



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
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**Directorate of Higher Education
Reviews
Programme Follow-Up Visit Report**

**Bachelor's Degree in Interior Design
College of Arts & Science
Ahlia University
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**First Follow-up Visit Date: 21-23 April 2019
Review Date: 8-11 May 2017
HC104-C2-F018**

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The Programme Follow-up Visit Overview

The follow-up visit for academic programmes conducted by the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR) of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA) in the Kingdom of Bahrain is part of a cycle of continuing quality assurance review, reporting and improvement.

The follow-up visit applies to all programmes that have been reviewed using the Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework, and received a judgement of 'limited confidence' or 'no confidence'.

This Report provides an account of the follow-up process and findings of the follow-up panel (the Panel), whereby the Bachelor's Degree in Interior Design (BID), at Ahlia University(AU) was revisited on 21-23 April 2019 to assess its progress in line with the published Programmes-within-College Reviews Framework and the BQA regulations.

A. Aims of the Follow-up Visit

- (i) Assess the progress made against the recommendations highlighted in the review report (in accordance with the four BQA Indicators) of AU's BID since the programme was reviewed on 8-11 May 2017.
- (ii) Provide further information and support for the continuous improvement of academic standards and quality enhancement of higher education provision, specifically within the BID programme at AU, and for higher education provision within the Kingdom of Bahrain, as a whole.

B. Background

The review of the BID programme, at AU in the Kingdom of Bahrain was conducted by the DHR of the BQA on 8-11 May 2017.

The overall judgement of the review panel for the BID programme, of AU was that of 'no confidence'. Consequently, the follow-up process incorporated the review of the evidence presented by AU to the DHR, the Improvement Plan submitted to BQA in April 2018, the progress report and its supporting materials, which were submitted in January 2019, and the documents submitted during the follow-up site visit and those extracted from the interview sessions.

The external review panel's judgement on the AU's BID programme for each Indicator was as follows:

Indicator 1: The learning programme; **'not satisfied'**

Indicator 2: Efficiency of the programme; **'not satisfied'**

Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates; **'not satisfied'**

Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance **'satisfied'**

The follow-up visit was conducted by a panel (the Panel) consisting of two members. This follow-up visit focused on assessing how the Institution addressed the recommendations of the report of the review conducted on 8-11 May 2017. For each recommendation given under the four Indicators, the Panel judged whether the recommendation is 'fully addressed', 'partially addressed', or 'not addressed' using the rubric in Appendix 1. An overall judgement of 'good progress', 'adequate progress' or 'inadequate progress' is given based on the rubric provided in Appendix 2.

C. Overview of the Bachelor's Degree in Interior Design

The College of Arts & Science is one of Ahlia's University (AU) colleges, which was established in 2001. Currently, the College offers two bachelor degree programmes namely Bachelor of Interior Design and Bachelor of Mass Communications and Public Relations. The Bachelor's Degree in Interior Design was first offered in the academic year 2003-2004, and graduated its first batch, comprising four students, in 2006-2007. The programme is offered in English through the Department of Interior Design (ID) and consists of 134 credits. The statistics provided by the Department of Interior Design during the follow-up visit indicate that currently the total number of full-time academic staff contributing to the programme is five supported by two laboratory technicians; and the number of students is 121. It is worth noting that admission to the BID programme was stopped by the Higher Education Council (HEC) in the second semester of the academic year 2018-2019.

1. Indicator 1: The Learning Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BID programme of AU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2017, under Indicator 1: The learning programme; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 1.1: *revise the curriculum to include courses such as Lighting Design, Textiles for Interiors, BIM, Working Drawings for Construction in addition to courses focusing on specifications, quantities, project tracking forms and contract.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The curriculum of the BID programme has been subjected to a review, and an informal benchmarking has been conducted against three international equivalent programmes by the BID team. New courses have been offered as core courses to address the recommendation and enhance students' technical and professional skills, such as Textiles for Interior Design (INTD213), Lighting in Interior Environments (INTD319), Building Information Modelling I (INTD309), Building Information Modelling II (INTD329), Working Drawing and Documentation (INTD403), and Environmental Control Systems (INTD406). A course related to ethical and legal issues in the field of interior design profession is also included as a core course entitled Ethics and Professional Practice in Interior Design (ETHC394).

