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

Higher Education Review Unit

Institutional Follow-Up Review Report

Kingdom University

Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 31 January 2012

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1. Overview of the Institutional Follow-up Process

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

At least one year after publication of its Institutional Review Report the institution submits to HERU a report which clearly shows how the institution has maintained and/or enhanced the commendations of the review report and specifies how the institution has met its affirmations and recommendations. The institution substantiates its claims with supporting documents, in the form of Appendixes. Details of how the institution is monitoring and evaluating the improvement activities should also be provided.

This follow-up review process applies to all higher education institutions that have had institutional reviews undertaken by HERU.

The Kingdom University (KU) submitted an Improvement Plan to HERU in the required time set out in the Handbook for Institutional Reviews. In this Plan, actions were identified to tackle the 36 Recommendations contained in the Institutional Review Report. In December 2011 KU submitted its One Year Report, which contained a narrative and documentary evidence about the progress the institution has made thus far in implementing quality improvements.

The Panel responsible for the Follow-up comprised the Executive Director of HERU and four Senior Directors, one of whom was the Director responsible for co-ordinating this site visit. The evidence base included: the Institutional Improvement Plan and the appendices submitted in April 2011 and the Institutional Review Report. The Institution also submitted supporting evidence on 24 January 2012. Interviews were also held during the site visit with a range of senior managers, academics, administrative staff, students, employers and alumni. These interviews allow the Panel to triangulate the evidence.

The Follow-up visit took place on 31 of January 2012, the purpose of which is (i) to assess the progress made in quality enhancement and improvement of the Kingdom University (KU) since the institutional review in April 2010, for which the review report was published in October 2010; and (ii) develop a report which outlines the progress made about the extent to which the Recommendations have been addressed.

This Institutional Follow-up Review Report sets out the findings with regard to the Recommendations contained in the published Review Report. For ease of reading the Recommendations made in the 2010 published Review Report are clustered together (in italics) at the beginning of each sub-section where a different theme is considered. The text that follows reflects the findings of the Panel during its visit in January 2012.

2.   Brief Overview of Kingdom University

Kingdom University was founded in May 2001. It was licensed by the Higher Education Council on 13 May, 2001 and started offering its first academic programmes in September 2004. The campus is located in the city of Manama, and extends over an area of 2,200 square meters. The University is organised into five Colleges; these are: College of Art, College of Business Sciences and Finance, College of Computing and Information Technology, College of Engineering and College of Law. At the time of the site visit, KU had 690 students and 32 academic staff members.

3.   Findings of the Follow-up Review by Theme

In the following sub-sections, the progress made in addressing the Recommendations under each theme is considered. The recommendations from the Institutional Review Report are clustered together in italics.

3.1 Mission, Planning and Governance

3.1.1   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University undertake a thorough review and revision of its Vision and Mission through an institution-wide consultation process which has a view to articulating a realistic role compatible with the University's current capabilities, and to establish an appropriate timeframe for their review.*

3.1.2   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University immediately cease to plagiarise documents and to develop transparent, ethical and inclusive processes for the establishment of its core documents, bringing in external sources as necessary but with appropriate attribution.*

3.1.3   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University undertake a thorough, consultative and transparent process of Strategic Planning to develop a comprehensive institutional Strategic Plan with appropriate Key Performance Indicators, and annual targets to enable the University to achieve the strategic objectives which will flow from the revised institutional Mission.*

3.1.4   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University adopt a transparent and devolved budget that includes input from senior faculty members and which has clear budgetary allocations and financial delegations aligned to the new Strategic Plan.*

3.1.5   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University develop a risk register and risk management strategy for consideration by the Board of Trustees and ensure these are reviewed on an annual basis.*

3.1.6   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University develop a revised organisational management structure with clear reporting lines and appropriate position descriptions for all staff with clear specification of roles and responsibilities.*

3.1.7   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University establish an effective and independent Board of Trustees, which meets regularly to carry out its governance responsibilities in accordance with good governance practice.*

3.1.8   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University urgently develop a comprehensive suite of policies with a central register, version control and a clear review schedule. These policies should be freely available to staff and students in hard copy and/or on the institutional website. Monitoring mechanisms need to be established to ensure that the policies are implemented consistently across the institution.*

