core courses were added to the programme as they are necessary to develop the legal mentality of students and to assist them acquire practical skills. These include: Principles of Economics (202201), as a college compulsory course, and

Enforcement of judgements. Two more compulsory courses were added as specialization requirements in order to support the programme with practical aspects; these are: Applications in Private Law, and Applications in Public Law (L 602442).

- A course in Methods of Scientific and Legal Research (L 107100) was added as a college compulsory course. In addition, three credit hours were allocated for the internship course (L602443-Compulsory) instead of the two credit hours allocated before.
- Titles and content of some course were reviewed. As a result, Enterprise and Bankruptcy course – which comprised two different subjects – split into two separate courses with three credit hours for each; these are: Trading Companies course (L 601323), which will be taught as a compulsory course, and Bankruptcy (L602119), which will be taught as an elective course. The content of ‘*in rem*’ rights course was modified by addition ‘*In rem*’ extended rights, the fact that necessitates changing the course title as ‘*In rem*’ rights (indigenous and *in rem*)(L601416).
- The College developed a mechanism to measure the ILOs of the Programme as whole and all courses as well, an evaluation form was developed to measure course ILOs that is to be completed by the faculty member teaching that course.
- Assessment processes are subject to internal as well as external reviews in order to ensure that the questions cover the syllabus of the course and its ILOs. The Panel noted that questions are sent to an external reviewer for evaluation before the examination date; however, there were no clear regulations followed by the College to avoid the risk of the leak of questions.
- The Panel examined some files of the new courses that were added to the Programme. On examining the course file on Competition and Monopoly Law (Eng 602114), the Panel found that the course description does not comply with international standards for course content; the description does not include: the agreements that restrict competition whether as horizontal or vertical restrains, abuse of dominant position, which entails the identification of relevant markets, and merging and acquisition, although these three subjects constitute key pillars that cannot be overlooked in the course content. It was also noted that discussing the topic of ‘dumping’ in detail within the content course which is different from Completion Law, is not compatible with the course title.
- The Moot Court was activated to include civil and commercial cases rather than being restricted to criminal cases.

- A number of training courses were organised to build the capacity of faculty staff in using modern methods of teaching, English language, and quality.

3.2 The Panel suggests that the College of Law at the ASU address the following matters of particular importance in its search for continuous improvement of the BL programme:

- consider the futility of dividing course into college and specialization course as the College comprises one programme that includes one specialization
- develop necessary regulations to avoid the risk of examination leaks
- consider re-describing the new courses in accordance with international standards, taking into account the external review of these courses by reviewers engaged in teaching these courses at accredited Arab and foreign universities.

3.3 Conclusion

On balance, the Panel finds that evidence exists that the February 2011 Review Panel's recommendations for Curriculum are being addressed *via* relevant actions and that an improvement cycle is beginning to emerge for Indicator 1: Curriculum, and as a result the programme now satisfies the HERU/QAAET requirements for this Indicator.

4. Indicator 2: Efficiency Follow-Up Review

This section evaluates the extent to which the Bachelor of Law Programme, University of Applied Science, has complied with the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of February 2011, in terms of efficiency related to the use of available resources, the admitted students and the ratio of admitted students to successful graduates; and as a consequence contributes to the Panel's decision regarding the level of implementation of recommendations for this Indicator and whether the programme has met or exceeded the implementation thresholds as outlined in 'Appendix 1: The Five Implementation Threshold for Delineation of Recommendation Implementation Progress' of this report.

4.1 In coming to its conclusion regarding the efficiency of the programme the Panel noted with appreciation that

- The admission policy was reviewed and it was decided to increase the minimum high school GPA required for admission to be 60%. For those whose GPA is less than the minimum, they have to pass an interview admission test. However, the criteria against which students capabilities are measured were not clear to the Panel.
- The number of faculty members became 17 (an increase of four members since the site visit of the Review Panel in October 2010). Four faculty members are Professors, one Associate Professor, and 12 members are Assistant Professors, all distributed in various fields of specialisation. This increase in the number of faculty members contributed to a decrease their teaching load.
- Attention was paid to fill the vacancies in some specialisations; a number of faculty members were employed with qualifications in International Public Law, International Private Law, General Finance, and Tax Legislation. It was also considered that some of the newly appointed staff members are capable to teach in English.
- Shortage of faculty members is also replenished by using part-time staff members, which allows courses to be taught by faculty members who are appropriately qualified.
- Faculty members have work and research papers published in many local and Arabic periodicals and journals. There is a limited number of research papers by a Professor of Commercial Law, which are published in one of the international journals, namely *Arab Law Quarterly*.
- References and periodicals in the College's library are updated as the library is provided with new references and publications.
- The Panel noted that the number of foreign legal publications and periodicals in the library was extremely small. The reason could be the limited area allocated for the library. However, the College tried to address this issue by subscribing to an e-

database specialised in Law, i.e. Legal Collection. The College also subscribed to Gale database, which includes a large number of foreign resources and periodicals.

4.2 The Panel suggests that the College of Law at the ASU should address the following matters of particular importance in its search for continuous improvement of the BL programme:

- develop appropriate criteria for student admission based on study conducted for this purpose in order to avoid admitting unqualified students
- fill in the vacant positions for faculty members.
- increase the number of legal references and periodicals available in the library, whilst considering the expansion of its allocated area.

