

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 Public Law
College of Law
University of Bahrain
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 4-6 May 2015
HC066-C2-R066**

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Acronyms

ABA	American Bar Association
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcomes
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 Outcomes
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 Public 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 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 Public 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 UoB will use the findings presented in this report to strengthen its Master of Public 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 Public 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 Public Law Programme

The Master of Public Law programme is offered by the Department of Public 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, and two students were graduated in the 2010-2011 academic year, as the first batch of graduates. There are (17) 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 (19) students, and (17) students graduated in the programme since its inception.

1.5 Summary of Review Judgements

Table 2: Summary of Review Judgements for the Master of Public 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 Public Law programme aims to prepare graduates with distinguished legal expertise for practicing legal work in the field of Public 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 programme has a clear academic framework which indicates the purpose of its provision, its structure, objectives as well as the Programme Intended Learning Outcome (PILOs). The SER includes matrices which clearly illustrate the mapping of the PILOs to the programme objectives, in alignment with the college mission, of preparing qualified legal graduates, and with the university mission, of excellence in teaching and learning. The Panel appreciates that the Master of Public Law programme has a clear academic framework which demonstrates the programme objectives and intended learning outcomes, and their contribution to the achievement of the college's and institution's missions.
- 2.2 The curriculum is composed of (33) credit hours, distributed over (9) course with three credit hours each, of which eight courses are compulsory and one is elective, in addition to (6) credit hours for the Master thesis. The Panel notes – with appreciation – that the curriculum is organized to allow students' progression from one semester to another, and from one course to another provided that the minimum workload for each semester is six credit hours and the maximum is nine credit hours. The Panel finds this workload to be appropriate for students. The Panel also notes that the offered courses cover the major branches of public law, with some courses having the title of the law branch it belongs to, without specifying the course subject, such as Criminal Law (LAW 522), Constitutional Law (LAW 524), Administrative Law (LAW 525) and International Law (LAW 527). During interviews, the Panel learned that the faculty member teaching the course selects three current topics and submits them to the Department Council, which decides on the topic that will be taught in the following academic year, subject to the College Council approval. The Panel reviewed the topics taught in several courses and found them to be overall appropriate. However, the Panel is of the view that the adoption of this system implies that the course topics changes from one year to another, and that students will not be aware of these topics at the time of joining the programme. The Panel recommends that the College develop - based on the Department Council's proposal and the College Council's approval - a list of topics that will be taught in each course as part of a three or five years plan so that these topics will be known to all students. Accordingly, the course specifications contained in the course files will need to be

amended in accordance with the topics taught every year. The SER states that the curriculum includes an elective course of three credit hours, whereby students choose one of three offered elective courses, namely 'Philosophy of Law' (LAW 501), 'Human Rights' (LAW 521) and 'Administrative Jurisdiction' (LAW 526). However, the Panel learned 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 is offered every semester. The Panel recommends that the College offer a suitable number of elective courses every semester, in order to give students a genuine opportunity to select from these courses. The Panel also suggests that these courses include new topics, in line with recent developments, such as, economic crimes, infrastructure construction contracts, international crimes court and natural resources investment contracts.

- 2.3 The Panel notes that the curriculum includes an appropriate range of broad and advanced courses that assist students in acquiring an appropriate 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 *via* the 'Research Methodology' (LAW 500) course which covers the identification of practical problems, and approaches to solving them, through the analysis of legal and 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, students expressed their satisfaction with this course and indicated that it was very beneficial for their studies. In addition, faculty members interviewed by the Panel, confirmed that the 'Research Methodology' course is taught in a practical way to teach students the conduct of legal research, in terms of problem selection and compliance with scientific research rules. Faculty member accompany the students to the library to assist them in conducting literature search related to their research topics. The Panel appreciates that the 'Research Methodology' course is included in the curriculum, which achieves the required balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the field of Public Law.
- 2.4 The Panel reviewed a number of course files during the site visit, and noted the use of a standard form for the course specification, including the statement of the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) and their mapping to the programme ILOs and objectives. The course specification also includes the distribution of the course syllabus over the (17) weeks of the semester, the implemented teaching and learning methods for each type of the CILOs, as well as the tools used to assess these outcomes. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel learned that the preparation of the course specification is carried out in light of the UoB Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation Centre (QAAC) guidelines. However, the Panel noted some inconsistencies between what is documented in the course files and the actual courses being taught at the time of site visit, which is attributed to the