3.1.9   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University develop supporting operational plans which flow from the University's Mission and Strategic Plan, and which contain appropriate Key Performance Indicators, and annual targets to enable measurement of performance.*

3.1.10   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University develop an integrated policy and procedures for academic misconduct, which include clear criteria for the application of penalties and clear processes for appeals.*

KU has reviewed and revised its vision and mission statements. These were developed by a consultant in conjunction with a strategic planning committee established for this purpose. The statements were also informed by a survey which was sent to faculty members, students, administrative staff and other stakeholders as well as a series of discussions. The vision and mission were approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2011 and are published on the KU website.

The vision and mission refer to the two core functions of teaching and learning and research with the latter referring also to the other core function of a higher education institution – community engagement. Whilst the vision is aspirational as visions should be, it sets a realistic long-term aim for the institution.

The mission refers to the University offering 'advanced educational services'. The Panel found from a range of interviews with members of management that there is no shared understanding about what this term means. In one session the Panel was told it referred to offering higher education provision. In another it was told that it refers to meeting labour market needs. A further interpretation offered was that as a private university it is a service provider. With regard to this last point the Panel understands that as a private university KU does not receive government funding and so is solely reliant on student fees for its revenue. It, nevertheless, encourages the institution to give careful consideration to the possible unwelcome consequences if the institution adopts a philosophy as providing

education services which inextricably leads to the commodification of education with the student as a consumer. This is quite different to being a student-centred university.

As noted above, there is reference to research in both the vision and mission statements. However, in the vision research is described as 'scientific' and in the mission, 'creative'. In interviews with a range of staff the Panel was told various reasons for this seeming disjuncture; one being that 'scientific research' is the internationally recognised term; another that the term 'creative research' was developed to meet the specific needs of KU. In the past academics had been undertaking research and publishing papers purely to meet promotion criteria. Now their research papers have to be relevant to local needs. In essence this is applied research which makes a contribution to knowledge required for industry related to the institution's programmes. In another session the Panel was told that 'all research is creative'. KU needs to ensure that there is a shared understanding of what research means for the institution amongst all faculty members.

The institution's understanding of community engagement will be considered in section 3.9 of this Report.

During the months December 2010 to March 2011, KU undertook a strategic planning process which was led by a consultant. This was done through an extensive survey of stakeholders as well as a series of discussions. The consultant also conducted workshops to build the capacity of the newly formed strategic planning committee to take the lead in developing and implementing the strategic plan. KU has now developed a comprehensive strategic plan for the years 2011-2015. This was approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2011. The Plan has clear goals, objectives, key performance indicators and timeframes. No budgetary allocation has been set out for the implementation of the plan nor is there any allocated responsibility for each of the objectives. Failure to attend to this matter constitutes a risk to the successful implementation of the plan.

Operational plans which flow from the university's strategic plan have been developed by each college or department. These have key performance indicators and annual targets. All plans are discussed in the deans and directors meetings. The college plans have been approved by the College Council and then the University Council.

KU has now adopted a decentralised budgeting process. Each college and administrative department prepares its budget in consultation with the Director of Finance. This is a three year budget, which is reviewed annually. A consolidated budget is then prepared by the Director of Finance after which it is considered at the Dean's Council and then by the President. Finally, it is submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval.

A management consultancy was contracted in November 2011 to conduct an internal audit; analyse risks; and prepare a risk management strategy including a risk register. It is expected that this work will be completed by March 2012. The Panel would like to remind

the institution that a mechanism for annual review also needs to be developed and implemented.

KU has revised its organisational management structure, which shows clear reporting lines and specifications of roles and responsibilities for all staff. This has not yet been implemented. KU still has a number of vacancies which are in part due to waiting for a response from the Higher Education Council in approving academic appointments.

The University now has an independent Board of Trustees approved by the Higher Education Council. In the Board of Trustees Handbook there are clearly stated rules, regulations and key responsibilities for members. However, this handbook has still to be approved. The Board meets regularly; three times during the last year although only two meetings are mandated by the proposed regulations. Provision is made in the handbook for holding *ad hoc* meetings.

