



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
Education & Training Quality Authority
Kingdom of Bahrain - مملكة البحرين

Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

**B.Sc. in Interior Design
College of Engineering
University of Bahrain
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 4-7 April 2016
HC081-C2-R0801

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Acronyms

BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
BSID	B.Sc. in Interior design
CAD	Computer Aided Design
CIDA	Council for Interior Design Accreditation
CILOs	Course Intended Learning Outcomes
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
HEC	Higher Education Council of the Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Bahrain
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
MIS	Management Information Systems
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PAC	Programme Advisory Committee
PCAP	Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice
PEOs	Programme Educational Objectives
PILOs	Programme Intended Learning Outcomes
PLEs	Programme Learning Expectations
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre
SAC	Student Advisory Committee
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SLEs	Student Learning Expectations
UILOs	University Intended Learning Outcomes

The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process

A. The Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework

To meet the need to have a robust external quality assurance system in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR) of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA) has developed and is implementing two external quality review processes, namely: Institutional Reviews and Programmes-within-College Reviews which together will give confidence in Bahrain's higher education system nationally, regionally and internationally.

Programmes-within-College Reviews have three main objectives:

- to provide decision-makers (in the higher education institutions, the BQA, the Higher Education Council (HEC), students and their families, prospective employers of graduates and other stakeholders) with evidence-based judgements on the quality of learning programmes
- to support the development of internal quality assurance processes with information on emerging good practices and challenges, evaluative comments and continuing improvement
- to enhance the reputation of Bahrain's higher education regionally and internationally.

The *four* indicators that are used to measure whether or not a programme meets international standards are as follows:

Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

The programme is efficient in terms of the admitted students, the use of available resources - staffing, infrastructure and student support.

Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

Indicator 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance

The arrangements in place for managing the programme, including quality assurance, give confidence in the programme.

The Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Panel’) states in the Review Report whether the programme satisfies each Indicator. If the programme satisfies all four Indicators, the concluding statement will say that there is ‘confidence’ in the programme.

If two or three Indicators are satisfied, including Indicator 1, the programme will receive a ‘limited confidence’ judgement. If one or no Indicator is satisfied, or Indicator 1 is not satisfied, the judgement will be ‘no confidence’, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Criteria for Judgements

Criteria	Judgement
All four Indicators satisfied	Confidence
Two or three Indicators satisfied, including Indicator 1	Limited Confidence
One or no Indicator satisfied	No Confidence
All cases where Indicator 1 is not satisfied	

B. The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process at the University of Bahrain

A Programmes-within-College review of the University of Bahrain was conducted by the DHR of the BQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place on 4-7 April 2016 for the academic programmes offered by the college, these are: B.Sc. in Chemical Engineering, B.Sc. in Process Instrumentation and Control Engineering, B.Sc. in Civil Engineering, B.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering, B.Sc. in Architecture, B.Sc. in Interior Design, B.Sc. in Electronics Engineering and B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering.

This Report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Panel for the B.Sc. in Interior Design (BSID) based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and appendices submitted by the University of Bahrain (UoB), the supplementary documentation made available during the site visit, as well as interviews and observations made during the review site visit.

UoB was notified by the DHR/BQA in 22 October 2015 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College reviews of its College of Engineering with the site visit taking place in April 2016. In preparation for the review, UoB conducted its college self-evaluation of all its programmes and submitted the SER with appendices on the agreed date in 10 January 2016.

The DHR constituted a panel consisting of experts in the academic field of Engineering, Design and in higher education who have experience of external programme quality reviews. The Panel comprised 15 external reviewers.

This Report records the evidence-based conclusions reached by the Panel based on:

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

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

The DHR would like to extend its thanks to UoB for the co-operative manner in which it has participated in the Programmes-within-College review process. It also wishes to express its appreciation for the open discussions held in the course of the review and the professional conduct of the faculty in the UoB.

C. Overview of the College of Engineering

The College of Engineering, at UoB, owes its roots to the Gulf Technical College which was established in 1968 and which later became the Gulf Polytechnic in February 1981. In 1986, Amiri Decree No. (12) was issued to establish the University of Bahrain by a merger of the Gulf Polytechnic and the Bahrain University College. Following this decree, the new organization plan of the UoB was issued in November 21, 1987. The College of Engineering currently comprises five departments; namely the Department of Chemical Engineering, Department of Civil Engineering, Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Department of Mechanical Engineering and Department of Architecture and Interior Design. The College is currently running a total of (11) academic programmes (8) at Bachelor and (3) at Master levels. The vision of the College of Engineering is to be among the leading colleges in the region and to maintain a respectful international status and reputation by sustaining a high quality of engineering education and scientific research. During the 2015-2016 academic year, there were (143) full-time and (23) part-time faculty members supported by (60) administrative staff. The total number of students enrolled in the College at the time of the site visit was (4113) students. The College obtained ABET accreditation for six

of its bachelor programmes in 2008 and 2014, these are the B.Sc. in Chemical Engineering, B.Sc. in Civil Engineering, B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering, B.Sc. in Electronics Engineering, B.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering and B.Sc. in Process Instrumentation and Control Engineering. In addition, the B.Sc. in Architecture obtained National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) accreditation in 2014. Moreover, the College is in the process of obtaining accreditation by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) for the B.Sc. in Interior Design programme.

D. Overview of the B.Sc. in Interior Design

The B.Sc. in Interior Design (BSID) is offered by the Department of Architecture and Interior Design. The programme was first offered in the academic year 2002-2003 under the Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture, and the first cohort graduated from the programme in the first semester of the academic year 2006-2007. The SER states that the programme’s mission is to ‘uplift the quality of interior places in Bahrain and other Gulf countries by educating competent interior designers, researching for means to improve the quality of local interior places, and raising the level of public awareness in relation to the role of interior design in improving quality of life’.

The programme is preparing to be accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA), USA. There are 12 full-time and 3 part-time faculty members supported by 2 administrative staff contributing to the delivery of the programme. At the time of site visit, the total number of students enrolled in the programme was 328.

