



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

# **Higher Education Review Unit**

## **Programme Follow-Up Review Report**

**Bachelor of Law**

**Kingdom University**

**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 20 February 2012**

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## 1. The Programme Follow-up Review Overview

The follow-up site 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 Kingdom University's, Bachelor of Law 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 Bachelor of Law degree at the Kingdom University (KU), 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 Kingdom University (KU) 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 was 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 at KU. Consequently the follow-up review process incorporated the review of the evidence presented by KU 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 KU'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; 'did not satisfy' 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 the follow-up visit, was focused on re-examining the Programme and the quality assurance and enhancement processes associated with those Indicators 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 Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme*) and determining the extent to which the original Review Panel recommendations for these indicators had been demonstrably reflected in the revised Improvement Plan and were adequately implemented in the Bachelor of Law Programme, at the time of the follow-up site visit.

It should be noted, however, that the indicators for Academic Standards of the 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.

The aim of the following section of this follow-up Review Report is to evaluate the progress made in KU's Bachelor of Law 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 Bachelor of Law Programme at Kingdom University**

Sections 3-6 of this Report discusses the extent to which the KU's Bachelor of Law 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 and a considerable amount of supplementary material submitted to the Panel up to 5:30 pm on Monday 20 February 2012.

The considerable effort the institution and the programme team put into providing the Supplementary Evidence requested by the Panel since the original submission of the Improvement Plan to QAAET till the end of the site visit is appreciated. In addition, the College's and KU's representatives provided details during the interview sessions; they provided more illustrations; cited additional evidence about planned operational steps; the responsibilities of each faculty member and the institution's representatives; the proposed initiatives for quality and implementation of treatments to improve quality; future timelines to accomplish implementation; and the decisions made for continuous improvements. The College provided a file of additional evidence to the Panel on the day of the follow-up site visit.

### 3. Follow-Up Review of Indicator 1: Curriculum

*This section evaluates the extent to which the Bachelor of Law, at Kingdom University, has complied with the recommendations outlined in the Programme review report of the review conducted in October 2010, 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 have 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 programme objectives were revised to incorporate the graduates' practice at various professional legal careers rather than being limited to advocacy and jurisdiction only.
- The Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) of the Programme were revised in accordance with the Programme objectives, and these ILOs were specified into: (i) ILOs of Associate Diploma; (ii) ILOs of Bachelor degree. Courses descriptions were introduced in each course file. However, ILOs of individual courses were developed traditionally and inaccurately with no clear link between these ILOs and those of the programme as a whole. The Panel noted that detailed mapping of course and Programme ILOs do not differentiate clearly between the Programme ILOs and the ILOs of each course independently; some of the mapped course ILOs were an exact copy of the ILOs of the programme as a whole, particularly those related to thinking skills, and general and transferable skills.
- The course 'Economics' (LAW103), with three credit hours, was added to the list of compulsory courses in the third version 2012 – 2013 of the programme. However, the Panel notes that the programme does not consider the Economics course (LAW103) as a prerequisite to register in the course 'General Finance' (LAW206). The course 'Principles of Scientific Research' (LAW486) was also added to the list of compulsory courses. The Panel notes that the course cannot be registered early as it requires student to pass 105 credit hours as a prerequisite to this course.
- The number of electives is increased in the third version 2012 – 2013 of the programme to be 19 electives from which the student may choose four courses. This should increase a student's opportunity for choosing elective courses. In the

first semester of the academic year 2011-2012, the College offered four elective courses, namely: 'Environmental Legislations' (LAW457), 'Applied Subject in Public Law' (LAW455), 'Applied Subject in Private Law' (LAW418), 'International Law' (LAW432). Two of these course were carried out, namely: 'Environmental Legislations' and 'Applied Subject in Private Law' whereas the other two courses were closed as there were few number of students registered in them.

- New elective courses were added to cope with the recent developments; these are: 'International Trade' taught in English (LAW478), 'International Economic Relations' (LAW408), 'Natural Recourses Investment Contracts' (LAW405), 'Money, Banks and Stock Market' (LAW409). The Panel noted that these courses have been added to the programme without their descriptions being subjected to evaluations by external reviewers, as their descriptions and ILOs were not developed yet. Also the Panel did not find course files for these courses, and therefore could not identify their content and who would be teaching them.
- The revised programme (third version 2012-2013) includes the development of some Law courses to be delivered in English; the topic 'Contract Theory' will be used for the development of the syllabi of the course 'Legal Terminology and Texts in English' (LAW204). This is a compulsory course taught at an early stage of the Programme. The course 'Commercial Law' – which is an elective course – will also be taught in English. This course includes International Trade.
- Communication between students and their teachers is encouraged by electronic means of communication. The University assigned an e-mail account for each student registered in the programme and faculty members are trained on how to communicate with their students.