There is now a central register which contains KU's policies and procedures. These are being developed by external consultants and are at various stages of development. There is also a review schedule. The Panel was concerned to hear in interviews with senior management that this activity was outsourced as the University does not have the internal capacity to develop its own policies and procedures. Of the policies that have been developed workshops have been held to familiarise staff with their contents. These are awaiting Board of Trustees approval.

A set of policies and procedures with regard to academic misconduct has been developed and implemented. With regard to student misconduct KU is using the University of Bahrain's regulations as instructed by the Higher Education Council. These regulations have been incorporated into the KU Student Handbook.

The institution has been using free software to detect plagiarism since September 2011. It has also signed a purchase agreement for a plagiarism detection software; four licenses have been purchased. A workshop to raise awareness of plagiarism and the tools to detect it was held by the IT Department for all staff members. An anti-plagiarism policy has been developed by the Research and Studies Center but has yet to be approved.

Despite using such software for the past four months, KU still submitted a plagiarised policy as part of its supporting evidence; five pages in all. The Panel is disappointed that this practice is still continuing at the University. (See Section 3.2.)

3.2   Academic Standards

3.2.1   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University develop appropriate formal processes for the use of external reference points in the development of its academic programmes.*

3.2.2 *HERU recommends that Kingdom University support faculty members through staff development activities in their understanding of intended learning outcomes and how to develop them in programme design and delivery .*

3.2.3 *HERU recommends that Kingdom University review the curriculum design and duration of its English language orientation semester, in line with higher education sector good practice, in order to prepare properly and support students for their programme of studies.*

3.2.4 *HERU recommends that Kingdom University take steps to develop and implement a University-wide Assessment Policy. In particular, the University should develop and implement policies and guidelines including the setting of coursework assignments and examinations, and for the moderation of students' performance. These policies and guidelines should be informed by reference to existing external good practice in the area of assessment.*

KU reviewed most of its programmes in the last two years. The Curriculum Review Committees (CRCs) established on both university and college levels are responsible for the review of the programme offerings. The name and structure of the committees have been expanded recently to include the monitoring of the programmes. The new committees are called 'The Curriculum Review and Monitoring Committees' (CRMCs). The minutes of CRMCs were provided for different colleges. It is left to the individual committee to set its remit and objectives. Scrutinising the evidence shows that objectives differ from one college to another. Minutes of meetings of CRCs and CRMCs indicate that changes to the curriculum were done mainly as a result of suggestions received from faculty members and/or advisory boards. The Panel did not see clear evidence indicating changes are suggested as a result of benchmarking activities with external reference points.

The Panel saw evidence of informal benchmarking activities where the curricula of KU programme offerings were compared to similar programmes in other higher education institutions. However, documents do not clearly state what is benchmarked, why and how benchmarking activities are conducted and how the results are used. The Panel was informed that, in the absence of a university-wide benchmarking policy, colleges are expected to develop their benchmarking policy. However, the submitted benchmarking policy of the College of Business is plagiarised from another international university. This may explain why the benchmarking activities conducted by the College are not aligned with the policy. The Panel urges the University to ensure the authenticity of all its documents. (See section 3.1 of this Report.) Moreover, the Panel suggests that, as a matter of urgency, a university-wide benchmarking policy be developed that states clearly how it will benchmark the curriculum structure, syllabus, intended learning outcomes, and assessment of its programmes with other similar local, regional and international programmes.

The University sought the opinion of external academics on its programmes offerings, this was implemented through MoUs signed with different institutions or by contacting distinguished academics to evaluate its offerings. KU also established advisory boards for its

colleges, consisting of external and internal members. As stated earlier, the Panel saw evidence of input from these external bodies to the review of programmes offered by KU. However, the University needs to formalise further a programme review policy and procedures that state clearly the type and cycle of programme reviews conducted, whether internal or external reviews, and the input and output of these reviews. The University also needs to document formally the process for the approval of the changes in the reviewed programmes.