E. Summary of Review Judgements

Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the B.Sc. in Interior Design

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

1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

- 1.1 The College of Engineering has a clear mission and a set of goals that are well aligned to the university mission and vision statements and are translated to the Interior Design programme's mission and goals. The BSID programme has a well-defined framework which is developed in accordance with UoB's 'Programme Development and Enhancement Policy', in consultation with appropriate committees and internal and external stakeholders. The framework is clear and ensures harmonisation of aims and learning outcomes. The programme aims are appropriate in type and level, evidenced through benchmarking and reinforced during panel meetings with the programme team and students. The Panel appreciates that the programme aims are appropriate to the programme type and level and are aligned to the college and university mission and sets of goals.
- 1.2 The BSID programme is structured as a four-years programme consisting of 132 total credit hours distributed over 43 courses delivered in eight semesters. The programme credits are divided into 108 credit hours for Interior Design core courses, which include 12 credit hours for elective courses, and 21 credit hours from general education and liberal art courses. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the curriculum has gone through a review in 2011 which resulted in changes such as including more liberal arts courses and introducing two new courses ('Color in Interior Design'; 'Design, Culture and the Environment') to meet the CIDA standards requirements. Further changes such as enhancing the curriculum content in relation to computer graphic skills were also introduced in response to demands generated by the local market. The Panel studied the programme specification and notes that there is an adequate number of theoretical components within the curriculum. Nonetheless, the Panel recommends that the College should consider including more interior design specific theoretical and philosophical content with the opportunity to review the vertical/horizontal alignment between the different elements of the curriculum. During interview sessions, the Panel confirmed that there is appropriate increase in projects complexity from Residential, Commercial, Institutional, Workplace, Hospitality/Clinical. However, the practical expression of this – *via* a literal upsizing of projects relative to their area in square meters and culminating in the largest project, seems to be crude. Project complexity can equally be demonstrated *via* focus on details and the material nature of a brief. This view was confirmed during students' interview sessions who indicated the need to further tune their capstone project. The Panel encourages the College to further explore this issue. The programme specification ensures a balance between theory and practice and knowledge and skills. Interviews with students and alumni confirmed that their workload is manageable. Progression

is clear within the structure of the programme, and is enforced with appropriate pre-requests that are clearly defined for each course. During interview sessions, students and alumni confirmed that the curriculum provides ample opportunities to apply the knowledge they have accumulated during their studies and practice the skills needed. The programme team also works with the Timetabling Committee to ensure as far as possible that studio delivery is as stable/fixed as possible. The Panel appreciates that the curriculum is well organised and ensures appropriate progression and a balance between theory and practice and knowledge and skills.

- 1.3 Course specifications are clearly stated for all courses within the BSID programme using a course syllabus template that includes the course description, course content and weekly breakdown, teaching and learning methods, assessment tools and weight and Intended Learning Outcomes. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the syllabus has been benchmarked with those of other institutions and against CIDA requirements for accreditation. Furthermore, the Panel was informed that UoB's Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre (QAAC) requirements and the BQA's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level descriptors are utilised as reference points for ensuring that the syllabus is suitable for the type and level of the course. The Panel reviewed the provided samples of course files and notes with appreciation that course syllabus is commensurate with those of similar programmes internationally, with a clear focus on the 'craft' of interior place-making. The course specifications also indicate reference and suggested reading list. The Panel noted that the suggested reading materials collectively provide the students with the breadth needed for the level and type of the programme. However, the overall direction is less clear. Moreover, in a number of courses, the reading list is not current. The Panel suggests that the College revise the reference reading lists of the ID courses to ensure currency and relevance. The Panel studied the provided syllabus and noted that there is little evidence of research teaching linkages. These were not present in SER, and during interview sessions with faculty members the Panel was not provided with clear explanations and examples on how recent research findings and practices are imbedded in course materials. The Panel recommends that the College should ensure that the syllabus is enriched by current and recent research findings and professional practices.
- 1.4 The BSID programme has a set of 14 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) that are categorised in four main domains: Knowledge and understanding; subject specific skills, thinking skills and general and transferable skills. These Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs), which are also called the Programme Learning Expectations (PLEs), are directly adopted from the CIDA professional standards 2011. The PILOs are mapped to the Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs) and the University Intended Learning Outcomes (UILOs). The Panel studied the PILOs and notes that these are appropriate for the level of the award and cover the key

professional and academic components for the subject. They indicate a level of building awareness for emerging designers and cover aesthetic, critical, historic and legal requirements for entry-level interior designers. During interview sessions, the Panel confirmed that mechanisms are in place for ensuring that systematic reflection and consultation on the relationship between UILOs, PEOs and PILOs take place, and that the university mechanisms for minor modifications to content (including to PILO's) are straightforward and responsive. The Panel acknowledges that the PILOs are clearly stated and are suitable for the type of the programme and the level of the degree awarded.

- 1.5 The Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) are clearly stated as Student Learning Expectations (SLEs) for each course specification. These are also extracted directly from the CIDA SLEs, which are listed under the PLEs. The Panel studied the SLEs assigned to each course and notes that these are precise, measurable and appropriate to the course content and level. The SLEs are linked to the PLEs through the CIDA standards and are grouped to indicate progression in the students expected work from one level to another. Moreover, the course specifications indicate how the achievement of these SLEs are assessed by specifically stated and relevant assessment tools. The Panel appreciates that there are CILOs expressed in the term of SLEs, are appropriate to the content and level of the course and are mapped to the PILOs.
- 1.6 The BSID programme includes a compulsory industrial training course (INTD 325; 'Interior Design Training'), which is a non-credit-bearing course allocated between semester 6 and 7 of the programme plan. It comprises a two-month long (200 hour) internship at an approved interior design practice. Enrolled students must complete 85 credit hours of the programme to be eligible to register for the training course. The course has a suitable set of SLEs, which are mapped to the PLEs, and there is information on the course that stipulates what is expected from the student with an appropriate system of monitoring and dissemination. The assessment policy of the course is covered in the 'Study and Exam Regulations', and the 'Assessment and Moderation Policy', exemptions are covered under 'Industrial Training Course Exemption Requirements in the Industrial Manual and Report'. During interview sessions, the Panel was satisfied that faculty members and students are well informed about the course and its contribution to the achievement of the PILOs. The Panel appreciates that there is an industrial training element in the programme, which is relevant and adds a positive value to the achievement of the PILOs. Although the course did not bare any credit at the time of the site visit, the SER states that in its processes to review and enhance the programme, the College is planning to assign two credit hours to the industrial training course. The Panel encourages the College to expedite the implementation and add credit to the course that represent an appropriate weight to the amount of learning achieved by the student.

- 1.7 The Department of Architecture and Interior Design has a teaching and learning policy that outlines in some detail the department's engagement with a broad range of appropriate activities to support the learning environment and experience, which from the document, consists of relevant learning levels, staged and progressive. Interior designers require this breadth of engagement with their subject of study and the procedures utilised by the programme team encourage the development of research techniques, engagement with the profession, site-visits and a range of diverse studio interactions, both formal and informal, staff facilitated and peer led. The Panel viewed samples of course specifications and notes that these include specific sections dedicated to course teaching methods and mapping of SLEs. Interviewed students during the site visit confirmed the diverse teaching and learning culture that operates within the Department. Students demonstrated a particular enthusiasm for, and understanding of, studio culture, and in particular, for peer learning with the particular example of (ARCG 322 Interior Design) cited as an opportunity to share expertise between students enrolled in the two programmes offered by the Department (Interior Design & Architecture), which students warmly expressed as awareness raising. Moreover, independent learning is fostered through understanding of studio culture, this includes relationship to spaces outside of the physical studio, including the Library, the design site and even into social spaces which, according to site visit's meetings with students and staff, are all viewed as places for independent learning to occur. Students also encounter applied theory and professional practice primarily in the industrial training course (INTD 325 'Interior Design Training'), in addition to operating within a studio environment which encourages discourse through jury reviews with practitioners. The Panel appreciates the diverse and comprehensive nature of teaching and learning approaches that are suitable for the type of the programme and facilitate the achievement of the ILOs.
- 1.8 While e-learning is stated as being a part of the teaching and learning policy the Panel considers that, in the document itself, references to this learning type are minimal and potential opportunities for its integration in the programme are under developed. There are capabilities and flexibilities offered by such learning platforms that may be of use to a creative programme such as interior design and its associated community of practice. The Panel encourages the College to further investigate this aspect. Moreover, the Panel noted that since 2014, research culture in the programme and College appears to have been neglected. During interview sessions with faculty and management, the financial crisis was repeatedly cited as the reason for this. The Panel recommends that the College should enhance the research culture within the programme and ensure that teaching and learning are appropriately informed by current research findings.
- 1.9 The Panel notes that the Department of Architecture and Interior Design adopts a clear assessment policy outline, 'Assessment Policies and Practices'. The SER states that