change of topics taught from one year to another, as mentioned earlier (see section 2.2). For example, the curriculum includes the course 'Cyber Crimes' (LAW 523), whereas the provided course specification indicate 'Contemporary Crimes' as the title for this course. Upon inquiring from the senior management about the topics taught in 'Contemporary Crimes' (LAW 523), the Panel was informed that in the third batch the topic was 'Electronic Crimes', which changed to 'Transportation and Agriculture' in the fourth batch, and consequently to 'Traditional Electronic Terrorism' in the fifth batch. From examining the course file of this course, the Panel noted that the course specification form does not include any of the abovementioned topics; rather Article (17) of this form generally refers to contemporary crimes, such as cyber-crimes, terrorism crimes and those related to stock market. The Panel recommends that the College revise and update the course specifications included in the course files, in accordance with the topics taught every year.

- 2.5 The Programme Intended Learning Outcomes are clearly presented in the programme specification, and include an advanced set of knowledge and skills related to the legal practice in the Public Law field, in addition to general skills, such as analytic thinking and scientific research skills. The SER clearly illustrates the alignment of the PILOs with the programme objectives. In its interviews with faculty members, the Panel was informed that the PILOs have been formulated in accordance with the standards adopted by the QAAC, to ensure the appropriateness of PILOs and their contribution to the achievement of the programme objectives. The Panel also notes that the programme ILOs and objectives are well-communicated to stakeholders through the college website and orientation handbooks. The Panel appreciates that the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes of the Master of Public Law programme are clearly reflected in the programme specification, well-aligned with its objectives, and are appropriate to its level.
- 2.6 The Course Intended Learning Outcomes are well-documented in the course specification and appropriately reflect the level of academic achievement. Upon reviewing a sample of course files during the site visit, the Panel confirmed that the CILOs are, in general, appropriate to the course level, and are consistent with the programme ILOs and objectives. The course specification includes matrices that illustrate the mapping the CILOs to the PILOs, indicating the relative contribution of each course to the achievement of the PILOs. The Panel appreciates that the Course Intended Learning Outcomes are appropriate to the course levels, and effectively contribute to the achievement of the Master of Public Law programme objectives.
- 2.7 The Department of Public Law implements the 'Regulations of Study and Examinations at University of Bahrain' guidelines, which stipulate the use of various teaching and learning methods and encourage the students' personal responsibility for learning, to enhance the achievement of learning outcomes. The SER indicates

that the implemented teaching and learning methods include: theoretical lectures, discussions and debates, juridical applications, and research projects. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel noted - with appreciation - that the majority of faculty members employ the interactive learning mode, which depends on students' participation in the learning process through debates and preparations of research papers that are discussed within the scope of the course being taught. In addition, practical issues are presented for students, which provide an appropriate opportunity for students to analyze judicial judgements and comment on them. However, the Panel notes that modern teaching technologies are not used, except by a small number of the faculty members. Moreover, the Department of Public Law does not utilize the expertise of external lecturers working in the legal field. The Panel acknowledges that the College recognizes the need to improve the teaching and learning methods, as evident from the initiatives included in the programme improvement plan, where the College intends to contract with legal professional staff to teach in the programme, in order to benefit from their practical expertise. The College also seeks collaboration with juridical entities in the Kingdom, to acquaint the students with the latest judicial developments, and to enhance their analytic capabilities. Nevertheless, the Panel is of the view that there is a need to encourage faculty members to use various teaching and learning methods, including the use of modern tools and e-learning. The Panel recommends that the College provide training for faculty members on using teaching and learning methods that are appropriate for legal instruction, and support the achievement of Master of Public Law programme objectives.

