

الهيئة الوطنية
للمؤهلات وصنمان جودة التعليم والتدريب
National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training



Directorate of Higher Education Reviews

Programmes-within-College Reviews Report

**Master of Private Law
College of Law
University of Bahrain
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 4-6 May 2015
HC065-C2-R065**

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Acronyms

ABA	American Bar Association
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
MIS	Management Information Systems
PCAP	Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice
PEO	Programme Educational Objectives
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Center
QQA	National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
UILO	University Intended Learning Outcomes
UoB	University of Bahrain

1. The Programmes-within-College Reviews Process

1.1 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 National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training (QQA) 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 QQA, 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	

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

A Programmes-within-College review of the College of Law was conducted by DHR of the QQA in terms of its mandate to review the quality of higher education in Bahrain. The site visit took place on 4-6 May 2015 for the academic programmes offered by the College; these are: Bachelor of Law, Master of Public Law; and Master of Private Law.

This Report provides an account of the review process and the findings of the Master of Private Law programme 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.

The University of Bahrain (UoB) was notified by the DHR/QQA on 11 December 2014 that it would be subject to a Programmes-within-College review of the programmes offered by the College of Law with the site visit taking place on 4-6 May 2015. In preparation for the review, UoB conducted its college self-evaluation of all

its programmes and submitted the SERs with appendices on the agreed date of 5 March 2015.

The DHR constituted a panel consisting of experts in the academic field of Master of Private Law programme and in higher education who have experience of external programme quality reviews. The Panel comprised four 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 Master of Private Law programme. 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 administrative staff and faculty members in the Master of Private Law programme.

1.3 Overview of the College of Law

The study of Law in UoB commenced as a department in the College of Business Administration in 1999. However, and in recognition of the significant role of legal studies, the UoB Board of Trustees issued resolution (159) to establish the College of Law on 6-3-2002. The College of Law aims to achieve its mission by preparing qualified graduates to work in judicial establishments and legal departments, and providing them with professional legal knowledge and skills which enables them lead positive change in their society. The College of Law has two academic departments, namely: Department of Public Law and Department of Private Law, which offer four academic programmes: Bachelor of Law, Master of Public Law, Master of Private Law and PhD in Law. During the 2014-2015 academic year, there were (44) full-time and (10) part-time faculty members supported by (20)

administrative staff. The total number of students enrolled in the College at the time of the site visit was (1871) students. The College was reviewed in 2013 by the American Bar Association (ABA) which submitted a detailed report including recommendations for the improvement of the college programmes.

1.4 Overview of the Master of Private Law Programme

The Master of Private Law programme is offered by the Department of Private Law in the College of Law. The college Dean is responsible for the programme management, in coordination with the Head of Public Law Department. The programme was first offered in the 2008-2009 academic year, with the first batch of students graduating in the 2011-2012 academic year. There are (26) faculty members offering the programme, supported by (20) administrative staff members. At the time of the site visit, the total number of students enrolled in the programme was (11) students, and the total number of graduate since the inception of the programme was (6) graduates.

1.5 Summary of Review Judgements

Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Master of Private Law Programme

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

2. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

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

- 2.1 The Master of Private Law programme has a clear academic framework which includes objectives and learning outcomes aligned to the college objectives and mission. The programme aims to prepare graduates with distinguished legal expertise for practicing legal work in the field of Private Law, and implementing legal research to meet the community and labour market needs. The programme also aims to enrich the legal studies that contribute to the development of the legislative and judicial aspects of the Kingdom's justice system. The Panel notes that the programme's objectives, in providing the labour market in the Kingdom with qualified legal cadre, are aligned with the university mission which emphasizes 'commitment towards excellence in teaching and learning', and the college mission which emphasizes 'preparing distinguished graduates in the legal field'. The SER includes matrices identifying the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) and their mapping to the programme objectives. The Panel appreciates that the Master of Private Law programme has a clear academic framework with clear objectives that contribute to the achievement of the college's and institution's missions.
- 2.2 The curriculum is composed of (33) credit hours, distributed on (9) courses - of which (8) are compulsory and one is elective, in addition to (6) credit hours for the Master thesis. The Panel notes that the curriculum includes an appropriate set of advanced and broad courses that achieve an appropriate balance between theoretical and applied aspects of the programme. The Panel appreciates that the curriculum is organized to allow a good balance between knowledge and skills, with an appropriate students' workload. However, the Panel notes that the 'Code of Civil and Commercial Procedure' (LAW 512) and 'International Private Law' (LAW 518) courses are offered in the last semester, preceded by 'Commercial Arbitration Force' (LAW 514) and 'Informatics Law' (LAW 513) courses. The Panel recommends that the College offer the 'Code of Civil and Commercial Procedure' (LAW 512) and 'International Private Law' (LAW 518) in the second semester, in order to achieve a better academic progression. The Panel also notes that the curriculum includes an elective course of three credit hours, whereby students can select one of four elective courses; namely 'Philosophy of Law' (LAW 501), 'Bank Transactions Law' (LAW 514), 'Copyright Property Law' (LAW 517) and 'Islamic Banking Law' (LAW 519). However, the Panel was informed, during interviews with faculty members and students, that there is no real opportunity for students to select from these courses as the College decides which elective course to offer every semester. The Panel recommends that the College offer an appropriate number of elective courses every

semester, in order to provide students with a genuine opportunity to select one course from them. The Panel also suggests that these elective courses include current topics, in line with the recent legal developments, such as 'Consumer Protection Law', 'Franchising Contracts', 'International Trade Law', 'Investment Protection' and 'Medical Law'.

- 2.3 With regard to the skills developed by the curriculum, the Panel notes – with appreciation – that certain aspects are well-addressed to assist students in acquiring deep knowledge reflected in cognitive and professional skills, such as analysis, inference and legal texts comparison. Students are also given the opportunity to apply their practical skills through the 'Research Methodology' (LAW 500) course which enables students to identify practical problems for investigation, and solve them through legal analysis of judicial verdicts and resolutions. Moreover, this course equips the students with the legal formulation skill, which is essential for writing the Master thesis. During interviews, it was evident to the Panel that the majority of students benefit from this course, and are satisfied with the faculty members teaching this course. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel confirmed that the 'Research Methodology' course is taught in a practical way, in terms of topic selection and compliance with scientific research rules. Faculty members also accompany the students to the library to assist them in conducting literature search related to their research topics. The Panel appreciates that the curriculum includes the 'Research Methodology' course, which achieves the required balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the field of Private Law.
- 2.4 The courses specifications are well-documented and meet the criteria of Private Law specialization, in terms of content, intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning methods, and resources for the current professional practice. Upon reviewing a sample of course files during the site visit, the Panel noted the use of a standard form for the identification of the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs), and their mapping to the Programme ILOs, in addition to the specification of the teaching methods and assessment tools for each CILO. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel learned that the process of preparing the course specification forms is carried out according to the guidelines of the Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation Centre (QAAC). The Panel appreciates that the curriculum content, its level and outcomes, in general, meet the standards and criteria expected in a Master of Private Law programme. The Panel notes that the course instructors select three current topics and submit them to the Department Council, which in turn selects one topic and forwards it to the College Council for final approval of the topic that will be taught in the following academic year. The Panel reviewed the topics taught in a group of courses and found them to be overall appropriate to the branch of Private Law that the course deals with. However, the Panel is of the view that the selection of topics for courses should be within the

context of a departmental plan, and not left for course instructors. The Panel recommends that the College develop an academic plan that specifies current topics in Private Law, to ensure that the topics to be taught will address recent jurisprudential and legislative developments in Private Law.