assessment policies are disseminated to staff and students *via* induction and orientation programmes respectively, as well as being repeatedly revisited throughout each stage of the programme and prior to the industrial training and final jury. As outlined in the SER, students receive the syllabus for their courses at the start of each semester. This includes clear information regarding assessment methods, which are monitored at the department level. Students' work is evaluated based on clear criteria for marking and the policy addresses formative and summative processes in sufficient detail. Interviewed staff and students were well aware of policies, regulations and criteria related to assessment. Moreover, from interview sessions conducted during the site visit and samples of course files provided, the Panel confirmed that feedback is provided promptly, however, with inconsistency between written and oral format. The Panel recommends that the College should ensure that feedback is available to students in written form consistently across the programme. The policy for plagiarism is handled *via* the Anti-Plagiarism Policy and the library staff assist students understanding of copyright and issues surrounding academic plagiarism. The Panel notes with appreciation that this policy is contextualised in the learning environment. Appeals are dealt with *via* a process of submission of a 'Final Exam Appeals Form', which initiates a re-marking of work with a new set of instructors assigned by the Department Chair. The Panel appreciates that there are clear assessment policy and procedures that faculty and students are well aware of and provide a provision for appeal.

1.10 In coming to its conclusion regarding The Learning Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- The programme aims are appropriate to the programme type and level and aligned to the college and university mission and sets of goals.
- The curriculum is well organised and ensures appropriate progression and a balance between theory and practice and knowledge and skills.
- Course syllabus is commensurate with those of similar programmes internationally, with a clear focus on the 'craft' of interior place-making.
- Course intended learning outcomes are clearly stated in terms of students learning expectations, are appropriate to the content and level of the course and are mapped to the programme intended learning outcomes.
- There is an industrial training element in the programme, which is relevant and contributes to the achievement of the programme intended learning outcomes.
- The programme employs diverse and comprehensive teaching and learning methods that are suitable for the type of the programme and facilitate the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.
- There are clear assessment policy and procedures that faculty and students are well aware of, provide a provision for appeal, and this policy is contextualised in the learning environment.

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

- consider including more interior design specific theoretical and philosophical content with the opportunity to review the vertical/horizontal alignment between the different elements of the curriculum
- ensure that the syllabus is enriched by current and recent research findings and professional practices
- enhance the research culture within the programme and ensure that teaching and learning are appropriately informed by current research findings
- ensure that feedback is available to students in written form consistently across the programme.

1.12 **Judgement**

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

2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

There is a clear admission policy which is periodically revised and the admission requirements are appropriate for the level and type of the programme

- 2.1 UoB has a clear admission policy with a general condition of scoring a minimum of 70% in the high school certificate or equivalent to be admitted to one of the university's undergraduate programmes. The Panel studied the admission policy and noted that there is ambiguity in some of the terms; for example, the term 'medically fit' is not defined. Moreover, during interview sessions staff and students did not have a shared understanding of the meaning of the term 'medically fit', or how it is applied. The Panel advises the College to provide clear definitions that are communicated to staff and students in order to ensure student equity during the admission process. The SER states that applicants should also set an aptitude test to assess the applicant's English language, mathematics and general knowledge skills. In addition, applicants to the BSID programme are evaluated in drawing skills that include basic drawing and graphic composition skills, visual perception and freehand rendering, freehand sketch, imagination and proportion abilities and special viand interviews. Policies and procedures are published on the university website and in the University Catalogue, and in the Programme Handbook. Interviewed students and staff members were well informed about the admission policy and procedures. The Panel appreciates that there are formal admission policy and procedures, known to students and staff and include an evaluation of applicants drawing skills. During interview sessions with the programme management, the Panel was informed that due to the BSID programme being taught in English, provisions are made by UoB to offer further English test for students that score less than TOFEL 550. The Panel acknowledges that admission tests and interviews are prepared at a programme level and final decision for student admission is made by the Architecture and Interior Design Department. However, during interview sessions, the Panel noted conflicting information in regards to the role of the Department of Architecture and Interior Design in setting the aptitude test. Moreover, the Panel studied provided samples of the aptitude test and noted that some of the questions are general and not at a bachelor entry level. The Panel recommends that the College should revise the aptitude test to be more specific to the entry level and direction of the programme.
- 2.2 The Panel studied the submitted students' profile and notes that admission criteria are consistently implemented. During interview sessions with staff, the Panel was informed that high school subjects are taken into consideration during the admission process to ensure the appropriateness of student profile to the needs of the programme. Moreover, interviewed students indicated their readiness for the programme needs which was confirmed by the statistics provided in the SER. The Panel also noted the higher ratio of female to male students, which is common in

similar programmes. However, the Panel is concerned that the average length of study in the programme is close to five years, which is on the high side for this type of programme. The Panel recommends that the College should investigate the reasons for this and develop a plan to address the issue.

- 2.3 There is a clear organisational chart that is appropriate for the management of the BSID programme. The SER stated that the department Chairperson, supported by the programme coordinator, 'holds the overall responsibility in terms of the management of the programme'. The Chairperson heads the Department Council, which is responsible for proposing the way study activities, research topics, examination and extra-curricular activities are organised. Proposals are passed by the Chairperson to the College Council where it is discussed and passed to the University Council by the Dean as needed. Course coordinators are responsible for the management and the learning and teaching of the courses offered. Interviewed staff and students were well-informed about the programme management and lines of decision making. The Panel values the regular meetings that take place in the Interior Design programme and the professional coherence amongst staff. In addition, the Panel notes the consultation of the programme and university committees such as the Student Advisory Committee (SAC), Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), the Timetable Committee and the Academic Committee; these meetings are held regularly and are minuted. The Panel appreciates that there is a formal structure for the management of the programme with clear lines of accountability that students and staff are well-informed of and that student committees are involved in the programme decision-making.
- 2.4 The SER states that there are 12 full-time faculty members (3 Assistant Professors, 5 Lectures, 4 Teaching assistants) whom are directly responsible for the delivery of the interior design course. In addition, there are six faculty members on scholarships pursuing their PhD Degrees. The Panel studied the profile of the faculty members and notes that they acquire suitable qualifications to teach into a bachelor degree at a higher education level and are fit for the purpose of the programme. However, the Panel noted with concern the limited practical experience the Interior Design staff have. Moreover, during interview sessions, the Panel was informed that university regulations do not foster the further development professional experience amongst existing academic staff. The Panel also noted the heavy workload amongst academic staff, which in turn is affecting the research outcome and their personal development, which was confirmed by faculty members interviewed during the site visit. The Panel recommends that the College should revise the academic staff workload and university regulations in order to encourage academic staff to focus more on personal and professional development as well as research. During the site visit, the Panel was informed that the student-to-staff ratio is calculated at the department level and is in the range of 20-30:1. The Panel is concerned that for this type of programme, a ratio above 24:1 is considered high, as design courses require many face-to-face feedback,

and the high number of students will not allow for that. Interviewed faculty and students also raised this concern. The Panel recommends that the College should develop a long-term recruitment plan that ensures a suitable student-to-staff ratio.

