

Directorate of Higher Education Reviews Programme Review Summary

**Applied Science University
College of Arts and Science
Bachelor in Graphic Design
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Site Visit Date: 20 – 22 February 2023

HA085-C3-R085

I. Introduction

In keeping with its mandate, the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), through the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR), carries out two types of reviews that are complementary. These are: Institutional Reviews, where the whole institution is assessed; and the Academic Programme Reviews (APRs), where the quality of teaching, learning and academic standards are assessed in academic programmes within various colleges according to specific standards and indicators as reflected in its Framework.

Following the revision of the APR Framework at the end of Cycle 1 in accordance with the BQA procedure, the revised APR Framework (Cycle 2) was endorsed as per the Council of Ministers' Resolution No.17 of 2019. Thereof, in the academic year (2019-2020), the DHR commenced its second cycle of programme reviews.

The Cycle 2 APR Review Framework is based on four main Standards and 21 Indicators, which forms the basis of the APR Reports of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

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

Standard 1: The Learning Programme

Standard 2: Efficiency of the Programme

Standard 3: Academic Standards of Students and Graduates

Standard 4: Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance

The Review Panel (hereinafter referred to as 'the Panel') decides whether each indicator, within a standard, is 'addressed', 'partially addressed' or 'not addressed'. From these judgments on the indicators, the Panel additionally determines whether each of the four standards is 'Satisfied' or 'Not Satisfied', thus leading to the Programme's overall judgment, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Criteria for Judgements

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

The APR Review Report begins with providing the profile of the Programme under review, followed by a brief outline of the judgment received for each indicator, standard, and the overall judgement.

The main section of the report is an analysis of the status of the programme, at the time of its actual review, in relation to the review standards, indicators and their underlying expectations.

The report ends with a Conclusion and a list of Appreciations and Recommendations.

II. The Programme's Profile

Institution Name*	Applied Science University
College/ Department*	College of Arts and Science
Programme/ Qualification Title*	Bachelor in Graphic Design
Qualification Approval Number	Decision of the Council of Ministers No.: (WD-140-2004), dated 5 July 2004
NQF Level	8
Validity Period on NQF	(5) years starting from date of placement on NQF
Number of Units*	44
NQF Credit	548
Programme Aims*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare a competent graduate who is capable of utilising design curricula, innovative thinking, and research methods in the fields of visual communication, understanding and analysing user behaviours, following up the education to solve graphic problems related to the market, commercial competition, the society and the environment needs, and preparing students to pursue postgraduate studies. 2. Provide a stimulating and creative study environment and equip the graduate with specialised design skills and design applications in publications, multimedia, video technologies, user interfaces, animation and computer technologies in various areas of Graphic Design to keep pace with the requirements of the local and regional labour market. 3. Enable the graduate to communicate and utilise modern communication techniques, fieldwork, leadership, work in a multidisciplinary team, take responsibility, consider intellectual property issues and contribute to building the local community.
Programme Intended Learning Outcomes*	<p>A. Understanding & Knowledge:</p> <p>A1. Summarising specialised knowledge of the history and theories of art and design and their techniques.</p>

	<p>A2. Providing critical explanations of communication theories, human behaviours, and concepts of semiology in various contexts of contemporary problems.</p> <p>A3. Demonstrating critical professional practices, ethics and related intellectual property issues.</p> <p>B. Subject specific skills:</p> <p>B1. Applying specialised drawing, visual organisation, typography and photogrammetry skills in advanced contexts and some complex formulations of Graphic Design projects.</p> <p>B2. Employing specialised technologies, software, and multimedia to build purpose-based visual representations.</p> <p>B3. Using technology systems and specifications professionally to meet production and publishing techniques and sustainability requirements.</p> <p>C. Critical thinking skills:</p> <p>C1. Developing creative design alternatives in the context of planning to solve complex problems.</p> <p>C2. Providing critical analysis based on various research methods or critical foundations of Graphic Design.</p> <p>D. General and Transferable skills:</p> <p>D1. Working professionally in changing environmental, social, and economic contexts while taking responsibility for the work of others within the scope of Graphic Design Practice.</p> <p>D2. Communicating competently with the relevant authorities and presenting formal presentations using modern communication techniques.</p>
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* Mandatory fields