- 2.5 The Master of Private Law programme has five intended learning outcomes at the programme level, which are clearly expressed in the programme specification. These include: in-depth knowledge of the branches of Private Law, professional legal skills, in addition to analytic thinking, and scientific research as well as general skills. In its interviews with the faculty members, the Panel was informed that there are standard guidelines prepared by the UoB QAAC for the formulation of the programme ILOs and their alignment to the programme objectives, as illustrated in the SER. From examining submitted evidence, the Panel confirmed that the programme learning outcomes achieve a broad set of knowledge and skills which are appropriate to the Master of Private Law programme level. The Panel appreciates that the intended learning outcomes of the Master of Private Law programme are appropriate to the academic degree, and are well-aligned with the programme objectives.
- 2.6 Each course in the curriculum has a set of intended learning outcomes which are documented in detail in the SER and in the course specification forms included in course files. During the site visit, the Panel confirmed that the CILOs are, in general, appropriate to the course level, and that they are appropriately mapped to the programme ILOs. Furthermore, the course specifications include matrices illustrating the mapping the CILOs of each course to the programme ILOs. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel indicated that they received training on the formulation of course ILOs to ensure their appropriateness to the level of courses for which they were developed, in terms of knowledge and skills complexity level, as well as the competencies achieved. The Panel appreciates that the course intended learning outcomes are appropriate to the level of courses, and are appropriately mapped to the Master of Private Law programme intended learning outcomes.
- 2.7 The Department of Private Law implements the institutional 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at University of Bahrain' as well as the 'Regulations of Postgraduate Studies at UoB', which encourage faculty members to use various teaching and learning methods to enhance students' achievement and personal responsibility for their learning. The SER states that the teaching and learning methods implemented in the programme include: theoretical lectures, discussions and debates, juridical applications, and research projects. During interviews, students informed the Panel that the teaching and learning methods include lectures, students' participation in the lecture preparation, research projects, classroom activities, as well as judicial applications. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel confirmed that the teaching and learning methods encourage independent learning

coupled with awareness of scientific research ethics, and referencing, which the Panel appreciates. However, the Panel notes that modern teaching technologies are not used, except by a small number of the faculty members. Moreover, the programme does not utilize external lecturers working in the legal field. The Panel is of the view that there is a need to encourage faculty members to use modern tools such as e-learning and provide teaching materials on Moodle or Blackboard in order to create a more interactive environment for students. The Panel recommends that the College provide adequate training for faculty members on the use of teaching and learning methods that are appropriate for legal instruction, and enhance the achievement of the Master of Private Law programme objectives.

2.8 The assessment policies implemented in the Master of Private Law programme are documented in the 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at University of Bahrain' and the 'Regulations of Postgraduate Studies at UoB' which include procedures to ensure the objectivity of assessments, in terms of marks distribution in students' assessed work as well as the evaluation of Master theses. According to the provided evidence, grades of postgraduate courses are distributed as follows: (25%) for midterm examination, (40%) for the final written examination, (10%) for class activities and (25%) for the oral examination. Upon reviewing course files, the Panel noted that both summative and formative assessment are implemented, using different tools such as examinations, reports, research papers, presentations and classroom activities. The 'Regulations of Study and Examination at University of Bahrain' include a clear policy which requires course instructors to provide students with written or oral feedback on their assessment, so that they become aware of their shortcoming and improve their performance. The Panel notes that feedback on students' performance is provided during classroom activities and midterm examinations, which motivates students to exert more effort in learning and improving their achievement. Based on the review of course files and students' interviews, the Panel notes that there is fairness and transparency in grading, which are enhanced by the implementation of the students appeals and plagiarism policies. Students interviewed by the Panel indicated that they are informed about the assessment policies during the orientation day, and from the handbooks issued by the College and Deanship of Student Affairs. The Panel appreciates that appropriate and transparent policies and mechanisms are implemented to assess students' achievements, and ensure the reliability and fairness of grading.

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

- The Master of Private Law programme has a clear academic framework with clear objectives that contribute to the achievement of the college's and institution's missions.

- The curriculum is organized to allow a good balance between knowledge and skills, with an appropriate students' workload.
- The curriculum equips students with deep legal knowledge reflected in cognitive and professional skills, such as analysis, inference and legal texts comparison.
- The curriculum includes a 'Research Methodology' course, which achieves the required balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills application of in the field of Private Law.
- The curriculum content, its level and outcomes, in general, meet the standards and criteria expected in a Master of Private Law programme.
- The intended learning outcomes of the Master of Private Law programme are appropriate to the academic degree, and are well-aligned with the programme objectives.
- The course intended learning outcomes are appropriate to the level of courses, and are appropriately mapped to the Master of Private Law programme intended learning outcomes.
- The implemented teaching and learning methods encourage independent learning coupled with awareness of scientific research ethics, and referencing.
- Appropriate and transparent policies and mechanisms are implemented to assess students' achievements, and ensure the reliability and fairness of grading.

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

- offer the 'Code of Civil and Commercial Procedure' (LAW 512) and 'International Private Law' (LAW 518) in the second semester, in order to achieve a better academic progression
- offer an appropriate number of elective courses every semester, in order to provide students a genuine opportunity to select one course from them
- develop an academic plan that specifies current topics in Private Law, to ensure that the topics to be taught will address recent jurisprudential and legislative developments in Private Law
- provide adequate training for faculty members on the use of teaching and learning methods that are appropriate for legal instruction, and enhance the achievement of the Master of Private Law programme objectives.

2.11 **Judgement**

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

3. 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.

- 3.1 Admission to the Master of Private Law programme follows the university-wide admission policy for postgraduate studies, which requires applicants to have a Bachelor degree in Law from UoB, or another recognised university, with a minimum GPA of (2.67 out of 4.00) or its equivalent. In addition, applicants must have a TOEFL or IELTS score specified by the College Council, or successfully complete two English courses at UoB. During interviews, the Panel confirmed that applicants have to pass a legal examination as specified by the Department Council, in addition to an Aptitude Test and a personal interview. The admission policy also allows the admission of students transferred from other universities or from another Master programme in the University as per Article (30) of the UoB 'Regulations of Postgraduate Studies'. The Panel notes that the admission policies and procedures are clear and widely published for students in the college handbooks and on the university website. The SER states that the admission criteria are subject to periodic reviews according to the current students' performance in the academic programmes, to ensure that the admission criteria are appropriate to the level and type of the programme. The Panel appreciates that the admission policies and procedures in the Master of Private Law programme are clear and appropriate to the level and type of the programme, and are available for students and subject to periodic reviews.
- 3.2 From provided evidence, the Panel notes that admission requirements (the required GPA of Bachelor degree and other stipulated criteria) are adequate to attract students who are appropriately qualified to join the programme. During interviews, the Panel confirmed that the programme students have the cognitive ability to comprehend the courses taught in the programme. The Panel also learned that the Department of Private Law may assign some remedial courses for students who need these courses to adapt themselves with the programme's requirements. The Panel acknowledges that the Department implements appropriate procedures, to ensure that the level of students admitted in the Master of Private Law programme is consistent with the programme objectives.
- 3.3 There are clear procedures for the distribution of responsibilities in the management of the Master of Private Law programme, as evident from provided documents and site-visit interviews. The College Dean holds overall responsibility for the management of the programme, in coordination with the Head of Private Law Department. The head of the academic department plays crucial roles in this respect, including delegating of faculty members to teach the various courses, dealing with