KU revised its course intended learning outcomes (ILOs). Each semester ILOs are reviewed by the assigned faculty member and then changes are discussed in the department meetings and approved by the College Council. These discussions are supposed to expand the faculty members' understanding of the use of ILOs in programme and course delivery. The developed ILOs are also reviewed by the Quality Assurance Committee, using a predefined matrix, to assure their appropriateness. The Panel examined a sample of course files and noted that ILOs are clearly stated in the course descriptions and are mapped to the course curriculum delivery which are detailed on a weekly basis. While the weekly course distribution states the ILOs covered and the assessment methods used, most assessments and examination questions do not clearly state the specific ILO it intends to measure for each individual work. The Panel was informed that it is the head of department's responsibility to ensure that all course ILOs are measured through different course assessments. The Panel is of the view that KU needs to develop a more robust mechanism to assure that the intended course outcomes are clearly measured by the different assessment methods used in an individual course delivery.

The Panel saw evidence of in-house workshops attended by faculty members for training on how to develop and use ILOs. The course files are also said to be used as reference point for new faculty members. While the Panel notes these activities, it suggests that the University further develop its capacity-building activities in order to expand its faculty members' exposure and understanding of the use of ILOs on both course and programme level.

Setting and grading the English Competency Placement Test (ECPT) has been the responsibility of the English Department in the College of Arts. However, the University recently hired a training institution specialised in English Language to develop an ECPT to be used as its admission test. The Panel was also informed that the orientation programme has been revised but the new programme and new ECPT have not been implemented yet as no new students have been admitted to the University since 2010-2011 academic year.

Different colleges have developed their own assessment policy. A university-wide assessment policy is being developed by the Curriculum Review and Monitoring Committee and is in a draft stage. During the site visit, the Panel was informed that in developing the university-wide policy, college policies were taken into consideration such that an overarching assessment policy is developed while allowing for individual college needs.

KU does not have a formal policy on the use of external examiners or an internal moderation system to ensure the consistency and validity of its course work assessment. However, some external moderation activities are practised within the University where every year, for around 20% of the courses offered, final examination papers with three answer sheet samples (worst, middle, best) are sent to external examiners for comments. No formal policy governs the roles and responsibilities of those external examiners. This needs to be developed.

During the site visit, the Panel was informed that part-time and new faculty members are mentored by the head of department to ensure that they set the assessment correctly and that their assessment is linked to the course ILOs. Other full-time faculty members are expected to set an assessment paper that measure the ILOs of their course. The Panel urges the University to revise its draft university-wide assessment policy to ensure that it includes a system for internal and external moderation of the students' assessment and performance.

3.3   Quality Assurance and Enhancement

3.3.1   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University formulate terms of reference for the Quality Assurance Committee, including its membership to ensure that all stakeholders are adequately represented so that the Committee can function effectively within a transparent quality assurance framework.*

3.3.2   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University establish an overarching quality framework of appropriate policies and procedures and ensure their implementation and monitoring across all Colleges.*

The University formed its first Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) in 2007, and in November 2011 the President re-established the committee with different members, chaired by the Vice President with members consisting of the director of the Quality Assurance Centre, faculty members, administrative staff and the President of the Student Council. However, the University has not yet developed specific terms of reference, reporting mechanism, and decision-making mechanisms for the committee.

During the site visit the Panel examined a copy of the Quality Assurance Handbook which contains procedures for approval, and monitoring and reviewing of the university's programmes. However, it lacks details about the quality assurance policies and procedures, The Panel found from different interviews that faculty members are not aware of the contents of the Quality Assurance Handbook. The University needs to develop a formal mechanism to disseminate its policies and procedures and to monitor their implementation and effectiveness.

3.4 Quality of Teaching and Learning

3.4.1 *HERU recommends that Kingdom University develop and implement a policy and procedure for the design and approval of new programmes.*

3.4.2 *HERU recommends that Kingdom University in order to secure and maintain the academic standards of its awards, take steps to develop and implement appropriate policies, methodologies and procedures for the monitoring and review of programmes and courses.*

Whilst there is a well-known practice for the different approval stages needed for the development of new programmes and to a lesser extent for the review of existing programmes, the University does not have documented formal policies and procedures. KU drafted a policy on 15 December 2011 that stipulates the steps needed to be taken to review an existing programme and develop new ones. At the time of the site visit, the policy was still in draft stage. The Panel urges KU to expedite the formalisation of its policies and processes.