- 2.5 UoB has clear recruitment, promotion and retention policies and procedures, which are communicated to the staff. Faculty members interviewed during the site visit were well-informed about these policies. The recruitment policy is transparent and the minutes of meetings of the Department, College and University Council indicate that decisions on selection of new staff recruitment are achieved through consultation at a university, college and programme level, which the Panel appreciates. The Panel studied the promotion policy and procedure, and notes that these are appropriate; however, they are not consistently implemented. During interview sessions, the Panel came to know that academic staff face many obstacles in being supported on a personal development and research level, which affects their promotion. Moreover, the Panel is concerned about the draw back in promotions, especially from a lecturer to a senior lecturer position, which hinders staff career progress and development and affects retention rate. The Panel recommends that the College should develop and implement a plan to facilitate faculty promotion. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that appraisal is made through student surveys and performance review. However, the Panel noted a misalignment in the HR promotion and appraisal procedures, which needs to be addressed. In addition, there is no clear indication or consistency of appraisal implementation for staff. Furthermore, appraisal is not linked to staff professional development (See paragraph 4.9). The Panel also noted that there is no formal induction procedure for new staff. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that induction is performed informally at a programme level. The Panel recommends that the College should develop and implement a formal induction programme for its newly appointed staff at a university, college and department level.
- 2.6 UoB has a functioning management information system (MIS), consisting of a number of software, used to inform some of the activities needed by the programme. The Online Registration System allows students to add, drop and replace courses during registration period. They can also pay the registration fee online. Interviewed students expressed their satisfaction with the online registration services. The system contains students' details including biographic and academic data/records that provides students with information about their academic progress and supports academic advising of the students enrolled in the programme. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that efforts are currently underway to make the system available on smart phones through a mobile application. The MIS team also runs periodic teaching and evaluation surveys and mini assessment surveys for various departments and programmes. The Panel appreciates the existence of an MIS that provides detailed information about the students and has a provision for online registration and fee payment. In addition, the HR intranet system provides

information about academic and administration staff members that can be used by the department Chairperson to enable informed decision-making. However, evidence provided and discussions during the site visit interviews did not clarify how the MIS is utilised to inform the handling of capital equipment, operational and human resource budgets. Moreover, the Panel was not provided with evidence on the MIS system being utilised on a department or college level to inform decision-making based on retention, graduation and success rate. In addition, during interview sessions, staff were not able to provide examples of utilising the MIS system outside academic advising and timetabling. Hence, the Panel encourages the College to further utilise the MIS system in generating periodic reports that are utilised to inform decision-making.

- 2.7 The University has policies and procedures in place to ensure the security of the learners' records and accuracy of results. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that at a university level, the Deanship of Admission and Registration is responsible for ensuring the security of students' main records. These are maintained both in hard and soft copies, access to which are limited based on level and authority. There is a formal policy in place to ensure security of records through a defined authorization mechanism, storage of data, privacy of information, exchange of information, the usage of anti-virus and security tools, and the security agreements with users. The University has a backup plan where an electronic backup of students' records is executed after each main registration and grade entry stage as per the IT policies and procedures. The Panel toured the facilities and noted that physical facilities and computers access on site are secure and available only for authorized personal and students as per the level of authorization. Moreover, students' marks and grades are recorded by faculty members through a transparent process, which is ensured by the department Chairperson and is additionally validated by the Registration Department. The Panel appreciates that there are policies and procedures that are consistently implemented to ensure the security of students' records and the reliability of the students' grades entering mechanism.
- 2.8 During the site visit, the Panel toured the facilities of the Isa Town Campus. Facilities visited by the Panel included: teaching halls, laboratories, studios, staff offices, the main food court, the student activity hall, the Library and other facilities. The Panel recognizes the quality and number of teaching and learning spaces available to students and values that many facilities were improved as per Student Advisory Committee's (SAC) request such as the Wi-Fi and other physical facilities, which interviewed students confirmed during the site visit. The Panel notes with appreciation that general facilities available are suitable for the needs of the programme and the students. Notwithstanding the above, the Panel notes that the available studio facilities and arrangements need further development. The current studio spaces are limited and do not facilitate 2- or 3-D representation. Moreover,

during interview sessions the Panel was informed that senior students are not allocated their own space in the studios where they can utilise the space during allocated practical sessions only or when the studio is not utilised by other courses. The Panel notes that student collaborative spaces need to be established in order to foster a studio culture that is imperative for creativity and innovation. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should further expand the studio facilities available to students and ensure that senior students are allocated permanent space to enhance their learning experience. In addition, the Panel acknowledges that computer laboratories are available and are all equipped with updated relevant software, which was confirmed during the site visit. However, during interview sessions the Panel was informed that the plotter was not made available to students although printing in larger format is required for assessment. Moreover, The Panel is of the view that relevant Computer Aided Design (CAD) programmes should be made available to all interior design students in order to ensure the currency of the graduate attributes. The Panel also toured the Library and noted the facilities available for students, which include study rooms, a common study area and the computers with Microsoft Word and printing facilities. The Panel also notes that the library's databases for e-book and e-journals are of an international standard. However, the Panel advises that the Avery Index, which is an integral database for art, architecture and design journals and publications, is not included. The Panel encourages the College to expand its e-learning resources to include Avery Index.