students to solve their problems, chairing the Department Council, attending the College Council sessions and coordinating with the College Dean regarding the programme. The College has clear procedures for decision making, with the important decisions being taken by the Department Council, and then forwarded to the College Council and subsequently to the University Council as necessary. In addition, there are many committees contributing to the programme management, the most important of which are Faculty Members Selection Committee, Academic Promotion Committee, Textbooks Committee, Assessment Committee, and Postgraduate Studies Committee. The Panel notes that there is a postgraduate studies coordinator, who follows up with postgraduate coordinators in other departments regarding the development of postgraduate programmes, and offering new programmes. The mandates and responsibilities of these committees are clearly-specified and well-documented. The Panel appreciates that there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability for successful programme management, which enables the Master of Private Law programme to achieve its objectives.

- 3.4 The College of Law includes (26) faculty members contributing to the Master of Private Law programme, of whom (3) are Professors, (4) are Associate Professors, (10) are Assistant Professors, in addition to (9) Teaching Assistants. The Panel finds that the number of faculty members is adequate and that their fields of specialization are varied, covering all specializations offered in the programme. The Panel also notes – with appreciation – the diversity of the academic institutions from which the faculty members graduated, including regional and European universities, which enriches the programme. However, upon examining provided evidence, the Panel notes the shortage in the number of the 'Professors', as there are only two professors in Civil Law and one professor in Private Law. The Panel recommends that the College recruit at least one Professor in Commercial Law or any of its branches, and another Professor in Arbitration or in Code of Civil and Commercial Procedure, as there are advanced courses that require the expertise of Professors. According to UoB 'Regulations of Postgraduate Studies', it is a requirement that faculty members teaching in postgraduate programmes to be of Professor or Associate Professor rank. However, it is possible, to have Assistant Professors teaching in the programme, following the Department Council approval provided that they have a minimum four years teaching experience, three published research papers and a teaching evaluation not less than (70%). This was confirmed during interviews with faculty members. During interviews with the College senior management, the Panel was informed that the College has an ongoing process for the recruitment of qualified faculty members according to the College programmes' needs. The Panel notes – with appreciation – that the top graduates are appointed as Teaching Assistants in the College, after they pass the Aptitude Test, and are offered scholarships to distinguished European and American universities to pursue postgraduate degrees in Law and then become faculty members in the programme. The Panel notes that

faculty members have a wide range of expertise and that some of them are actively engaging in research and publishing, as was evident from the faculty members' CVs and list of academic publications. In addition, the College is keen to develop the faculty members' competency in the field of teaching and scientific research by engaging them in conference, workshops and training courses. However, and in spite of the appropriate scholarly output of the faculty members, the Panel notes the lack of a college research plan to motivate active researchers to continue their research activities. The Panel recommends that the College develop a research plan to encourage faculty members - through some type of recognition - to publish their work in academic fields that serve the college and programme aims.

- 3.5 The University has clear procedures for the appointment, appraisal and promotion of faculty members and administrative staff, which are transparently implemented across all colleges. With regards to the recruitment of new faculty members, the concerned committees in the College are responsible for the preparation of shortlisted nominees for academic positions, in collaboration with the Human Resources Office. These nominations are submitted to the Department Council, and subsequently to the College Council, which in turn submits its recommendations to the University Council for final approval. The Panel notes that Bahraini citizens are appointed on a permanent basis, whereas non-Bahrainis are recruited on contracts basis, which are renewed based on competency. During interviews, the Panel learned that the College has an induction programme for new faculty members and staff, during which they are introduced to the College of Law facilities and programmes. As for the retention of competent faculty members, the College offers several incentives such as financial support for research projects and opportunities for publishing their work. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel expressed their satisfaction with the arrangements in place for the recruitment, induction and retention of faculty members. The Panel appreciates that clear and transparent procedures are in place for the recruitment and retention of faculty members, and are consistently implemented.
- 3.6 According to the SER, the Faculty Members Appraisal System includes teaching performance evaluation by students in each semester, as well as a comprehensive evaluation of faculty members by the Head of Department and the College Dean. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the comprehensive appraisal system is implemented only for promotion purposes, and at the time of contract renewal for non-Bahraini faculty members. The Panel is of the view that there is a need for implementing an annual evaluation process for all faculty members. The Panel recommends that the College develop and implement a plan which includes formal mechanisms for the annual evaluation of all faculty members and use the results of this evaluation to identify their professional development needs and academic performance improvement.

- 3.7 The University has a comprehensive framework with clear procedures for the promotion of academic staff members, as evident from provided documents. In line with this framework, promotions are based on four aspects namely: the time period, teaching activities, scientific research and scholarly activities, as well as university and community services. However; during interviews, faculty members indicated that although the promotion policies and procedures are clear, there are some obstacles that can lead to prolonging the promotion process. The Panel was informed that the promotion process may take up to three years from the time the faculty member submit their promotion documents. The Panel learned that only one faculty member was promoted over the last five years, with another faculty members whose promotion application is being processed. From examining provided evidence, the Panel notes that a large percentage is allocated to the non-academic activities such as community services within the university promotion system, which the Panel finds to be a delaying factor in the promotion of many faculty members. The Panel recommends that the College work with relevant entities in UoB to review some of the promotion procedures, particularly the relative weightages of promotion criteria, and to shorten the time required to process promotion applications.
- 3.8 UoB provides an effective Management Information System (MIS) which includes components for electronic registration, timetable preparation, academic advising, e-learning as well as human resources. During the site visit, the Panel observed a demonstration of this system, which confirmed that this system is available on the university website, and that necessary information and data can be extracted for informing decisions or developing policies and strategies. The Panel also learned during interviews that students, faculty members and administrative staff can access relevant information on the MIS according to their individual need. The Panel appreciates that an effective Management Information System is in place and is effectively utilized by the College to inform the decision-making processes in the management of the Master of Private Law programme.
- 3.9 The College has appropriate policies and procedures for ensuring the security of students' records, examinations and results, which are implemented by the Deanship of Registration and Admission and the College of Law Deanship, as coordinated by the postgraduate studies coordinator. In light of these policies, the Postgraduate Studies Deanship is responsible for maintaining students' academic records and data, first as hard copies and which are later saved electronically and regularly updated. The Deanship of Admission and Registration, on the other hand, is responsible for implementing necessary procedures for keeping students' records and ensuring their integrity and security *via* a secured multi-layered system to control access to these data. The website operates by an internal network exclusive to UoB (LAN) and is secured by a security system (SSL). During interviews with the IT Centre staff, the Panel was informed that access to records is restricted to authorized

personnel, *via* a password that is changed every (120) days. The Panel also learned that it is possible to track the identity of individuals who access these records. An electronic copy of records is made every semester by the IT Centre, in addition to the on-campus and off-campus back up in case of disasters. In light of provided evidence and interviews, the Panel notes – with appreciation – that robust policies and procedures are implemented to ensure the accuracy and security of college data and records.