- 2.8 The College implements the assessment policies included in the 'Regulations of Postgraduate Studies at UoB', which stipulate that the academic department should develop an assessment system to evaluate the students' achievement in postgraduate courses. In light of this system, clear criteria - which require approval by the Postgraduate Studies Council and the University Council - are used to allocate marks to classroom activities, examinations, reports, research papers, projects and practical training. According to the provided evidence, the grades of postgraduate courses are distributed as follows: (25%) for midterm examination, (40%) for the written final examination, (10%) for classroom activities and (25%) for the oral examination. On reviewing the course files, the Panel noted that both summative and formative assessment tools are implemented, including examinations, reports, research papers, presentations and classroom activities. The 'Regulations of Study and Examination at University of Bahrain' include a clear policy which requires the faculty members to provide students with written or oral feedback on their assessment, so that they become aware of their shortcomings and improve their performance. Faculty members interviewed by the Panel confirmed their compliance with the feedback policy, as they provide students with clear comments and model answers within two weeks of the assessment date. However, during interviews, students informed the

Panel that some faculty members do not comply with the feedback system, as they only inform them about their grades in the midterm examination. The Panel encourages the College to ensure the consistent application of the feedback system by all faculty members. With regards to the appeal system, the College implements the institutional policy included in the 'Regulations of Postgraduate Studies at UoB', which enables students to appeal the results of their assessments within the specified period. The Panel notes that this policy is well-implemented, as an appeal committee is established by the Department - excluding the faculty member teaching the course - to consider the appeal requests after which the appeals results are forwarded to the Deanship of Postgraduate Studies, for the necessary amendments to be made. The Panel commends the appropriate implementation of the appeal policy, which reflects the fairness and transparency of this process. Moreover, the College implements the institutional plagiarism policy, and students interviewed by the Panel indicated that they are informed of the assessment and plagiarism policies during the orientation day, and from the handbooks issued by the College and Student Affairs Deanship. The Panel appreciates that appropriate and transparent policies and mechanisms are implemented to assess students' achievements, and to 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 Public Law programme has a clear academic framework which identifies the programme objectives and intended learning outcomes, and their contribution to the achievement of the college's and institution's missions.
- The curriculum is organized to allow students' progression from one semester to another, and from one course to another with an appropriate workload.
- The curriculum includes a range of in-depth and advanced courses that assist students in acquiring an appropriate 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 in the field of Public Law.
- The Programme Intended Learning Outcomes are clearly reflected in the Master of Law programme specification, are well-aligned with its objectives, and appropriate to its level.
- The Course Intended Learning Outcomes are appropriate to the courses' levels, and effectively contribute to the achievement of the Master of Public Law programme objectives.
- Faculty members employ interactive learning mode, which encourages students' participation in the learning process through debates and preparations of research papers.

- Appropriate and transparent policies and mechanisms are implemented to assess students' achievements, and to ensure the reliability and fairness of grading.

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

- develop a list of topics that will be taught in each course as part of a three or five years academic plan so that these topics are known to all students
- offer an appropriate number of elective courses every semester, to provide students a genuine opportunity to select from these courses
- revise and update the course specifications included in the course files, in accordance with the topics being taught every year
- provide training for faculty members on using teaching and learning methods that are appropriate for legal instruction, and support the achievement of the Master of Public 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 Public 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 as 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 Public Law programme are clear and appropriate to the level and type of the programme, 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 Public Law may assign some remedial courses for students who need these courses to adapt themselves with the programme requirements. The Panel acknowledges that the Department implements appropriate procedures, to ensure that the level of students admitted in the Master of Public 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 Public 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 Public 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 Postgraduates Study 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 enable the Master of Public Law programme to achieve its objectives.

- 3.4 The College of Law includes (17) faculty members contributing to the Master of Public Law programme, of whom (3) are Professors, (5) are Associate Professors and (9) are Assistant Professors. 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 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 'Professors', as there are only two professors specialized in Administrative Law and one professor specialized in Criminal Law, while there are no Professors specialized in International Law or General Finance and Taxation Law. The Panel recommends that the College recruit a Professor in International Law or one of its branches, and another Professor in General Finance and Taxation Law or Constitutional Law, 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 of 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 the 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 that they are offered scholarships to distinguished European and American universities to pursue postgraduates