- 2.9 UoB employs a number of tracking systems to evaluate the utilisation of its different resources. The Panel notes the involvement of the timetabling committee in managing the resources allocated to the programme. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that laboratory technicians are responsible for tracking the utilisation of the laboratories and ensuring that sufficient equipment and consumables are available. These are arranged for at the beginning of each semester and monitored throughout the delivery of the courses. Moreover, the e-learning centre maintains usage data of the e-learning resources and the library recently implemented the LibQUAL system, which is a web-based survey to help in assessing and improving its services. The Panel acknowledges the existence of these tracking systems and encourages the College to further utilise these data to inform its decision-making.
- 2.10 The SER indicates that UoB provides its students with a range of support that includes support for the usage of the laboratory, library and e-resources, academic advising, counselling and health care. The Career Counselling Office supports students through liaising with the industry to provide students with suitable opportunities for on-job training and advocating for the programme graduates to be employed, in addition to conducting workshops on leadership development, CV writing and job interviews. Moreover, the Deanship of Students Affairs organises and oversees students' activities such as peer learning and youth delegation programmes while the university health

clinic provides comprehensive on campus services. Interviewed students were satisfied with the range of support provided to them. The Panel appreciates the range of social and career counselling provided to students. The Library provides a range of services, such as library induction, open days and training workshops are offered to students and staff and conducts bi-annual user surveys to monitor the level of satisfaction. Moreover, the IT Centre runs information literacy training and the e-learning Centre provides students with support for the usage of 'Moodle' and 'Blackboard'. All enrolled students are assigned an academic advisor upon enrolling in the programme, however, except for at-risk students, the process used to monitor and follow-up students' progress is unclear and performed informally at the programme and individual level between the student and academic staff. The Panel acknowledges the range of academic support provided to students and encourages the University to develop an overarching support policy in order to ensure consistency and equity amongst students.

- 2.11 UoB has a formal induction day for newly admitted students organised by the Deanship of Students Affairs, where the college's Dean, department Chairperson and course coordinators participate in delivering the event to the students. The orientation programme is compulsory for students who score less than 80% on their aptitude test. During interview sessions, the Panel confirmed that the orientation programme comprises both a general orientation section at the university level, and a programme specific section during which students are provided with relevant information, which includes the Handbook, and an Orientation Guide specific to the Department of Architecture and Interior Design. The Panel appreciates that the Orientation programme is organised at both the university and programme level and caters specifically for the needs of the Interior Design students. Nonetheless, the Panel noted the low number of students who attend the orientation programme. Moreover, it is unclear how students that do not attend the orientation are provided with the information needed. The Panel recommends that the College should provide alternative provisions for those students who do not attend the orientation programme.
- 2.12 As stated earlier, every student is assigned an academic advisor from the first day he/she commences in the programme. The SER states that there is an appropriate academic support in place to track students' progress, identify students at risk of academic failure and provides interventions for them. This is available through a communication system between the IT, MIS, administration and academic staff. Interviewed staff members indicated to the Panel that the follow up support for these students is implemented at a programme level through an action plan. However, the Panel noted that although the system is available, much of student support is performed informally between students and academic staff. There is also a peer-mentoring scheme that at-risk students may benefit from. The Panel appreciates the

peer-mentoring scheme, which allows for a vertical collaboration of students between different year levels. The Panel acknowledges that policies and procedures are in place to identify at-risk students and provide timely intervention for students at risk and encourages the College to develop and implement a system to identify students that are undergoing hardships before they become at risk of academic failure.

2.13 The Department of Architecture and Interior Design offers many opportunities for site tours and visits, in addition to attending seminars and lectures presented by guest speakers. Moreover, career day is organised annually and attended by senior students to expose them to the labour market and its expectations. Students are also encouraged to attend conferences and competitions whenever applicable. During interview sessions, the Panel confirmed that students lead the organisation of a number of activities through students' societies and clubs and participate in sport tournaments organised by the University. In addition, a number of activities are organised by the Division of Social and Cultural Activities of the Deanship of Students Affairs. The Panel notes with appreciation the many activities attended and organised by the students that enrich their learning experience.

2.14 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Efficiency of the Programme, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- There are formal admission policy and procedures, known to students and staff and include an evaluation of applicants drawing skills.
- There is a formal structure for the management of the programme with clear lines of accountability that students and staff are well-informed of and student committees are involved in the programme decision-making.
- The recruitment policy is transparent and decisions on selection of new staff recruitment are achieved through consultation at a university, college and programme level.
- There is a management information system that provides detailed information about the students and has a provision for online registration and fee payment.
- There are policies and procedures that are consistently implemented to ensure the security of students' records and the reliability of the students' grades entering mechanism.
- General facilities available are suitable for the needs of the programme and the students.
- Students are provided with a range of career and social counselling, which they are satisfied with.
- Newly admitted students are provided with orientation programme that is organised at both the university and programme level and caters specifically for the needs of the Interior Design students.

- There is also a peer-mentoring scheme that at-risk students may benefit from, which allows for a vertical collaboration of students between different year levels.
- Students organise and attend a range of activities that enriches their learning experience.

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

- revise the aptitude test to be more specific to the entry level and direction of the programme
- investigate the reasons for the relatively long period the students take to complete the programme requirements and develop a plan to address the issue
- revise the academic staff workload and university regulations in order to encourage academic staff to focus more on personal and professional development as well as research
- develop a long-term recruitment plan that ensures a suitable student-to-staff ratio
- address the misalignment in the HR promotion and appraisal procedure, and develop and implement a plan to facilitate faculty promotion
- develop and implement a formal induction programme for the newly appointed staff at a university, college and department level
- further expand the studio facilities available to students and ensure that senior students are allocated permanent space to enhance their learning experience
- provide alternative provisions for those students who do not attend the orientation programme.

2.16 **Judgement**

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

3. Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

- 3.1 The BSID programme has a set of PEOs identifying the skills and attributes programme graduates are expected to attain. These are mapped to the PILOs, which are also called the PLEs and are directly adopted from the CIDA professional standards 2011. As stated under Indicator 1, the CILOs are also adopted from the SLEs stated by CIDA. These are clearly mapped to the PLEs and hence the PEOs. There is a clear mechanism to link the assessment methods used to the SLEs needed to be assessed and then the outcome of the assessment is utilised to assess the level of SLEs achievement, which is then aggregated to assess the level of achievement of the PEOs. The SER states that course specification documentation is one mechanism through which the achievement of graduate attributes is ensured, these attributes are stated in the course documentation. Hence, the Panel appreciates that graduate attributes are clearly stated in terms of PEOs and that assessment outcomes are aggregated to assess the level these attributes are attained by a cohort.
- 3.2 There is a formal benchmarking policy on the university level that stipulates the benchmarking principles and procedures to be used and clearly states the responsibilities of the QAAC, VP academics, college's Dean and the department Chairperson in the process. The SER states that the programme has elected CIDA as its primary benchmarking reference point. The programme is further benchmarked with a basket of similar programmes offered by local, regional and international institutions. The Panel notes the decision to make the internationally accepted benchmark its primary reference point and appreciates that the benchmarking activities resulted in improving the programme structure and content. However, the Panel notes that the benchmarking process mainly comprises a comparison of curricula, course contents, ILOs and credit levels and should be expanded to include comparison of admission requirements, progression rates, academic standards, teaching and learning strategies, etc.. The Panel recommends that the College should expand its benchmarking activities to include all aspects of the programme and its outcomes.
- 3.3 There is a formal assessment policy that is adopted by the Department, and is freely available to staff and students. The department Chairperson is responsible for the implementation of the policy and that it is reviewed on an annual basis, which has led to the development of the department's assessment policy. During interview sessions with faculty members and registration staff members, the Panel confirmed that student grade distribution is approved by the department Chairperson and the Dean before it is published to students. The department Chairperson is also responsible for

arranging for the invigilation of the final examinations to ensure their integrity. There is evidence from the documentations provided and interviews conducted that assessment policy and procedures are consistently implemented, monitored and subject to regular reviews. As detailed under Indicator 1, there is also a student's appeal system and an anti-plagiarism mechanism that both students and staff are well-informed of. The Panel appreciates that there is a formal assessment policy and procedures that are consistently implemented and regularly reviewed.