- 3.10 UoB has adequate physical resources in terms of area, type and equipment that meet the needs and objectives of the Master of Private Law programme. During the site visit, the Panel had the opportunity to tour the College of Law building and common facilities, and noted that there is an adequate number of lecture halls equipped with data show and electronic teaching tools, faculty members offices, IT laboratories, two Moot Courts, Legal Clinic, in addition to an auditorium with a capacity for (127) students. The Panel finds these facilities to be adequate in terms of number and capacity. As for the library - and despite its temporary move from the College building to the Central Library - the Panel finds that it is rich references in general and legal ones in particular. The legal library includes more than (17000) references, most of which are in Arabic including textbooks on Public and Private Law, Islamic Sharia in addition to Arabic legal journals and periodicals. During the site visit to the central library, it was evident that the library has adequate learning resources with study areas, computers, internet catalogue and digital library. However, the Panel is of the view that the library needs support with regard to legal references in foreign languages. The Panel recommends that the College subscribe to foreign electronic databases in the legal studies field such as: WestLaw, LegiFrance, and LexisNexis, to support the faculty members' and students' research. In general, the Panel appreciates that the UoB campus and the College of Law building provide an excellent learning environment that meets the faculty members' and students' needs. However, students interviewed by the Panel expressed their dissatisfaction with the move of the legal library to the central library. In this regard, the college management informed the Panel that this move was made to provide more offices for new faculty members who have recently joined the College. The Panel also learned that the University has an initiative for constructing an additional building for the College of Law - which includes a legal library - to accommodate the future expansion of the College in light of the increasing demand on its programmes. The Panel supports the implementation of this initiative.
- 3.11 There is a tracking system in place to identify the usage of laboratories, library and e-learning resources. A daily log is maintained for tracking the usage of computers in the laboratories and the library. In addition, the library tracks the usage of resources, as evidenced from the statistics on the number of legal references borrowed from the library. As for the e-learning resources, Blackboard and Moodle, the e-learning centre

is responsible for tracking their usage and producing reports. In its interviews with the administrative staff, the Panel confirmed that a tracking log is available for the usage of abovementioned facilities, and that regular reports are prepared and submitted to departments upon request. The Panel acknowledges that the tracking system is adequate for the evaluation of the utilization of the college resources.

3.12 The College of Law has a range of support services available for students of the Master of Private Law programme, which include the use of laboratories, library and e-learning. Faculty members and students can have access to computers - *via* their usernames and passwords – that are connected to the internet and protected by the Directory Domain. The University also provides technical assistance for computer users so that they can report on technical problems to be solved by technicians. In addition, there is a technician in each computer laboratory who provides assistance for students. In addition, Zain centre for e-learning provides training on the efficient use of the Moodle and Blackboard systems for both faculty members and students. With regards to the library, there is a system - operated by specialized technical staff – to assist students in locating books and electronic resources, as was evident during the site visit to the central library. The Panel commends the level of the administrative staff in the central library, and the effective support they provide for students and researchers. The Student Activities Office, Guidance and Counselling Office and Student Services Office in the Student Affairs Deanship conduct cultural, social, sporting and art activities for the programme students. A number of these activities, as well as the distinguished activities of Training and Student Development Unit, are listed in the SER. These activities were confirmed during the site visit tours and interviews with the administrative staff and students. The Panel also notes the logistic support provided for students with special needs across the campus, including the allocation of a special examination room for students with sight disability, as well as the provision of a special laboratory quipped with Visio Braille. The Panel appreciates that a broad range of effective support services is provided for students to assist them in the utilization of available resources, and the enhancement of their learning experience.

3.13 The University organizes an orientation day for the newly-admitted students at the beginning of each academic year during which students are introduced to the college facilities, academic programmes and faculty members, as well as the academic and social services provided by the Deanship of Student Affairs. The students are also provided with the College Handbook, Student Manual and Disciplinary Bylaws, that inform students about their liabilities and duties. The same orientation procedures are also provided to students who are transferred from other institutions. During interviews, the students were positive about the value of the orientation day in preparing them for their studies, as it provided valuable information about the programme, the university facilities and services. The Panel appreciates that a well-

developed induction programme is implemented for new students admitted in the Master of Private Law programme.

- 3.14 The College of Law implements the institutional academic advising system, to follow up on the academic progress of students, in collaboration with the Deanship of Registration and Admission. In line with this system, an academic advisor is assigned for each student and their communication is facilitated *via* different appropriate means. The College also adopts the academic warning system to identify 'At risk students' and implement intervention measures. Students with a GPA lower than (3.00 out of 4.00) are placed on probation. The College follows up students' progression in cooperation with the Deanship of Registration and Admission to timely identify 'At risk' students and provide appropriate support for them. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that all students are required to meet with their academic advisors at least once every semester. The academic advisor's main role is to assist the students in selecting courses, and to improve the GPA of 'At risk students', who are not permitted to register without the academic advisor's approval. The SER outlines several programmes that are implemented to offer academic support and guidance for 'At risk students'; these include peer-tutoring sessions and extra-tutorial classes offered by the Student Training and Development Unit, to support the students' academic progress and social welfare. During interviews, the students indicated that they are aware of the assessment and academic warning systems and regulations, as they are available on the university website. The Panel notes the general satisfaction with the academic advising process, as evident from the results graduating students' surveys: the item 'Generally, I received distinguished academic advising during my study' scored (73.3%), and the item 'The academic advisor was keen to support me' scored (86.7%). The Panel appreciates that the College has an appropriate system for identifying 'At risk' students, with effective support mechanisms, implemented in the Master of Private Law programme.
- 3.15 The College has an appropriate informal learning environment which broadens the students' knowledge and experience outside classrooms, by organizing an extensive array of activities, courses, seminars and conferences. These activities include the 'Legal Week' which is organized in collaboration with the Legislation and Legal Opinion Commission, and the 'Legal Forum' organized by the College of Law Society, during which lectures are delivered by a group of distinguished specialists. In addition, visits are regularly organized to the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives, the Constitutional Court and the Bahrain Institute for Political Development. Furthermore, support is provided for students to attend local and regional competitions. The Panel commends the efforts of the College of Law Society, the Youth Delegation Programme, Injaz Programme, the students' engagement in the Moot Court competitions in Austria, as well as the Legal Clinic activities in the

United States. Moreover, the Job Fair day, which is annually organized by the Career Counselling Office, is a significant event during which employment opportunities are presented and students are kept abreast with the latest developments in the legal labour market. Students interviewed by the Panel expressed their satisfaction with the opportunities provided to them by the College to participate in informal learning activities. The Panel appreciates that a broad set of informal learning opportunities and activities are provided for the Master of Private Law programme students, to expand their knowledge and enhance their skills.

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

- The admission policies and procedures in the Master of Private Law programme are clear and appropriate to the level and type of the programme, available for students, and subject to periodic reviews.
- There are clear lines of responsibility and accountability for successful programme management, which enables the Master of Private Law programme to achieve its objectives.
- There is diversity in the specializations of faculty members and the academic institutions from which they graduated, which enriches the programme.
- The College's top graduates are appointed as Teaching Assistants in the College and are offered scholarships to distinguished European and American universities to pursue postgraduate degrees in Law.
- Clear and transparent procedures are in place for the recruitment, orientation and retention of faculty members, and are consistently implemented.
- An effective Management Information System is in place and is effectively utilized by the College to inform the decision-making processes in the management of the Master of Private Law programme.
- Robust policies and procedures are implemented to ensure the accuracy and security of college data and records.
- The UoB campus and the College of Law building provide an excellent learning environment that meets the faculty members' and students' needs.
- The administrative staff in the central library are highly professional, and provide effective support for the faculty members and students of the Master of Private Law Programme.
- There is a broad range of effective support services provided for students to assist them in the utilization of available resources, and the enhancement of their learning experience.
- A well-developed induction programme is implemented for new students admitted in the programme.