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 Human Resources Office. These nominations are then 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, to introduce them to the College of Law facilities and programmes. As for 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 that faculty member submits their promotion documents. The Panel learned that only one faculty member was promoted over the last five years, with another faculty member's promotion application 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 for the promotion of many faculty members. According, 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 Public Law programme.
- 3.9 The College has appropriate policies and procedures for ensuring the security of students' records, examinations 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 Deanship of Postgraduate Studies is responsible for maintaining students' academic records and data, first as hard copies 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) 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. From 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 Public 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 court halls, 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 in 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. 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 the 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 Public 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 problem 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 for both faculty member 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 to the Panel 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 are 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, 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 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 to 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, 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 Public 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. The 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 Public 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 Public Law programme are clear and appropriate to the level and type of the programme, are 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 Public 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 Public 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 Public 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 Public Law programme.
- A broad set of informal learning opportunities and activities are provided for the Master of Public 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 International Law or one of its branches, and another Professor in General Finance and Taxation Law or Constitutional Law, as these are advanced courses that require the expertise of Professors
- develop and implement a research plan to encourage faculty members to publish their work in academic fields that serve the college and programme aims
- 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
- review some of the promotion procedures, particularly the relative weightages of promotion criteria, and shorten the time required to process promotion applications
- subscribe to foreign electronic databases in the legal studies field such as: WestLaw, LegiFrance, and LexisNexis, to support the 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 SER specifies a set of graduate attributes for the Master in Public Law programme, stated as programme objectives and intended learning outcomes; and include the in-depth knowledge of the branches of Public Law, the ability to analyze legal texts, conduct legal research and practice legal work in the field of Public Law, The Panels finds that the graduate attributes are appropriately stated and are, in general, comparable to those of similar programmes. The Panel also notes that the courses intended learning outcomes, stated in the courses specifications, are aligned with the programme ILOs. The SER details the direct and indirect methods of assessment implemented by faculty members to measures the extent to which these outcomes are achieved, including examples of direct methods of evaluating students' performance against the ILOs. The Panel appreciates that the programme's graduate attributes are clearly defined as intended learning outcomes, and that they are subject to appropriate assessment, *via* which the programme's objectives are achieved.
- 4.2 According to the SER, the College conducts continuous benchmarking of the Master in Public 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 in Public 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, to compare the equivalency between the essential aspects of the Master in Public 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 assessment policies and procedures are consistently implemented in the Master of Public 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 course intended learning outcomes. 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 the 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 extent to which the PILOs are achieved is also measured by using the form especially designed for this purpose. 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. This process is subject to monitoring, 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 Public 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. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College develop and implement appropriate mechanisms to moderate formative assessment tools such as quizzes and presentations.

- 4.6 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 and the use of feedback for the continuous improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. The SER indicates that the College of Law enlisted the expertise of the American Bar Association to conduct a comprehensive review to the College in September 2013, after which it submitted a detailed report on the College programmes. The Panel notes that this report did not include the moderation of assessments, in terms of the questions level and grading of students' work. The Panel discussed this issue with faculty members, who confirmed 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 Public Law programme, and their conformity with those in other reputable programmes. The Panel also encourages the College to utilize a range of external examiners, in accordance with the courses offered in the programme, and not be limited to one external examiner for all courses.
- 4.7 According to the SER, the College of Law evaluates the level of students' achievements, and measures the extent of learning outcomes achievement, to ensure

that these achievements are consistent with the programme's level. The Panel examined a sample of students' assessed work, in addition to a sample of Master theses, and noted that the level of students' achievements and these topics in the Master of Public Law programme is comparable to the level in similar programmes in the region. The Panel also 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 of the course or not. During interviews with faculty members, the Panel learned that, and at the end of the semester, course instructors identify those outcomes that have not been achieved, and make recommendations for their improvement. The Panel appreciates that the level of students' achievements in the Master of Public Law programme is consistent with the programme's level and 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 learning outcomes. The CILOs are mapped to the PILOs, which are in turn mapped to the programme objectives, which enables the measurement of the achievement of the programme objectives. Recent results of the assessment of programme educational outcomes indicate that these outcomes have been achieved between (86-100%), which is consistent with the survey results of the achievement of the programme educational objectives. In addition, graduates and employers interviewed by the Panel commended the level of graduates and indicated that the graduates' achievements meet the programme ILOs. The Panel also notes, from final results and quality of theses, that graduates' achievements satisfy the programme objectives and PILOs, as the College uses professional judges from the Court of Cassation, or consultants from the Parliament and ministries, to assess students' theses and specify their levels against educational outcomes. The Panel also notes – from graduates' interviews and provided evidence – that most of the graduates occupy prestigious positions in legal establishments, and that some of them have successfully completed their postgraduate studies in their fields of specialization. The Panel appreciates that the level of achievement of the Master of Public Law graduates is consistent with the programme objectives and its learning outcomes.
- 4.9 The statistics viewed by the Panel indicate that there is an increasing demand for enrolment in the Master of Public Law programme, as the number of registered students ranged from (31) to (40) over the last three academic years. The Panel also notes that the length of study in the programme ranges between four to six years, with the majority of students (69%) finish their study during four to five years. The SER indicates that the percentage of students continuing their study in the programme is (87%), which is, in the Panel's opinion, acceptable. The Panel notes,