- 3.4 The SER states that the 'Articulation Matrix' is used by the BSID programme team to ensure that the PEOs and PLEs are achieved *via* the assessment of the SLEs. Moreover, the Departmental Assessment Policy requires that SLEs and PLEs must form part of all documentations prepared for the juries of studio-based courses. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that faculty members utilise the course assessment matrix to map assessment tools to relevant SLEs, and that at the end of each semester, they complete a course assessment form, which reports on the alignment of all assessment tools used to the SLEs and the level of achievement and their contribution to the PLEs. The Panel notes with appreciation that the system in place is sufficient to assess the level of learning outcomes' attainment. Nonetheless, when studying the provided course files, the Panel noted some discrepancies in the level and accuracy of implementing this process in a few courses. In addition, as pre-assessment moderation is not adopted by the College or the Department, misalignment can be detected after students sit the assessment. This will be discussed in more details in the paragraphs below.
- 3.5 UoB has an assessment and moderation policy that stipulates the pre- and post-assessment moderation systems. For courses offered in multi sections, all instructors contribute in setting the examination paper, which is finalised by the course coordinator and the examination paper is graded collectively. The Panel furthermore notes that student grade distribution is approved by the department Chairperson and the Dean before it is published to students. During interview sessions, the Panel confirmed that post-assessment moderation is conducted by the QAAC, where course files, including assessment tools, are subject to revision and comments on the level of assessment and its relevance to the learning outcome is included. Moreover, the department's assessment policy stipulates that assessing students' work in all studio-type courses is achieved through a jury with clear roles and responsibilities of jury members who are provided with a rubric to guide their assessment. However, the Panel noted that theoretical courses (except those offered in multi-sections) are not subject to pre-assessment moderation and that post-assessment moderation is conducted by the QAAC only and not by specialised faculty members. The Panel recommends that the College should expand its internal-moderation system to include a pre-assessment moderation for all its courses and that pre- and post- assessment moderation is conducted by specialised faculty members.

- 3.6 UoB and the department's assessment policies indicate that only the assessment of senior design projects and industrial training courses involve input from external examiners. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that by subjecting the programme to external accreditation by a professional body, such as CIDA, the programme will be externally moderated. Whilst the Panel agrees that this is a form of external moderation, it is a pre-assessment moderation that occurs only periodically. Moreover, the BSID has not been subject to any external accreditation yet. The Panel recommends that the College should revise its moderation policy to include external moderation of its assessment tools beyond the senior design projects.
- 3.7 During the site visit, the Panel was provided with ample samples of students' assessed work. These included quizzes, examinations (mid-term and final), assignments and students design work. The Panel studied the samples provided and notes that for the theoretical courses, the assessment tools used are, in general, suitable for the course level and content and are properly linked to the SLEs. Moreover, the grades awarded are of an acceptable level. The Panel also studied the exhibited students' design work and notes that students' work is comparable with what can be found at other schools offering a similar programme. However, the Panel found that the theoretical framework behind the design is not elaborated on and during interview sessions, the Panel confirmed that it is not expected from the students. The Panel found that with the exception of the Design Basic I studio, the design outcome of the studios and theory units does not align with the vision of the programme. The Panel recommends that the College should ensure that the students design work is strengthened by including the philosophical and theory background of the design that will encourage abstract critical thinking (See Paragraph 1.3).
- 3.8 The level of the programme graduates' achievement is measured directly through evaluating the achievement of SLEs, PLEs and PEOs using assessment and mapping as explained in Paragraph 3.4 above. The SER states that the programme team also assess the level of students' achievement indirectly by seeking feedback from the employers and alumni on the level of its graduates' achievement and attainment of the PLEs and PEOs, which indicate a high satisfaction. This was confirmed during interview sessions. The Panel also studied the grade distribution of the programme's graduate for the 2007-2010 students' batches and notes that these are average results, although somewhat some were on the high side. Moreover, as stated earlier, students' work is in general suitable for the type and level of the programme. Hence, the Panel appreciates that the level of achievement of the graduates meets the programme educational objectives and intended learning outcomes.
- 3.9 The SER states that the College of Engineering monitors students' pass rates and completion and exit rates *via* reports submitted by the department Chairperson and the registrar office. Gradates destination data provided indicate that the programme

team has information about 62% of its graduates' destination for those graduated since the academic year 2012-2013. Out of these, 6% are self-employed, 31% are employed in the programme field, 13% employed outside the programme field and 9% are unemployed. The Panel acknowledges that these data are within acceptable level. Nonetheless, when requesting BSID detailed cohort analysis, the Panel was provided with aggregated data regarding retention, dropout and dismissal rates of both the BSID and the B.Sc. Architecture programmes, which limits the Panel's ability to judge the performance of the individual programme. The Panel recommends that the College should conduct a detailed cohort analysis for the BSID programme separately to properly and precisely assess the ID cohorts' performance.

- 3.10 As stated under Indicator 1, the BSID programme includes a compulsory industrial training course (INTD 325; 'Interior Design Training') allocated between semester 6 and 7 of the programme plan. It comprises a two-month long (200 hour) internship at an approved interior design practice. The allocation of students is managed by the Department and the industrial liaising department on the university level where available training sites are identified and students are allocated. The Department assigns faculty members to supervise students and liaise with the on-job supervisor who is provided with a clear rubric on what is expected from the training and how to assess the trainee. Students are required to write a report and present it as part of their assessment. Interview sessions revealed that stakeholders highly appreciate the process. The Panel appreciates that the work-based learning is properly managed and assessed to ensure appropriate learning experience.
- 3.11 The BSID programme includes a graduation design project which is delivered in two phases; 'Graduation Project-Programming Stage course (INTD 411) in which students are expected to do research oriented work and 'Graduation Project-Design Stage' (INTD 420) which is a design oriented course. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the Graduation Project Committee is responsible for setting up the standards and procedures for managing the course and ensuring the quality of the projects. The Committee also sets the grading criteria and assembles jury panels for assessing the design work. These criteria are clearly stipulated in the 'Graduation Project Guidelines' document distributed to students, supervisors and jury members, which must include an external member. The document also states the roles and responsibilities of the student and the supervisor. Furthermore, the Architecture and Interior Design Department has introduced mechanisms for monitoring the implementation and improvement of these processes by requiring written reports from external assessors, which are considered in the post-examination review conducted by the Department Council. Interviewed staff and students were well-informed with these guidelines. The Panel appreciates that there is a clear procedure for managing the graduation design project, clearly stating the roles and responsibilities of the student, supervisor and jury members, and that feedback is

sought from external jury members to improve the design and delivery of the course. Notwithstanding the above, the Panel is concerned that there is a high emphasis on the size of the design as a main measure for project complexity. The Panel notes that complexity of the design could be more in the detail and needs of the project rather than the volume. The Panel advises the College to investigate the possibility of reducing the project area in order to have more time to focus on critical thinking (See paragraph 3.7).