- The College has an appropriate system to identify 'At risk' students, with effective support mechanisms, implemented in the Master of Private Law programme.
- A broad set of informal learning opportunities and activities are provided for the Master of Private Law programme students, to expand their knowledge and enhance their skills.

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

- recruit a Professor in Commercial Law or one of its branches, and one Professor in Arbitration or Civil Procedures, as these are advanced courses that require the expertise of Professors
- develop and implement a supported plan to motivate active researchers continue their research activities, and encourage faculty members publish their works in the areas that serve the College and its programmes
- develop and implement a plan which includes formal mechanisms for the annual evaluation of faculty members, and use the results of this evaluation to identify their needs of professional development and academic performance development
- review some of the promotion procedures, particularly the relative weightages of promotion criteria, and shorten the time required to process promotion applications
- support the library by subscribing to electronic databases in the field of legal studies in foreign languages, to enhance faculty members' and students' research.

3.18 **Judgement**

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

4 Indicator 3: Academic Standards of the Graduates

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

- 4.1 The graduate attributes of the Master of Private Law are specified in the programme intended learning outcomes and include the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and professional skills related to the field of Private Law, the ability to conduct legal research and comparative legislations in response to labour market needs. The Panel finds that the graduate attributes are satisfactorily stated and are, in general, comparable to those of similar programmes. The Panel also notes that the PILOs are clearly mapped to the CILOs – which are subject to assessment – and *via* which the graduate attributes are achieved. During interviews, the Panel confirmed that faculty members implement a number of direct assessment tools (such as examinations and projects) and indirect ones (such as questionnaires and surveys) to measure students' performance against the CILOs. The Panel appreciates that the graduate attributes of the Master of Private Law programme are clearly defined as intended learning outcomes, and that appropriate assessment tools are implemented to reliably assess the achievement of these attributes.
- 4.2 According to the SER, the College conducts continuous benchmarking of the Master of Private Law programme with similar programmes in regional and international universities. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the benchmarking activities are carried out by the College Curriculum Committee, in coordination with the Heads of Departments and the College Council. The Panel also learned that the College does not yet have a benchmarking policy in place, and that - to date - benchmarking initiatives took place informally, to check the equivalency of the Master of Private Law programme with similar programmes in Cairo University, Ain Shams University, Baghdad University and other well-established universities. The Panel finds these initiatives to be useful and constructive. However, the Panel is of the view that there is a need to improve the benchmarking process to enable the College to conduct a comprehensive and formal benchmarking that identifies the purpose of this process, the selection of what is to be benchmarked, and how the benchmarking results are utilized. The Panel recommends that the College develop and implement appropriate benchmarking policies and procedures, in order to compare the equivalency between the essential aspects of the Master of Private Law programme with those of similar reputable regional and international programmes.
- 4.3 The College implements the institutional assessment policies and procedures detailed in the 'Regulations of Study and Examinations in the University of Bahrain', and the 'Regulations of Postgraduate Studies at UoB'. Interviews with students and faculty members confirmed that these policies are widely communicated *via* the

university website and in the College Handbooks. Students are also informed about the assessment policies and procedures, pertaining to the courses and the thesis, by their inclusion in the course specifications. From reviewing the course files, it was evident to the Panel that the assessment policies and procedures are consistently implemented with regards to the mid-term and final examinations as well as other summative activities. The Panel also notes that the regulations relating to the Master thesis, including the topic selection, formation of examination committee and thesis evaluation are all implemented in accordance with the 'Regulations of Postgraduate Studies at UoB'. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the implementation of the college assessment policies and procedures is subject to monitoring, whereby an assessment report is prepared for each course by faculty members at the end of each semester, including improvement recommendations for the unachieved learning outcomes. The College Quality Assurance Office is responsible for reviewing all course files, to ensure the consistent implementation of assessment policies and regulations. The QA Office then submits a report to the College Dean detailing the areas for improvement, so that corrective measures are undertaken. The Panel appreciates that the institutional assessment policies and procedures are consistently implemented in the Master of Private Law programme, and are subject to regular monitoring.

- 4.4 The College implements the institutional mechanisms developed by the Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation Centre for the alignment of assessment tools with the CILOs. During interviews, the Panel learned that faculty members use the Course Assessment Matrix to evaluate students' achievement of specific knowledge or skills *via* typical assessment tools (such as examinations, quizzes and projects) so as to determine the achievement of a particular learning outcome. The programme coordinator, in collaboration with the Department Council, determines the criteria for aligning the assessment tools with the learning outcomes in all courses. Upon reviewing a sample of course files during the site visit, the Panel confirmed that the Assessment Matrix is used to ensure that the assessment tools are appropriate to level of the CILO subject to assessment. The Panel appreciates that appropriate mechanisms are consistently implemented to ensure the alignment of course assessments to the course learning outcomes.
- 4.5 The College implements internal moderation mechanisms for the development of assessment tools and evaluation of students' achievements and grade moderation, in accordance with the 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at University of Bahrain'. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the main examinations are subject to moderation, starting from their initial design to the final results submission. The Panel also learned that course coordinators are responsible for identifying the moderation duties of multiple-section courses, whereas the course coordinator prepares the examinations in coordination with other

faculty members, to ensure transparency and objectivity in the preparation of the examination questions. The Panel also learned that this process is subject to follow up, whereby the course coordinator - or the course instructor in the case of single-section courses - prepares a course file which includes the examinations, model answers and marking rubrics. The QAAC – in collaboration with the College QA Office - reviews the course files, to check the level of questions and examinations and their compliance with the regulations specified in Article (56) of the 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at University of Bahrain', and then submits a detailed report of its observation to the Head of Department. The final results for all courses are checked by the Head of Department before being forwarded to the Deanship of Admission and Registration. The Panel appreciates that the institutional mechanisms for internal moderation, in relation to the development and design of examinations and their marking, are consistently implemented in the Master of Private Law programme. However, the Panel notes that internal moderation is restricted to mid-term and final examinations, and does not cover the formative assessment tools. The Panel recommends that the College develop and implement appropriate mechanisms to moderate formative assessment tools such as quizzes and presentations.