from its interviews with the senior management and provided evidence, that the first destination of graduates is the legal field of jurisdiction or advocacy, while some of them continue their postgraduate studies to pursue PhD degrees. However, the Panel notes that the College lacks a database that includes statistical batch analyses of the students, to be used in the programme improvement plans. The Panel recommends that the College conduct cohort analysis of the programme students and compare them with those in similar local, regional, and international programmes, in order to improve the overall quality of the programme graduates.

- 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 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 examination committees formation. The Panel notes the participation of an external examiner in the thesis evaluation committees. 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 are of a good level. The Panel appreciates that robust policies and procedures for the theses supervision and evaluation are implemented in the Master of Public Law programme. The Panel 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 includes adequate evidence on graduates' satisfaction with the Master of Public Law programme. The results of graduates' surveys analysis indicates that the level of satisfaction with the programme learning outcomes ranges between (74-78%), which is good. The Panel notes that the highest score (78%) was achieved by the programme outcome: 'Ability to practice all legal and judicial work in an efficient and excellent manner', and the programme outcome: 'Ability to execute and prioritize jurisprudential and comparative legislations'. These results are consistent with the graduates' views, who expressed their appreciation of the skills they acquired during their study in the programmes. Moreover, employers interviewed by the Panel indicated that the programme meets the labour market needs in the Kingdom of Bahrain, and 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 Public 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 programme graduate attributes are clearly defined as intended learning outcomes, and are subject to appropriate assessment, *via* which the programme's objectives are achieved.
 - The assessment policies and procedures are consistently implemented in the Master of Public Law programme, and are subject to regular monitoring.
 - Appropriate mechanisms are consistently implemented to ensure the alignment of course assessments with 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 Public Law programme.
 - The level of students' achievements in the Master of Public Law programme is consistent with the programme's level and learning outcomes, and is comparable to levels achieved in similar regional programmes.
 - The level of achievement of the Master of Public Law graduates is consistent with the programme objectives and its learning outcomes.
 - Robust policies and procedures are in place for the theses supervision and evaluation, and are consistently implemented in the Master of Public law programme.
 - There is evident graduates' and employers' satisfaction with the Master of Public Law programme graduate 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 Public 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 Public Law programme, and their conformity with those in other reputable programmes
- 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 Public 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 Public Law Department. The Panel also acknowledges the role of Quality Assurance Office in disseminating the college policies and regulations, and in 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 Master of Public Law programme.
- 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 Public Law Department, are responsible for the management of the Master of Public 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 and higher education fields, 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 Public 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 (QAAC); 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 the programme objectives, and the 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 institutional quality assurance policies and procedures in the annual review and evaluation of the Master of Public Law Programme, where the College Quality Assurance Office conducts an annual self-evaluation of the programme, including teaching and learning aspects, for the continuous development of the programme. The Panel was provided with evidence of the involvement of all relevant committees in implementing the quality assurance management system in the Master of Public 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 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 system and their adequate 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 QAAC, 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 Public 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 QAAAC. The College has conducted eight training courses between 2012-2015 on topics such as the formulation of CILOs and course assessment. 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 adequate 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 Public 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 Public 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, a College 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 on 9-13 September 2013 by the America Bar Association, as a four members team 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 utilize the expertise of external entities to review the college programmes; however, upon reviewing the ABA 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 Public Law programme, and use the recommendations in its continuous improvement. Internally, 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 areas of 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 questionnaires, the Panel notes 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 College Quality Assurance Office conducts a number of stakeholders surveys, and feedback is considered by the College to implement 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 regard 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 Public 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 did not find any clear approach for collecting initial basic data directly related to scoping the labour market of the Master of Public Law programme. 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 Public 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 Public Law programme.
 - The Master of Public 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 Public Law Programme and is subject to monitoring and evaluation.
 - Students participate positively in the quality system of the Master of Public 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 Public 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 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, to enhance their understanding of the importance of quality assurance at the programme and college levels
- conduct an external review of the Master of Public 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 Public 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 Public Law programme offered by the College of Law in the University of Bahrain.