The newly developed programme review policy and procedure addresses only the major programme reviews which are conducted every two years. However, the document does not address minor programme and course reviews conducted at the end of each semester on the departmental level. For example, it does not explain what the processes are for changing course content or text books assigned to an individual course as a result of these minor reviews. As for the major programme reviews, the policy outlines the steps to be undertaken when reviewing a programme. However, it does not clearly state the exact input used (beside surveys) by the department and college for the review of their programmes. For example, no external reference point is identified at these stages. The feedback from the external examiners serves at the University Council after the programme is reviewed by the Curriculum Review and Development Committee and submitted to the College Council for approval. Benchmarking is also not identified as an input used for these reviews, though it is identified as stated earlier as an activity undertaken by the different programmes. (See section 3.2 of this Report.) The same remarks apply to the development and approval of new programmes. The Panel suggests that KU revise its draft policy and expand it so that it addresses all these matters.

3.5 Student Support

3.5.1 *HERU recommends that Kingdom University develop and implement policies and mechanisms to identify and support at-risk students and ensure that these are implemented consistently across all Colleges.*

3.5.2   HERU recommends that Kingdom University provide adequate provision for counselling, health care and careers planning for students.

3.5.3   HERU recommends that Kingdom University takes measures towards involving students in the institution's decision-making processes via their participation in appropriate committees.

The University has not yet developed a formal policy to identify and support students at academic risk. During interviews, the Panel learned that there are no special arrangements or support mechanisms for this group of students. Students whose GPAs fall below that expected for graduation are provided with suitable advising instructions by the respective academic advising committees within the colleges. The Panel encourages KU to develop and implement a set of policies and procedures to support at-risk students and consistently implement them across all colleges.

KU has recently appointed a male and a female academic as counsellors. To ensure appropriate student counselling practice the Panel encourages KU to appoint dedicated professional counsellors. KU does not have a dedicated career counsellor and queries related to career planning are directed to the respective faculty deans and heads of departments, therefore the Panel suggests that KU consider appointing a dedicated professional career counsellor. Two part-time professional nurses have recently been appointed to work on a daily four hour shift basis. They are allocated a medical room with the necessary equipment to deal with minor cases and to prepare more serious ones for emergency transfers to the nearest hospital. In general, interviewed students were satisfied with the advising practice and health care services provided by KU.

KU senior management circulated in October 2011 a decision to all colleges to appoint student representatives in its councils and committees. The decision was accordingly implemented by the colleges. During interviews faculty members and students praised this decision to be a step forward towards better decision-making that has benefits to the academic practice at KU, however the impact of this practice is too early to be measured.

3.6 Human Resources

3.6.1   HERU recommends that Kingdom University urgently develop a human resources policy as part of an overarching human resources plan for all employees to support the recruitment and retention of appropriate and qualified staff.

3.6.2   HERU recommends that Kingdom University re-evaluate its recruitment policy to allow for longer-term contracts, hence assuring the sustainability of its core academic staff.

3.6.3   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University develop and implement an annual comprehensive performance appraisal system for all staff.*

3.6.4   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University formalize and expand the orientation process of new faculty members and that it involves both Human Resources and the respective departments.*

3.6.5   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University develop and implement a systematic approach to staff development that is underpinned by a separate staff development budget.*

3.6.6   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University review the workload allocation policy so that it effectively supports the strategic goals of the University and supports staff in performing their responsibilities.*

Human Resources (HR) policies were originally developed in 2009 by the HR and Finance departments in order to familiarise the academic and administrative staff with the KU internal regulations. During the site visit, the Panel was informed that in November 2011, the University opted to hire an external management consultant to develop the suite of KU policies. All developed policies are approved in the Deans Council prior to their implementation. The Panel also learned that several workshops have been conducted for all KU staff to familiarise them with the newly developed policies. The Panel examined the revised HR policies and found them to be appropriate for the operation of a higher education institution.