- 4.6 The SER indicates that the College of Law enlisted the expertise of the American Bar Association to conduct a comprehensive review of the College in September 2013, after which it submitted a detailed report on the college programmes. The Panel notes that the ABA report did not include the moderation of assessments, in terms of the questions level and grading of students' work. Moreover, no evidence was provided to the Panel on the appointment of an external examiner to evaluate the consistency and fairness of students' assessments. The Panel notes that, with the exception of the participation of external examiners in the theses evaluation, there are no implemented procedures for the external moderation of students' assessment in the Master of Private Law programme. This was confirmed during interviews with faculty members, who indicated that external examiners are not utilized for the external moderation of internally moderated students' assessments. The Panel is of the view that external moderation has a significant role as a quality assurance mechanism, especially in relation to the benchmarking of the programme's academic standards against similar programmes. The Panel recommends that the College develop and implement an external moderation framework, to ensure the consistency and fairness of assessment procedures in the Master of Private Law programme, and their conformity with those in other reputable programmes.
- 4.7 The College of Law implements appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the level of students' achievements in the Master of Private Law programme is equivalent to similar reputable programmes. From examining a sample of course files, the Panel notes that the mechanisms used to measure the level of students' achievements are implemented, as each course file included the 'Course Evaluation Form' to identify

the percentage of students who scored (60%) and above in each assessment, to decide whether they have achieved the CILOs or not. The Panel examined a sample of students' assessed work, including written examinations, quizzes and reports, and noted that the level of students' achievements is appropriate and consistent with the programme outcomes and objectives. The Panel also notes that the level and topics of Master theses, are comparable to those in similar programmes in the region. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel learned that the level of students' achievements is subject to review and evaluation by the College Quality Assurance Office, whereby the unachieved learning outcomes are identified and improvement recommendations are made. The Panel appreciates that appropriate mechanisms are implemented to ensure that the level of students' achievements in the Master of Private Law programme is consistent with the level of the programme and its learning outcomes, and is comparable to levels achieved in similar regional programmes.

- 4.8 The College adopts outcome-based assessment mechanisms, to verify that the level of graduates' achievements meets the programme objectives and ILOs in accordance with international standards. The CILOs are mapped to the PILOs, which are in turn mapped to the programme objectives, hence enabling the measurement of the achievement of the programme objectives. Recent results of the programme educational outcomes assessment indicate that these outcomes have been achieved between (89-100%), which is consistent with the employers' views who commended the level of programme graduates which meets the programme outcomes. The Panel reviewed some Master theses and found them comparable, in terms of their level and quality, with those in similar regional institutions. The Panel also noted that the College uses professional judges from the Court of Cassation and consultants from the Parliament and ministries, as members of the theses evaluation committees. Students also enlist the advice of legal professionals during the preparation of their theses and to access judicial verdicts and Parliament proceedings. The Panel appreciates that the level of achievement of the Master of Private Law graduates is consistent with the programme objectives and its learning outcomes.
- 4.9 According to the SER, the maximum length of study in the Master of Private Law programme is four years, including three semesters for courses and a maximum of five semesters for the Master thesis. The Panel notes that majority of students complete their study within four years, which the Panel finds to be a relatively long period, compared to the usual two years period in other regional universities. The Panel also notes that the number of graduates in the programme to date is six, and that the first destination of graduates is working in the legal field of or pursuing higher degrees. From provided statistics, the Panel notes that the enrolment in the programme is very low; as only six students were admitted in the programme in the 2011-2012 academic year, five students in the 2012-2013 academic year and eight

students in the 2013-2014 academic year. This was confirmed during interviews with students and faculty members. The Panel recommends that College investigate the reasons behind the low enrolment rate in the Master of Private Law programme, in light of a study of labour market needs in the Kingdom.

- 4.10 The curriculum includes a thesis component of six credit hours, whereby the students apply the theoretical knowledge they acquired during the courses stage – particularly those related to the cognitive and professional skills - on a specific topic for their theses. The 'Regulations of Postgraduate Studies at UoB' include all the policies and procedures for the thesis supervision; these include the selection of supervisors and theses topics, research conduct and thesis evaluation. The Panel learned – from interviews with faculty members – that all stages of thesis preparation and assessment are subject to follow up and monitoring from the College and Department Councils. The Department's Postgraduate Studies Committee is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the 'Regulations of Postgraduate Studies at UoB' related to the thesis, such as initial approval of thesis proposals, supervisors appointment and formation of examination committees. The Panel notes the participation of an external examiner in the thesis evaluation committees. During interviews, the Panel learned that students select theses topics that address specific legal problems and require the implementation of theoretical knowledge and practical skills. In this regard, students rely on the judicial principles and they receive guidance from their supervisors. The thesis evaluation committee assesses the theses in accordance with provided standards, to ensure it contributes to the achievement of programme learning outcomes. Students and graduates interviewed by the Panel expressed their satisfaction with the thesis supervision arrangements and the support they receive from their supervisors. Upon reviewing a sample of students' theses, the Panel is of the opinion that they there are of a good level. The Panel appreciates that robust policies and procedures for theses supervision and evaluation are implemented in the Master of Private Law programme. The Panel notes that the Department – as part of its improvement plan – has specified the need to develop a research plan with a list of research topic for students' theses over a number of years. The Panel concurs, and suggests that the College of Law selects theses' topics in line with a college scientific research plan, to contribute to the achievement of the programme's educational objectives (see section 3.4).
- 4.11 The College of Law has an Employers Advisory Committee comprising nine members from various legal sectors in the Kingdom. The committee is mandated to offer suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of the College's programmes in order to enhance their graduate profiles and learning outcomes. During interviews with senior management, the Panel was informed that the Advisory Committee has not met recently due to its members' commitments, being members of the Supreme Judicial Council. The Panel also learned that the College

obtains the Advisory Committee's views *via* surveys on the extent to which the programme's outcomes meet the labour market needs. The Panel recommends that the College activate the role of the Employers Advisory Committee, to better inform the decision-making process in the programme. The Panel also suggests re-establishing the Committee and selecting members who have adequate time for participating in the programme's development and improvement.

4.12 The SER indicates that the process for collecting alumni and employers' feedback on the Master of Private Law programme is in its initial stage, due to the low number of graduates, with only six graduates at the time of the site visit. The Panel acknowledges the College's efforts in conducting a focus group with the graduates during their meeting with the College Dean in the first semester of the 2014-2015 academic year, to explore their views on the improvement of the programme's graduates attributes. In addition, an Alumni Survey was circulated; however, the responses were not a meaningful indicator due to the low number of graduates. The College has also conducted an Exit Survey for expected graduates to explore their views on the extent to which the programme has succeeded in achieving its outcomes. The results of this survey indicate that the level of satisfaction towards the programme learning outcomes ranges between (74-78%), which is a good percentage. The results also revealed a good level of satisfaction with the skills developed by the programme, particularly the written communication (79%) and the analytic thinking skills (76%). These results are consistent with the graduates' views, who expressed their appreciation of the skills they acquired during their study in the programme. Moreover, employers interviewed by the Panel expressed their satisfaction with the quality of the graduates, as reflected in their professional performance. The Panel appreciates the overall graduates' and employers' satisfaction with the Master of Private Law programme graduates attributes.

4.13 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Academic Standards of the Graduates, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

- The graduate attributes of the Master of Private Law programme are clearly defined as intended learning outcomes, and appropriate assessment tools are implemented to reliably assess the achievement of these attributes.
- The assessment policies and procedures are consistently implemented in the Master of Private Law programme, and are subject to regular monitoring.
- Appropriate mechanisms are consistently implemented to ensure the alignment of course assessments to the course learning outcomes.
- The institutional mechanisms for internal moderation, in relation to the development and design of examinations and their marking, are consistently implemented in the Master of Private Law programme.