**3.2** The Panel suggests that the College of Law at KU address the following matters of particular importance in its search for continuous improvement of the Bachelor of Law Programme:

- Revise the Course ILOS in accordance with the course objectives and description, taking into account the alignment between the Course ILOs and the ILOs of the programme as a whole. This has to be accompanied by revision of the detailed ILO mapping in order to differentiate between the Course ILOs and the Programme ILOs and to identify the contribution of each course in the accomplishment of the Programme ILOs.
- Consider that the course 'Economics' (LAW103) be a prerequisite to register in the course 'General Finance' (LAW206).

- Develop the files of the new courses following the review of these courses by external reviewers, in addition to their review of the Programme as a whole.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

**On balance, the Panel finds that evidence exists that the October 2010 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. Follow-Up Review of Indicator 2: Efficiency of the programme

*This section evaluates the extent to which the Bachelor of Law, at Kingdom University, has complied with the recommendations outlined in the Programme review report of the review conducted in October 2010, 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 have 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

- There is some improvement in the admission policy, as the minimum score at secondary school 'tawjeehiah' required for admission has been increased to 60%. However, this criterion has not been implemented yet because of the suspension of the admission of new students to the programme. Also, the Panel did not see evidence that the decision of increasing secondary school score to be 60% as a minimum criterion for admission was based on a scientific study that resulted in setting up a better admission system.
- There is improvement in the number of faculty members in the College as it became nine faculty members in the second semester 2011-2012, all working as full-time staff of whom two are professors; two are associate professors, and five are assistant professors. This is in addition to part-time staff teaching in the programme. This has resulted in a decrease in the teaching load of faculty members, which does not exceed 15 teaching hours per week for general faculty members, six teaching hours per week for Deans, and 12 teaching hours for Head of the Departments. The increase in faculty members has also resulted in improvement of the consideration to have faculty members teach within their field of specialisation.
- There is an appraisal system adopted by the College for faculty members' promotion in KU, and some staff members were promoted according to this system. However, there is no system to send faculty members abroad for an academic or training mission as a visiting staff member at a foreign university. Moreover, the College has no system to hire teaching assistants and no scholarships system for its outstanding graduates or others to study abroad so as to meet the College's future needs for Bahraini faculty members.

- There is a plan to move the university campus to the new location overlooking Al-Istiqlal St. It was planned to move in September 2011, however, the process was postponed to accomplish some procedures necessary to obtain HEC's approval at the Ministry of Education. From the interviews with the senior management of the University and examining the report 'Responding to the requirements of the new campus overlooking Al-Istiqlal St.' submitted to the secretariat of HEC in November 2011, the Panel concluded that the University is putting serious efforts to accomplish the approval requirements and move to the new campus. The university management informed the Panel that it is expected to accomplish these requirements and move to the new campus in six months from the date of this site visit. The new campus would allow students to benefit from the available resources for learning activities more than the current situation, in addition to all other facilities (sports, cultural, social, ...). Care was taken in the new building to allocate appropriate space for the library in addition to the allocation of a hall for the Moot Court. The Panel saw the drawings of these plans.
- There is a relative improvement in the condition of the College's library; the library has been provided with a number of Arabic legal resources and periodicals; however, these are still inadequate. The library was also provided with a small number of foreign resources and periodicals. A positive step was taken to compensate this shortage in resources and periodicals as the University subscribed in some Arabic and foreign legal networks (The Arab Legal Information Network, West Law Gulf). In all, since January 2010, the library has benefited from an addition 237 books, nine journals and periodicals, and two legal networks.

**4.2** The Panel suggests that the College of Law at KU should address the following matters of particular importance in its search for continuous improvement of the Bachelor of Law Programme:

- Develop an admission policy for the programme based on a scientific study that includes clear criteria to ensure admitting qualified students.
- Completion of filling the shortage in the faculty members and teaching assistants to meet the programme needs while considering that some of the faculty members are capable of teaching in English, and develop a system for faculty scholarship.
- Accelerate the accomplishment of procedures to move to the new campus as early as possible, as the current building is inappropriate: it is located on top of shops; the number of teaching rooms is limited and serve all five Colleges of the University; offices of faculty members are common and lack any privacy; and

there are no spaces for practicing any extra curriculum activities; particularly sport activities.

- Acquire more legal resources and periodicals, both hard and electronic, in Arabic and English for the College library.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

**On balance, the Panel finds that evidence exists that the October 2010 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, and as a result the Programme now satisfies the HERU/QAAET requirements for this Indicator.**

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

*This section evaluates the extent to which Bachelor of Law, at Kingdom University, has complied with the recommendations outlined in the Programme review report of the review conducted in October 2010, 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 have 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