The University re-evaluated its recruitment policy and is now implementing an open contract system for all its staff members; copies of employment contracts for both administrative and academic staff were provided to the Panel. During the site visit, the Panel learned that these contracts are automatically renewed unless one party informs the other of their unwillingness to renew the contract in writing. Staff members interviewed by the Panel expressed their satisfaction with the revised contract system. The Panel encourages the University to continue with the implementation of the new contracts as it will contribute to the stability and sustainability of the institution.

The Panel was informed in different interviews that a new comprehensive policy for performance evaluation has been developed and implemented for both academic and administrative staff. In the case of academic faculty, a '360 degree feedback program' is employed and comprises student evaluation, peer evaluation, self-evaluation as well as Chairman/Dean review. Copies of the student feedback and peer class observations were provided. The performance appraisal of administrative staff, on the other hand, comprises self-evaluation and line manger evaluation. The Panel was pleased to learn that the results of the various evaluations are discussed with the staff members and are used as an input for identifying the staff development needs and addressing poor performance.

The University has expanded its orientation procedures for new faculty members to involve both the human resources (HR) department and the respective academic department. During interviews, the Panel learned that the HR department allocates two days for the induction of new faculty during which they are introduced to local working issues and to the KU policies and procedures. New staff are also provided with a 'Faculty Kit' that contains information about the institution, the internal regulations, the faculty-student academic policies as well as an overview of the different colleges and committees. The Panel was also informed that the Deans and Department Chairs also participate in the induction process and brief the new faculty members about the academic requirements and procedures. New staff interviewed by the Panel expressed their satisfaction with the orientation process and induction programme. The Panel encourages the University to document the recently implemented practices and to include them in the updated HR policies and procedures manual.

At the time of the site visit, the Panel was informed that a staff development policy is currently being developed by an external management consultant. The Panel also learned from different interviews that the training needs of staff are determined by different sources; these include suggestions by the faculty members themselves, results of staff appraisal as well as course evaluations. The requests for staff development activities are then forwarded from the departments' councils to the respective college council for approval. The Panel was provided with lists of staff development activities from all the colleges, as well as copies of research articles published by faculty members. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel confirmed that they are encouraged by the University to attend conferences of relevance to their area of specialisation and pursue higher qualifications. The Panel encourages KU to formalise these practices and implement a systematic approach for targeted staff development.

The Panel heard consistently, during different interviews, about the difficulties in recruiting academic staff members from abroad due to the bureaucratic procedures involved in this process. Accordingly, KU has not made sufficient progress towards reviewing the academic staff's workload allocation policy. Nevertheless, a resolution regarding the reduction of the teaching load of faculty members with administrative responsibilities has been implemented effective the second semester of the academic year 2011-2012. The Panel was informed that college deans and departmental chairmen teach a maximum of six and 12 credits, respectively. However, all the faculty members interviewed by the Panel confirmed that they teach a minimum of 15 credit hours with many of them teaching the maximum allowed by the HEC, i.e. 21 credit hours. While the Panel understands the problems associated with the recruitment of new faculty, it is of the view that the institution needs to explore all available options to increase its core academic staff and accordingly overcome the problems associated with high teaching loads.

3.7 Infrastructure, Physical and Other Resources

3.7.1   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University limit its student enrolment to those that can realistically be accommodated in the current site of delivery and find an interim solution to the provision of adequate premises while awaiting the construction of the new campus.*

3.7.2   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University develop and implement policies to ensure the health and safety of its staff and students.*

3.7.3   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University develop and implement a library strategic and operational plan with targets, and identify Key Performance Indicators and budgetary requirements.*

3.7.4   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University take a proactive approach to ensuring sustained access to appropriate and sufficient physical resources for teaching and learning.*

3.7.5   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University ensure that the current computing/IT initiatives be developed into the University's overarching Strategic Plan to support effectively the University's goals and objectives.*

Due to the HEC ban on new students' admission, the number of enrolled student is 690 in the first semester of 2011-12.   The University has rented extra rooms to provide additional facilities to staff and students and made separate offices for Deans, departmental chairmen, Quality Assurance Centre, Student Affairs, Students' Council, and Students' Services. However, during interviews the Panel heard from students that part-time faculty members do not have separate offices, most of the part-time faculty members are sharing offices. The Panel encourages the institution to develop an enrolment plan to match the expected enrolment with the current resources

KU provided evidence to comply with minimum requirements in terms of health and safety in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Moreover, during the site visit, the Panel learned that an external management consultant has been recently hired to develop its suite of policies and procedures, including those relating to the health and safety issues. The Panel encourages KU to ensure the implementation of these policies.