- Appropriate mechanisms are implemented to ensure that the level of students' achievements in the Master of Private Law programme is consistent with the level of the programme and its learning outcomes.
- The level of achievement of the Master of Private Law graduates is consistent with the programme objectives and its learning outcomes.
- Robust policies and procedures for these supervision and evaluation are implemented in the Master of Private Law programme.
- There is evident graduates' and employers' satisfaction with the Master of Private Law programme graduates' attributes.

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

- develop and implement appropriate benchmarking policies and procedures, in order to compare the equivalency between the essential aspects of the Master in Private Law programme with those of similar reputable regional and international programmes
- develop and implement appropriate mechanisms to moderate formative assessment tools such as quizzes and presentations
- develop and implement an external moderation framework, to ensure the consistency and fairness of assessment procedures in the Master of Private Law programme, and their conformity with those in other reputable programmes
- investigate the reasons behind the low enrolment rate in the Master of Private Law programme, in light of a study of labour market needs in the Kingdom
- activate the role of the Employers Advisory Committee, to better inform the decision-making process in the programme.

4.15 **Judgement**

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

5 **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.

- 5.1 In its management of the Master of Private Law programme, the College implements the institutional policies, bylaws and regulations which are available for faculty members and students on the university website and the Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation Centre website. Furthermore, these policies and bylaws are included in the College Prospectus, Faculty Manual, and Quality Assurance Manual. During different interviews, the Panel learned that communicating new policies and procedures to all faculty members and ensuring their implementation is the responsibility of the College Dean and the Head of Private Law Department. The Panel also acknowledges the role of Quality Assurance Office in disseminating the college policies and regulations, and ensuring their appropriate implementation. The role of the QA Office includes ensuring the compliance of faculty members with the procedures related to the teaching process such as the approval of courses, the administration of examinations, their marking, and subsequent discussion of results with the students. In order to enhance the dissemination of the college policies and regulations, students are informed about them during the orientation day, which facilitates the students' understanding of these policies during their study in the University. The faculty members interviewed by the Panel also confirmed that they are informed of the institution's policies and procedures during their induction programme, as well in the Department and College Council meetings. From the provided documents and interviews with students and faculty members, the Panel notes – with appreciation – that the institutional policies and procedures are implemented effectively and systematically in the College of Law and Department of Private Law.
- 5.2 The organizational structure of the College of Law clearly identifies the roles and mandates of the College Dean, College Council, Departments Councils and Heads of Departments. The College Dean, along with Head of the Private Law Department, are responsible for the management of the Master of Private Law programme, and are assisted by the college academic and administrative staff. The Panel notes that the academic staff include distinguished professionals with extensive experience in the legal fields and higher education, which reflects positively on the academic leadership in the College. In addition, a number of committees have been established, comprising faculty members and teaching assistants, to ensure the participation of faculty members and support staff in the programme management and decision-making processes. Moreover, a Postgraduate Studies Committee was established to review and make recommendation on proposals for offering

postgraduate programmes from academic departments. A Postgraduate Studies Coordinator was also appointed to coordinate with the university administration and solve any issues that may arise with regard to the programme. From interviews with senior management and faculty members, the Panel concludes - with appreciation - that the Master of Private Law Programme is effectively-managed indicating a responsible academic leadership at department and college levels.

- 5.3 The Quality Assurance System in UoB includes: the University Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation Centre (QAAAC); the College Quality Assurance Office, the Programme Quality Assurance Committee, the Quality Assurance Executive Committee, the Programme Advisory Committee and the Student Advisory Committee. This comprehensive structure monitors the implementation of quality assurance procedures across all colleges in the University. The Quality Assurance Office was established in the College of Law to communicate the information and monitor the implementation of the institutional quality assurance measures with regards to teaching and learning processes. The QAAC has developed a University-Wide Handbook for the outcome-based assessment process (IDEAS). The policies and procedures of programme quality assurance include identifying, assuring and measuring the extent of students' achievement of the learning outcomes in accordance with programme objectives, and how to use the resulting information for the development of the programme. The tasks and mandates of all members and committees involved in this process are also clearly identified. The College applies the quality assurance policies and procedures in the annual review of the Master of Private Law Programme, where the College Quality Assurance Office conducts an annual self-evaluation to the programme including the teaching and learning process, for the continuous development of the programme in accordance with the university standards. The Panel was provided with evidence of the involvement of all relevant committees in implementing the quality management system in the Master of Private Law Programme. The College has established a Student Advisory Committee comprising eight members, in order to formalize the processes for obtaining students' feedback in the improvement of the Master of Private Law programme. The Panel reviewed the Student Advisory Committee reports, and noted that they include many significant recommendations, which have been considered by the College during the review of the programme. The Students Advisory Committee also communicates with the students *via* social media (LAW UoB) to enable the students to discuss and present their views on issues related to the quality of teaching. The Panel appreciates the positive contribution of students to the quality assurance system and their sufficient understanding of their role in assuring the effectiveness of teaching. The Panel confirmed, during interviews with senior management, that the quality assurance system is subject to continuous evaluation, as the College Quality Assurance Office prepares an annual report that identifies the areas of strengths and weaknesses, in addition to an improvement

action plan. This annual report is submitted to the university Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation Centre, which in turn studies this report and provides appropriate feedback on it, which is subsequently included in the university annual self-evaluation report. The Panel appreciates that a clear system for quality assurance management is well-implemented in the Master of Private Law programme and is subject to monitoring and evaluation.

- 5.4 The SER indicates that a number of courses and workshops have been conducted to explain the concepts of quality assurance in education to the faculty members and support staff, as part of the plan developed by the College Quality Assurance Office in cooperation with QAAC. The College has conducted eight training courses between 2012-2015 on topics such as the formulation of CILOs and course assessments. The Panel finds that the number of these workshops is not adequate to achieve sufficient awareness among faculty members about issues related to quality assurance. From interviews with faculty members and administrative staff, it was evident that they have an acceptable level of understanding of quality assurance concepts and their roles in ensuring learning effectiveness. However, the Panel noted, from reviewing course files, that there is some inconsistencies in faculty members' application of assessment procedures and issues related to quality assurance. The Panel is of the view that establishing a better understanding among faculty members about the quality assurance system would lead to improvements in the teaching and learning processes and their outcomes. The Panel recommends that the College conduct more training workshop and courses for academic and administrative staff, and encourage them to attend these workshops, to enhance their understanding of quality assurance practices at the programme as well as college level.
- 5.5 The institutional framework for the development of academic programmes and courses, which was endorsed in the University Council meeting (12-2103), clearly specifies the procedures and requirements for developing new programmes and courses, as well as revising existing ones. According to this system, a feasibility study should be conducted to justify the development of an academic programme or its development. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the proposals for the introduction of new programmes are first studied by an *ad hoc* committee at the department level which forwards its recommendations to the Department Curriculum Committee and Head of Department to be discussed in the Department Council. The Department Council recommendations are then forwarded to the College Dean, who in turn presents it to the College Curriculum Committee, and then to the College Council, which forwards it – in case of approval – to the University Curriculum Committee. The Panel notes – from provided evidence - that the College implements these institutional procedures when introducing a new programme, or amending an existing curriculum. The Panel appreciates that

appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the development of new programmes, and are effectively implemented to ensure that these programmes are relevant and meet the labour market needs.