III. Judgment Summary

The Programme's Judgment: Confidence

Standard/ Indicator	Title	Judgement
Standard 1	The Learning Programme	Satisfied
Indicator 1.1	The Academic Planning Framework	Addressed
Indicator 1.2	Graduate Attributes & Intended Learning Outcomes	Addressed
Indicator 1.3	The Curriculum Content	Partially Addressed
Indicator 1.4	Teaching and Learning	Addressed
Indicator 1.5	Assessment Arrangements	Addressed
Standard 2	Efficiency of the Programme	Satisfied
Indicator 2.1	Admitted Students	Addressed
Indicator 2.2	Academic Staff	Partially Addressed
Indicator 2.3	Physical and Material Resources	Partially Addressed
Indicator 2.4	Management Information Systems	Addressed
Indicator 2.5	Student Support	Addressed
Standard 3	Academic Standards of Students and Graduates	Satisfied
Indicator 3.1	Efficiency of the Assessment	Addressed
Indicator 3.2	Academic Integrity	Addressed
Indicator 3.3	Internal and External Moderation of Assessment	Addressed
Indicator 3.4	Work-based Learning	Partially Addressed

Indicator 3.5	Capstone Project or Thesis/Dissertation Component	Partially Addressed
Indicator 3.6	Achievements of the Graduates	Addressed
Standard 4	Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance	Satisfied
Indicator 4.1	Quality Assurance Management	Addressed
Indicator 4.2	Programme Management and Leadership	Addressed
Indicator 4.3	Annual and Periodic Review of the Programme	Addressed
Indicator 4.4	Benchmarking and Surveys	Addressed
Indicator 4.5	Relevance to Labour Market and Societal Needs	Addressed

IV. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own self-evaluation report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the virtual site visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/BQA *Academic Programme Reviews (Cycle 2) Handbook, 2020*:

There is Confidence in the Bachelor in Graphic Design of the College of Arts & Science offered by the Applied Science University.

In coming to its conclusion regarding the four Standards, the Panel notes, *with appreciation*, the following:

1. The automation of many processes and services that meet the needs of students and faculty members, through comprehensive and interconnected electronic systems.
2. There is an effective advisory board at the level of the programme, which contributes in ensuring the alignment of the programme's outcomes with labour market needs.

In terms of improvement, the Panel recommends that the Applied Science University/ College of Arts & Science should:

1. Introduce practical applications in the related courses, such as packaging, and web design.
2. Focus on advanced technical skills that help keep up to date with the requirements of the labour market, and which can improve the quality of graduation projects and student work, in addition to enhancing the students' English language, presentation and communication skills.
3. Update textbooks and references used in teaching courses.
4. Revise the admission policy and require a portfolio from all applicants to the programme and not only from those who have not passed the aptitude test.
5. Develop clear criteria for the admission of students with disabilities and identify ways to deal with the difficulties they face in learning, including the teaching and assessment strategies that are applied in teaching them, as well as the resources and assistive technologies that are available to support their academic achievement.
6. Develop a plan to increase the number of faculty members, especially in areas that require advanced technical skills.
7. Investigate the reasons behind the low scientific research production of faculty members, develop a plan to address this, and encourage faculty members to participate in community service activities.

8. Equip the studios with side tables and provide a water source or washbasins close to the studios.
9. Update library books and references.
10. Employ a mechanism to detect visual plagiarism in practical projects and use software, sites and tools that help identifying image plagiarism attempts.
11. Provide internship providers with information and documents that clarify their roles and responsibilities.
12. Develop and clarify the capstone project and study guidelines, so that the importance of the entrepreneurial innovation aspect in this project is emphasized through the application of innovative teaching and assessment strategies that help the student to be more innovative and creative within this course.
13. Put more emphasis on the quality of graduation projects and student works; and ensure that graduation projects in Graphic Design reflect advanced skills level.
14. Develop the graduation project assessment mechanism, to include precise and detailed assessment criteria.