- 3.12 The BSID programme has a Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), which meets annually as stated in the SER. The Committee includes representatives from the industry, employers and alumni. The Panel was provided with minutes of the first annual meeting of the PAC, which is dated 1 December 2015. During this meeting, the current programme, its learning outcomes, and suggestions for improvements were discussed. However, the BSID programme team could not provide the Panel with documents on PAC's policy or procedure. Moreover, the Panel requested to meet with representatives from the PAC. However, the College could only arrange for a teleconference meeting with one member only. The Panel recommends that the College should develop and implement a formal policy and procedure for the PAC that clearly state the committee's remit and the number of meeting it should have during an academic year, in addition to a mechanism to assess its effectiveness.
- 3.13 UoB measures employers and alumni satisfaction using survey's administrated yearly and every two years, respectively. The SER states that these questionnaires are used to identify the level of satisfaction with the atonement of the PEOs and PLEs. Alumni and employers aggregated data indicate that they are in general satisfied with the programme outcomes. Moreover, interviewed alumni and employers indicated their high satisfaction with the programme and its outcome. The Panel appreciates that alumni and employers are satisfied with the programme and its outcome.
- 3.14 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Academic Standards of the Graduates, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- Graduate attributes are clearly stated in terms of programme educational objectives and assessment outcomes are aggregated to assess the level these attributes are attained by a cohort.
 - There is a formal benchmarking policy on the university level that stipulates the benchmarking principles and procedures to be used and its application by the BSID programme team resulted in improving the programme structure and content.
 - There are formal assessment policy and procedures that are consistently implemented and regularly reviewed.
 - An appropriate system is in place for the assessment of the level learning outcomes' attainment.

- The levels of achievement of graduates meet the programme goals and intended learning outcomes.
- The work-based learning component of the programme is properly managed and assessed to ensure appropriate learning experience.
- There is a clear procedure for managing the graduation design project, clearly stating the roles and responsibilities of the student, supervisor and jury members, and feedback is sought from external jury members to improve the design and delivery of the course.
- Alumni and employers are satisfied with the programme and its outcome.

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

- expand the benchmarking activities to include all aspects of the programme and its outcomes
- expand the internal-moderation system used to include a pre-assessment moderation for all the programme courses and ensure that pre- and post-assessment moderation is conducted by specialised faculty members
- revise the moderation policy to include external moderation of the assessment tools beyond the senior design projects
- strengthen the students design work by including the philosophical and theory background of the design that will encourage abstract critical thinking
- conduct a detailed cohort analysis for the BSID programme separately to properly and precisely assess the ID cohorts' performance
- develop and implement a formal policy and procedure for the programme advisory committee that clearly state the committee's remit and the number of meeting it should have during an academic year, in addition to a mechanism to assess its effectiveness.

3.16 **Judgement**

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

4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance

The arrangements in place for managing the programme, including quality assurance and continuous improvement, contribute to giving confidence in the programme.

- 4.1 UoB has a comprehensive set of policies, procedures and regulations for university-wide academic, admission, human resource and other matters. These are available on the university's web site, where they are accessible by the university community, and the College of Engineering expands that with its own website that includes *inter alia* related policies, procedures, regulations and news. In addition, students have access to the relevant policies and procedures through the orientation programme, Students Handbook and requests to the Dean's office. The SER states that Adherence to university policies and procedures are monitored at two levels. At the university level, QAAC works directly with the colleges' Dean. This office is responsible for the consistency and alignment of the implementation of policies and their related procedures. At the programme level, the Dean and the Chairpersons are responsible for implementation and management. The Panel appreciates that there is a set of appropriate policies and procedures suitable for the management of the programme with clear responsibilities that are accessible by staff and students. However, based on the evidence provided in the course files and the staff interviews, the Panel is concerned that for a few policies relevant to the programme, especially the new ones, faculty are not well-informed about these policies and procedures. Hence, the Panel recommends that the College should further enhance the mechanisms for communicating new institutional policies to respective stakeholders to ensure shared understanding and effective implementation.
- 4.2 Management of the programme is the responsibility of the department Chairperson, who reports to the Dean of the College. The Chairperson is assisted by the programme coordinator and there is a range of committees that have the responsibility for accreditation, curriculum development, administration and events. During interview sessions, the Panel learned that permanent committees are formed at the beginning of each academic year while *ad hoc* committees, such as recruitment, promotion and invigilation committees are formed based on need. The Department Council is the custodian of the academic integrity and is responsible for approving all the major academic decisions raised by the programme team, through the Chairperson, to the College. Nonetheless, the Panel is concerned with the heavy workload and responsibilities of the department Chairperson and senior staff members that might hinder their abilities to provide effective leadership to the programme. The Panel recommends that the College should address the leadership responsibilities as this could hinder the effective leadership and could influence the management of the programme.

- 4.3 UoB has a formal Quality Assurance Manual that provides comprehensive information about policies and procedures relating to Quality Assurance (QA). The QAAC has the overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the quality management system at the University. On the Department level, the Departmental Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee operates under the guidance of the college's Quality Assurance Office, which is responsible to the QAAC. During interview sessions, the Panel confirmed that the QAAC conducts periodic QA compliance audits and the findings are logged at a report submitted to the University Council, where there are follow-up actions. In parallel, there are random quality assurance audits at the university and college levels. The Panel acknowledges the provision of a structure for the management of QA within the Department of Architecture and Interior Design. Nevertheless, the Panel noted from evidence provided and discussion with staff at different levels that the Department, and hence the College, is focussed more on satisfying CIDA criteria rather than meeting university, college, departmental and programme's QA objectives. While the Panel acknowledged the department's desire to seek CIDA substantial equivalence, it suggests that the CIDA Accreditation Committee to be a sub-Committee of a Departmental Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee rather than a main derive to ensure a culture of contentious enhancement, rather than compliance culture.
- 4.4 The SER states that quality assurance policy and procedures have been formally established at the UoB since 2009 and faculty members and administrative staff have been made aware of these through briefings and emails. In addition, QA principles and mechanisms adopted to quality assure the programme are communicated through workshops and seminars. Reinforcing these is the IDEAS Handbook, which is provided to faculty members and administrative staff. During interview sessions, the Panel confirmed the awareness of academic and administrative staff of UoB's adopted quality assurance principles, policies and procedures and their role in assuring the quality of the provision. The Panel appreciates that the College provides capacity-building opportunities for academic staff to enhance their understanding of quality assurance concepts and their roles and responsibilities.
- 4.5 New programmes are developed and introduced based on the 'Academic Programme and Course Development Policy', which emphasises the need to evaluate the relevance of the programme to the market needs and the aims and objectives of the Department and the University as a whole and its alignment to external accrediting bodies' requirements. The policy stipulates the role of the Departmental Curriculum Committee, Department Council, College Curriculum Committee and College Council in ensuring that the programme is designed and developed in line with published policies and procedures before submitting it to the University Council for approval, and the Board for final endorsement. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the College did not introduce new programmes in the last three years.