- The College has identified some Arab universities as reference points to develop specific academic standards for itself, and sought consultancy and input for its programmes from a considerable number of well-known external reviewers who are faculty members at Arab universities. The College has also entered in agreement with Tanta University in Egypt to enhance their mutual relation. However, the cooperation with Tanta University is in practice restricted to limited areas. Moreover, the Panel did not see evidence of concrete results with regard to the development and adaptation of clear academic standards for the graduates of the Law College.
- In its pursuit to maintain continuous communication with its graduates, the College's Alumni Committee formed an advisory board for its graduates. This board serves as a nucleus for an institutional structure or a society the College intends to form for its graduates. It became clear to the Panel that the current structure includes a limited number of graduates. Moreover, the advisory board activities are not regulated through an approved bylaw. This advisory board had met for two successive cycles but it has not achieved the intended communication between the graduates and the College yet. Efforts are exerted by the University to follow up its graduates, such as appointing a faculty member as the director of students affairs whose responsibilities include graduates follow up, and work is in progress to issue an Alumni Handbook that includes graduates' data to facilitate communication with them.
- In order to develop and improve assessment methods and link them to the ILOs, faculty members adopt a variety of student assessment tools to measure specific ILOs. However, and as mentioned earlier, the Panel noted that course ILOs were developed in a traditional and inaccurate way.

- The College sends examination papers and samples of assessed students' work in some subjects to external examiners for assessment, in addition to the use of external reviewers to evaluate the programme as a whole. However, the Panel noted that there are no clear criteria for the selection of external examiners. With regard to review of examinations, the Panel found that the College does not send sufficient information to the external examiners about the courses and their ILOs to ensure that the examiners' judgement on the appropriateness of these examinations are based on the course content and its ILOs, rather than on their personal knowledge.
- In 2012, the University developed regulations regarding benchmarking and the work of external and internal examiners. However, the Panel did not find evidence of the implementation of these regulations. The reason might be their recent development.

5.2. The Panel suggests that the College of Law at KU address the following matters of particular importance in its search for continuous improvement of the Bachelor of Law Programme

- Select a number of similar Arab and foreign accredited educational institutions for the purpose of quality benchmarking within the framework of developing clear academic standards for graduates to be adopted by the College.
- Continue with its procedures of forming an institutional structure with an approved bylaw that would include the Colleges graduates, to achieve communication between the College and its graduates.
- Develop clear standards for the selection of external examiners and consider providing them with adequate information about the programme, courses, and ILOs so that their judgement is based on the ILOs rather than their personal knowledge, and develop a mechanism to ensure its regular implementation.

### 5.3. Conclusion

**On balance, the Panel finds that evidence exists that the October 2010 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. Follow-Up Review of Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance**

*This section evaluates the extent to which Bachelor of Law, at Kingdom University, has complied with the recommendations outlined in the Programme review report of the review conducted in October 2010, relating to the arrangements in place for managing the Programme, including quality assurance, as a consequence contributes to the Panel's decision regarding the level of implementation of recommendations for this Indicator and whether the Programme have 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 University has established a Quality Assurance Centre and a faculty member from the College is assigned for communication with this Centre. In collaboration with the University Quality Assurance Centre, the College conducted a workshop for its faculty members on developing ILOs and linking the overall learning outcomes of the programme and courses outcomes, and developing means and methods for measuring these outcomes. The workshop was conducted in November 2011 as part of an overall training programme for the College's faculty which included computer training, using current methods of teaching, preparing course files, academic advising, and English language. However, through discussions with faculty members, it became evident to the Panel that the training events and workshops conducted are not enough to embed a quality culture and this issue needs more support from the University.
- The College organised a number of meetings and workshops on various legal issues. As yet, the College did not organise any conferences. However, the College management expressed their intention to hold a conference on information technology and its implications for Law in January 2013.
- The University has a strategic plan, but the College needs to develop a detailed operational plan which shows how to implement the strategic plan with regard to the programme and the College as a whole. This plan should include the timelines and the budget required to implement its various items.
- The College reviews the programme, and there is evidence of developments in the programme as a result of these reviews. However, the Panel did not see evidence on implementing a systematic policy for internal review of the programme for the purpose of continuous improvement.

**6.2.** The Panel suggests that the College of Law at the KU address the following matters of particular importance in its search for continuous improvement of the Bachelor of Law Programme.

- Enhance the university's role in spreading and establishing quality concepts and culture in the College.
- Develop more effective programmes to develop and enhance faculty members' capacity.
- Develop a mechanism and detailed support plans that include timelines and budget allocation to implement the university's strategic plan in relation to the College and the Bachelor of Law Programme.
- Improve the programme internal review system in accordance with quality concepts.

### **6.3. Conclusion**

**On balance, the Panel finds that evidence exists that the October 2010 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 Bachelor of Law Programme offered by the College of Law at KU is as follows:**

**That the Bachelor of Law Programme at Kingdom University has successfully addressed the recommendations of the original programme review conducted in October 2010 and published, in the review report, in February 2011 and that an important improvement cycle is beginning to emerge. The Panel now has confidence in the Programme.**

## ***Appendix 1: The Five Implementation Thresholds for Delineation 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 October 2010 Review Panel's recommendations for the Indicator; or**
- III. That the October 2010 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 October 2010 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 October 2010 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.**