4.3 Conclusion

On balance, the Panel finds that evidence exists that the February 2011 Review Panel's recommendations for Efficiency of the Programme are being addressed via relevant actions and that an improvement cycle is beginning to emerge for Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme.

5. Indicator 3: Follow up Review of Academic standards of the graduates

This section evaluates the extent to which the Bachelor of Law Programme, University of Applied Science, has complied with the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of February 2011, relating to meeting acceptable academic standards in comparison with equivalent programmes in Bahrain and worldwide; and as a consequence contributes to the Panel's decision regarding the level of implementation of recommendations for this Indicator and whether the programme has met or exceeded the implementation thresholds as outlined in 'Appendix 1: The Five Implementation Threshold for Delineation of Recommendation Implementation Progress' of this report.

5.1. In coming to its conclusion regarding academic standards of the graduates the Panel notes with appreciation that:

- In view of the non-existence of national academic standards in the field of Legal Sciences in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the College strives to establish academic standards for graduates. The College has taken many steps in this direction by benchmarking its programme in terms of the content of offered courses and academic standards with a number of other Arab Universities.
- There is an effective system for the evaluation of examination processes. The system takes into account that the external examiner has to be specialised in the legal sub-field of the courses which he evaluates their examinations. However, there are no criteria for the selection of external examiners and their relation with the University. Instead, they are selected on case-by-case basis.
- There are some co-operation agreements between the University and some Egyptian and Jordanian universities; however, the Panel did not find evidence of programmes accreditation in these universities. In addition, these agreements are restricted to limited activities and not activated adequately.
- A mechanism was developed to measure ILOs at the course level, which includes conducting external and internal reviews of examination questions. A form of measurement was developed to measure the ILOs of each course to be completed by the faculty member engaged in teaching the course.

5.2. The Panel suggests that College of Law at the ASU address the following matters of particular importance in its search for continuous improvement of the BL programme

- expand the scope of cooperation with peer Arab and foreign universities while taking into account whether or not their programmes are accredited.
- implement a scientific approach for developing academic standards for the graduates taking into account that the peer Colleges of Law used as benchmarking reference points are accredited and offer accredited programmes.

5.3. Conclusion

On balance, the Panel finds that evidence exists that the February 2011 Review Panel's recommendations for Academic Standards of Graduates are being addressed via relevant actions and that an improvement cycle is beginning to emerge for Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates.

6. Indicator 4: Follow-Up Review of Effectiveness of quality management and assurance

This section evaluates the extent to which the Bachelor of Law Programme, University of Applied Science, has complied with the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of February 2011, relating to the arrangements in place for managing the programme, including quality assurance, and as a consequence contributes to the Panel's decision regarding the level of implementation of recommendations for this Indicator and whether the programme has met or exceeded the implementation thresholds as outlined in 'Appendix 1: The Five Implementation Threshold for Delineation of Recommendation Implementation Progress' of this report

6.1. In coming to its conclusion regarding the effectiveness of the management of the programme, the Panel notes with appreciation that

- The College conducts periodical internal and external reviews for its Programme. It also prepares the annual self-evaluation report and surveys the stakeholders' views and employers in order to make use of the feedback for the improvement of the programme.
- A strategic plan was developed at the university level and work is in progress to develop a similar plan at the college level in accordance with the university's strategic plan.
- A number of workshops were organised for the faculty to develop their capabilities. The workshops focus on learning a foreign language, the use of modern technology in teaching, and quality systems.
- The Panel did not find evidence of a system for faculty staff to travel abroad as visiting staff members to benefit from the expertise of similar Arab and foreign universities in their own fields of specialisation.

6.2. The Panel suggests that the College of Law at ASU address the following matters of particular importance in its search for continuous improvement of the BL Programme. Specifically, that it

- develop a strategic plan for the College in accordance with the University' strategic plan
- develop more effective programmes for faculty staff development in their own field of specialisation, including the visit to accredited Arab or foreign universities.

6.3. Conclusion

On balance, the Panel finds that evidence exists that the February 2011 Review Panel's recommendations for Effectiveness of the Quality Assurance are being addressed via relevant actions and that an improvement cycle is beginning to emerge for Indicator 4: Effectiveness of the Quality Assurance.

7. Overall Conclusions

The outcome of the follow-up review process by HERU/QAAET for the BL programme offered by the College of Law at ASU is as follows:

That the BL programme at the University of Applied Science in the Kingdom of Bahrain has successfully addressed the recommendations stated in the February 2011 review report and these are subject to treatment by taking appropriate actions, and a cycle of improvement is beginning to emerge. Hence, the Panel now has confidence in the programme.

Appendix 1: The Five Implementation Thresholds for Delineation Panel of Recommendation Implementation Progress

- I. Extensive good practice is evidenced as a result of the comprehensive implementation of the Panel's recommendations for the indicator; or**
- II. That the programme team have adequately addressed and have fully implemented the February 2011 Review Panel's recommendations for the indicator; or**
- III. That the February 2011 Review Panel's recommendations for this indicator are currently being addressed via relevant actions (beyond the establishment of a new policy or committee) and that an improvement cycle is beginning to emerge, (but has not yet fully emerged) for the indicator; or**
- IV. That documented evidence exists that the February 2011 Review Panel's recommendations for the indicator have been addressed in the improvement plan, and are anticipated [by the programme team] to be implemented at some later date; or**
- V. That the February 2011 Review Panel's recommendations for the indicator have not been adequately addressed in the action plan nor in the interventions by Faculty of the institution.**