- 5.6 The College follows the institutional procedures for the annual internal programme evaluation which are documented in the 'Quality Assurance Manual for Departmental Quality Assurance Committees'. This manual clearly outlines the steps for preparing the self-evaluation reports and improvement plans using the self-evaluation templates for academic programmes. The College Quality Assurance Committee conducts an annual review of the Master of Private Law Programme and prepares an annual self-evaluation report with an improvement plan, which are submitted to the University QAAC. During interviews, the Panel learned that academic staff participate in the self-evaluation process by preparing evaluation reports on CILOs achievement for each course which are then used for measuring the attainment of PILOs. The Panel reviewed samples of self-evaluation reports, and found that they constitute an appropriate mechanism for the evaluation of the programme, the achievement of its learning outcomes and the identification of areas of strengths and weaknesses. The Panel also notes that feedback from internal stakeholders is taken into consideration, and is utilized to enhance the improvement processes. The Panel appreciates that appropriate arrangements are implemented for the annual evaluation of the Master of Private Law Programme, which result in continuous improvement.
- 5.7 The College follows the institutional policy for the periodical review of academic programmes, and the associated mechanisms for the implementation of improvement recommendations, as outlined in the SER. In order to ensure that review processes utilize various inputs and feedback, the College has established a number of advisory committees, including the Committee of Experts from the Professional Field established by the College Deanship decree number (6) in 2013. This Committee is mandated to investigate the appropriateness of the college programmes for meeting the labour market needs, and propose measures to enhance the programme's graduate profile and learning outcomes. In addition, an Alumni Advisory Committee was established by the College Deanship decree number (22) in 2013, to measure the level of stakeholders satisfaction about the community services provided by the College, and to offer advice for programme improvement. Moreover, there is a Student Advisory Committee for Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation. The SER indicates that the College underwent an external review in 9-13 September 2013 by the America Bar Association, a team of four members visited the College and provided a review report evaluating the efficiency of the programmes, in addition to a set of recommendations and suggestions. The Panel appreciates that the College utilizes the expertise of external entities to review the college programmes; however, upon reviewing the report, the Panel notes that it

focuses on the Bachelor of Law programme with few references to the Master programmes. The Panel recommends that the College conduct an external review of the Master of Private Law programme, and use the recommendations in the continuous improvement of the programme. At the internal level, the College receives reports from the Employers and Alumni Advisory Committees. During interviews with senior management, the Panel was informed that College has developed a plan for the implementation of stakeholders' suggestions and recommendations included in these reports, including those of the American Bar Association. Upon reviewing provided evidence, the Panel acknowledges that the College has taken some actions to implement the recommendations resulting from the programme review, to improve the quality of teaching and learning processes.

- 5.8 The College Quality Assurance Office conducts a number of surveys to collect feedback from stakeholders, these include: Senior Exit, Alumni, Employer, Faculty and Students Surveys. During interviews, the Panel was informed that the Quality Assurance Office analyzes these surveys to identify the programme's strengths and weakness and utilizes the analysis results to take appropriate decisions, for the purpose of continuous improvement. The College also provided evidence in the SER appendices that the results of these questionnaires are subject to analysis. Upon reviewing the results of these surveys, the Panel noted that that some aspects in the Student Survey achieved low scores, such as 'the use of various teaching methods' (46.2%), and 'the use of E-learning Centre to support teaching activities in the programme' (40%), as shown in the results of graduating students surveys. These scores support the Panel's views and recommendations. The Panel also notes that the results of Faculty Survey analysis include a number of recommendations, the most important of which are related to revisiting the promotion system and encouraging faculty members to attend conferences and professional symposiums. During interviews with senior management, the Panel was informed that the College has started addressing the issues identified in these surveys, in its programme improvement plan. For example, the grading scheme for courses was reviewed in the light of students' suggestions, and was approved by the College Council, as confirmed by submitted evidence. The Panel appreciates that the College Quality Assurance Office conducts a number of stakeholders surveys, and feedback is considered by the College to implement necessary improvements, as appropriate.
- 5.9 The SER refers to some professional development activities organized by the University for academic and administrative staff, the most important of which is the Professional Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP), which aims at providing new faculty members with the knowledge and skills required for enhancing the teaching processes. The Academic Development section in the Measurement and Evaluation and Academic Development Centre is responsible for organizing induction courses and workshops for the development of new faculty members. Furthermore, the

College Quality Assurance Office organizes training workshops in the field of quality assurance. With regards to administrative staff, the university Administrative Training Centre is responsible for offering training workshop to enhance the level of administrative staff performance. Upon examining provided evidence, it is evident to the Panel that a limited number of faculty members has participated in the workshops for academic staff development over the last three years. The Panel also notes that the participation of faculty members in regional and international conferences is limited. This was confirmed during interviews, and from the results of faculty members' surveys. Furthermore, there was no evidence of formal mechanisms for the analysis of faculty members' training needs, or for the assessment of the effectiveness of the training courses. The Panel recommends that the College develop and implement a strategy for the professional development of academic and administrative staff, which includes mechanisms to identify their training needs and link them to their annual performance evaluation.

- 5.10 The SER indicates that the College – through the advisory committees and surveys – continuously develops the Master of Private Law programme to ensure its alignment with the labour market needs. The Panel also learned, during interviews, that the Quality Assurance Offices conducts regular visits to the legal establishments to explore the programme's alignment with the labour market needs and trends. The Panel acknowledges that these are good developments; however, the Panel notes the low enrolment rate and number of students registered in the programme. Moreover, the Panel did not find any clear approach for collecting initial basic data directly related to scoping the labour market of the Master of Private Law programme. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College conduct formal studies of the target market, in order to identify the latest trends and to ensure that the Master of Private Law programme meets the local and regional labour market needs. The Panel also encourages the College to enhance its utilization of the advisory committees members' expertise as another resources to scope labour market, by activating the role of these committees and organizing regular meetings (see section 4.11).
- 5.11 In coming to its conclusion regarding the Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:
- The institutional policies and procedures are implemented effectively and consistently in the Master of Private Law programme.
 - The Master of Private Law Programme is effectively-managed indicating a responsible academic leadership at department and college levels.
 - A clear system for quality assurance management is well-implemented in the Master of Private Law Programme and is subject to monitoring and evaluation.
 - Students participate positively in the quality assurance system of the Master of Private Law programme, and have good understanding of their role in assuring the effectiveness of the teaching.

- Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the development of new programmes, and are effectively implemented to ensure that these programmes are relevant and meet the labour market needs.
- Appropriate arrangements are implemented for the annual evaluation of the Master of Private Law Programme, which result in continuous improvement.
- The College utilizes the expertise of external entities such as the American Bar Association, to review the programme and provide suggestions for its improvement.
- The College Quality Assurance Office conducts a number of stakeholders surveys, and feedback is considered by the College to implement necessary improvements, as appropriate.

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

- conduct more workshops and courses for academic and administrative staff, and encourage them to attend these workshops, for more understanding to the importance of quality assurance and its practices at the programme and college levels
- conduct an external review of the Master of Private Law programme, and use the recommendations in the continuous improvement of the programme
- develop and implement a strategy for the professional development of academic and administrative staff, which includes mechanisms to identify their training needs and link them to their annual performance evaluation
- conduct formal studies of the target market, in order to identify the latest trends and to ensure that the Master of Private Law programme meets the local and regional labour market needs.

5.13 **Judgement**

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

6. 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/QQA *Programmes-within-College Reviews Handbook, 2012*:

There is confidence in the Master of Private Law programme offered by the College of Law in the University of Bahrain.