The Panel acknowledges that the policy adopted for designing and developing new programmes is fit for purpose.

- 4.6 Based on the university's internal Quality Assurance manual, an evaluation report is prepared by teaching staff for each taught course at the end of every semester. The report stipulates analysis of students' achievement and grade distribution, evaluation of the adequacy of the pre-requests and comments on course content and changes if needed. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that these reports are submitted to the Departmental Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee, discussed in the Department Council and as a result minor changes are introduced to the course where needed. The Panel appreciates that there is a formal process for the review and contentious maintenance of the programme that is consistently implemented. Moreover, students' course-specific evaluations play a central role in the contentious assessment of the programme. These surveys cover such topics as the quality of the syllabus, learning goals, instructor performance, and teaching and assessment methods. These surveys are analysed by the Centre for Measurement with the outcomes as an input for course revision or faculty mentoring. During interview sessions, the Panel was informed that the responses to these student-completed surveys are processed and the compiled outcomes are given to the department Chairperson and the relevant instructor, though only the quantitative outcomes, but not to the students. The qualitative responses of students, i.e. their comments, are not normally considered. Interviewed faculty members mentioned that they were therefore less able to understand the quantitative survey outcomes because they lacked the qualitative comments of their students. The Panel advises that the faculty should receive both quantitative and qualitative results from the student evaluations of their courses.
- 4.7 Periodic programme review is undertaken through a multi-faceted procedure. A key quality assurance procedure is the bi-annual submission of a self-evaluation report prepared by the Department. This is driven by the Departmental Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee, supervised by the College level Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee, which finally reports to the QAAC. Interviewed faculty members indicated their involvement in both committees and the Centre. Although it is stated in the SER that the University adopts a 5-year periodic programme review cycle, there is no evidence on the consistent implementation of such review cycle. The BSID programme was first offered in 2002 and did not go through major review until 2011 for which the changes were implemented during the academic year 2014-2015. The review was mainly driven by the desire to obtain CIDA equivalency, which is a form of accreditation. In line with the university's 'Academic Programme and Course Development Policy', the review was initiated by the Department and has propagated through different levels to the University Council utilising input from different internal and external stakeholders, including the alumni and employers. There is

ample evidence of recent and successful major changes introduced in the programme and the Panel was informed that the revised programme has been discussed with members of the PAC to get their feedback on the programme's way forward. The Panel appreciates that the periodic review of the programme is effective and has resulted in the improvement of the curriculum and its content.

- 4.8 Stakeholders' feedback is solicited at the university, college, programme and course levels. The intent is to provide necessary feedback for decisions on programme revision and development. A range of relevant input sources is used to ensure that the programme is up to date and meets internal and external stakeholders' expectations, which include government entities, employers, graduates, exiting seniors, Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), CIDA standards, faculty and students. A number of methods for soliciting input are utilised to engage with these stakeholders. Written surveys, such as employers and students course satisfaction surveys, is a prominent method for obtaining stakeholder views. Structured conversations with exiting seniors and with industry leaders, as with the PAC, is another source of stakeholder polling. Clear evidence of inputs derived from stakeholder engagements was reported in the SER. These findings are then utilised to improve the programme. In meetings with the Panel, stakeholders spoke of their engagement with the programme for feedback purposes. The Panel appreciates the range of methods utilised to collect stakeholders feedback to inform decision making on programme delivery and development. Notwithstanding the above, there is little evidence of feedback being provided to stakeholders on programme development due to their feedback. The Panel recommends that the College should develop a mechanism to communicate the collated outcomes of the feedback and the changes introduced as a result to the relevant stakeholders.
- 4.9 Professional development of teaching and administrative staff of the programme is important for effective conduct and development of the programme. The SER reports that faculty attend conferences and seminars, some by visiting professionals and academics, as well as training. The Panel acknowledges the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP) training programme is made available to faculty members to enhance their knowledge and skills of teaching and learning pedagogies. A sample list of seminars in the college during 2014, reported seven seminars of which the Panel found only two of possible relevance to the faculty of the ID programme. Moreover, evidence was provided on a range of quality assurance workshops offered by the QAAC, but faculty members noted that conflicts with their teaching and administration responsibilities made attendance difficult. In meetings with the faculty, it was reported that faculty members are encouraged to attend conferences away from the campus within the limitation of the budget. In addition, the Panel was not provided with evidence on personal development plans of faculty members that are formally reviewed and agreed on with the Department or College. Hence, the Panel

recommends that the College should develop and implement staff professional development policy and procedures, that identify areas for professional development linked to their appraisal; and that mechanisms be provided to enable faculty participation in their professional development.

- 4.10 The SER states that scoping of labour market requirements is undertaken mainly by employer survey and through the PAC. Evidence were provided on the systematic application of the employers' survey, which mainly evaluates the employer satisfaction level with the graduate attainment of the PLEs. However, there is no evidence that the PAC has conducted any meeting beyond the first annual meeting in December 2015. (See paragraph 3.12). Given that professional relevance is critical for employment of graduates of the programme, the Panel notes that the channels for obtaining necessary feedback are limited and not much utilised. The Panel recommends that the College should conduct a formal study of the labour market and its needs to maintain the relevance of the programme.
- 4.11 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- There is a set of appropriate policies and procedures suitable for the management of the programme with clear responsibilities that are accessible by staff and students.
 - Capacity-building opportunities are provided for academic staff to enhance their understanding of quality assurance concepts and their roles and responsibilities.
 - There is a formal process for the review and contentious maintenance of the programme that is consistently implemented.
 - The periodic review of the programme is effective and has resulted in the improvement of the curriculum and its content.
 - A range of methods is utilised to collect stakeholders feedback to inform decision making on programme delivery and development.
- 4.12 In terms of improvement, the Panel **recommends** that the College should:
- further enhance the mechanisms for communicating new institutional policies to respective stakeholders to ensure shared understanding and effective implementation
 - address the heavy workload and responsibilities assigned to the programme leadership and management team to ensure effective and responsible leadership
 - develop a mechanism to communicate the collated outcomes of the feedback and the changes introduced as a result to the relevant stakeholders
 - develop and implement staff professional development policy and procedures, that identify areas for professional development linked to their appraisal; and

- provide mechanisms to enable faculty participation in their professional development
- conduct a formal study of the labour market and its needs to maintain the relevance of the programme.

4.13 Judgement

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

5. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own self-evaluation report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the site visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the *DHR/BQA Programmes-within-College Reviews Handbook, 2014*:

**There is confidence in the B.Sc. in Interior Design, College of Engineering,
offered by the University of Bahrain.**