A library committee has been established to improve the quality of library services, and a Library Strategic Plan from 2011-2015 developed with strategies, tasks, KPIs, and individual responsibility. During the site visit, the Panel found that KU did not develop any budgetary requirement. The unavailability of budget, might hinder the full implementation of the plan. The Panel urges the University to allocate budget for the plan.

The University has increased the number of computer laboratories from two to four and upgraded some computer laboratories including engineering and architecture, added online library and online academic resources, and developed personalised KU email addresses for full-time, part-time faculty members, administrative staff and students.

KU has updated its software system and added the following facilities: Online registration, Online Payment, E-mail facility, and academic reports. It has also introduced the anti-plagiarism software, and developed a disaster management and recovery plan. From January 2012, the University will perform a monthly back-up of all its data on a monthly basis to the Arab Open University-Bahrain branch.

As noted above, KU has developed a strategic plan for 2011-2015, the Panel found that the plan does not cover all IT initiatives, the University needs to include all the elements related to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources in the strategic plan to support the development of these initiatives.

3.8 Research

3.8.1   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University develop and implement a sustainable strategic plan with KPIs and targets to support research and monitor its output, together with introducing policies and processes to ensure ethical and effective conduct of research that strictly prohibits plagiarism and academic fraud.*

3.8.2   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University allocate adequate annual funds to support the development of research infrastructure and an effective research management system to provide an environment conducive to initiating research activities.*

3.8.3   *HERU recommends that Kingdom University provide effective support to its postgraduate students to ensure the quality of programme outcomes in terms of systematic research training, adequate supervision and access to required resources.*

KU has recently, with the support of a consultation firm, developed a 2011-2015 research strategic plan with KPIs and annual targets. Although the Panel is pleased that the 2011 KPIs have already been met, it encourages KU to complete this newly developed plan by taking decisions on the KPIs tagged 'TBD' and allocate responsibilities and budget to the list of objectives. KU has also developed a manual called 'Studies and Research Policy and Procedures' that includes its policies for ethical and effective conduct of research including the prohibition of plagiarism and academic fraud.

The Panel notes with interest the establishment of the Research and Studies Center and the university-wide committee for post-graduate studies and research in KU as a step forward to manage effectively research, but the impact of this approach to manage research could not

be assessed. The director of the Center only took up the post in December 2011. The Panel welcomes other steps KU has taken towards improving its research infrastructure such as, the allocation of a research budget, subscribing to online journals and inter-library loan facility.

All postgraduate degrees in KU comprise a set of taught courses followed by a thesis. Students working on their thesis are supervised and are expected to meet with their supervisors at least twice a month. They are also encouraged to meet with their supervisors once a week to discuss matters related to their thesis. Students interviewed by the Panel expressed their satisfaction with the accessibility of their supervisors and the ability to contact them electronically *via* email. In addition to academic support, postgraduate students are provided with access to a collection of e-resources offered by the library and a free on campus Wi-Fi. During interviews, the Panel learned that while "Scientific Research Methodology" is a compulsory course for postgraduates in Law, it is offered as an elective course in the Master of Architecture Engineering programme. The Panel encourages the University to make research training compulsory for all postgraduate students before embarking on their thesis.

3.9 Community Engagement

3.9.1 *HERU recommends that Kingdom University develop and implement a community engagement policy that aligns individual efforts with its strategic plan and enables the coordination, monitoring and review of its community engagement activities.*

KU, with the help of a consultancy firm, has recently started developing its community engagement strategy which is expected to be finalised in March 2012. The Panel urges KU to finalize this plan and ensure it encompasses individual efforts of students and staff members in a way that allows the monitoring and reviewing of all community engagement initiatives.