The Panel studied the course specifications, which were available in the course files provided during the site visit, and was concerned that the newly introduced courses content did not sufficiently cover 'specifications and quantities' that enable the students to establish a complete tendering package as applied in Interior Design. Therefore, the Panel urges the College to address this issue.

The Panel notes with appreciation that the new study plan has five studio courses instead of four compared to the old one. However, the last design studio course is introduced in the second semester of year four with the graduation project, despite that semester two in year three has no design courses. Hence, the Panel advises the College to offer the Advanced Healthcare Interior Design Studio (INTD417) in the second semester of year three to enable students to be more focused on the Interior Design Graduation Project.

Based on an examination of course files, and conducted interviews, the Panel notes that the current transition study plan between the curricula of the old and the revised one does not demonstrate clear guidance, and there is a misalignment in the equivalency of the content of the courses between the two curricula. For example, most

of the new study plan courses in Semester one and Semester two of the academic year 2018-2019 have not been offered for year four and three students due to the difficulty in the equivalency. Therefore, the Panel urges the College to adjust the transition plan and the equivalency between the courses of the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 curricula. Consequently, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 1.2: *expand the pool of electives to include areas of interest for the students enrolled in the programme and increase employability of graduates.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

To address the recommendation, 13 major elective courses with a mix of practical and theoretical courses have been introduced in the BID revised study plan such as; Furniture Design, Kitchen and Bath Design, Exhibit Design and Insulation, Islamic Art and Design and Design psychology. Students must select six elective credit hours; one practical major elective; one theoretical major elective and one free elective. Furthermore, the Panel was assured through reviewing the new study plan and the University Council meeting minutes that the internship course (INTD470) has been introduced as a compulsory course for all students in the updated study plan to increase the employability of graduates and provide them with practical training experience through off-campus placement. Hence, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is fully address and advises the College to evaluate the impact of the changes in the curriculum on the progress of the programme delivery and its students.

Recommendation 1.3: *revise the course syllabi of Building Systems & Interior Codes as well as Lighting & Acoustics, and update the resources catering towards the progress and development of the BID syllabi for an overall enrichment.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

From the progress report and the submitted evidence, the Panel learned that the course syllabus of the Building Systems & Interior Design Codes (INTD306) course was revised in terms of learning outcomes, course structure, and assessment. Moreover, the Lighting and Acoustics course was split into two elective courses, namely Lighting in Interior Environments (INTD319) and Acoustics (INTD415) to enhance their depth and enrich the content. Furthermore, through examining the updated course syllabi, the Panel noted that a wide variety of updated courses were added to enrich the BID syllabi.

During the follow-up visit, the Panel visited the library and observed that there is a notable increase in the variety of reference books available for the ID students and faculty to borrow. The Panel was informed that each course has a list of resources and recommended readings that are available in the library. In addition, interviewed

students informed the Panel that they are using the library resources so frequently to complete their projects and assignments. The Panel appreciates the increase in the variety of the available resources to cater for the BID syllabi and advises the College to include more on the history and the latest trends of Art and Design; and keep updating the library resources and references to remain current. All in all, this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 1.4: *revise the programme intended learning outcomes to ensure that these outcomes are appropriately written with correct action verbs.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

According to the progress report, the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) were revised taking into consideration local and international standards such as the National Qualifications Framework Level 8 and Council of Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) Standards. In the interviews, the Panel learned that the programme team contributed to the PILOs' updates and they were discussed in the Department Council, and every instructor updates the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) of the courses that he/she is involved in.

The Panel reviewed the programme specification for 2018-2019 and all the updated course specifications and noted that the revised PILOs are brief and precise, which fully address this recommendation. However, in some cases, the Panel found that the revised CILOs are too narrow in scope, in the sense that they fail to reflect the full professional and practical range of the topics under study, such as in Sustainable Design (INTD413). Moreover, some CILOs do not relate to the specific aims and topics of the course such as CILO 'B02' in History of Interior Design (INTD217), 'Use advanced level and some specialist level skills to create designs inspired by artistic styles of pre-modern movements'. It incorporates a design skill that is not related to a history course, as creating innovative designs is the aim of design studio courses not the history courses. Therefore, the Panel urges the College to ensure that all the revised CILOs are aligned with the aims and the level of each course; and update the course specifications accordingly.

Recommendation 1.5: *ensure that students are exposed to professional practice with an experience that ensures the achievement of the internship learning outcomes.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

According to the progress report and the provided evidence, the Panel learned that the internship (INTD470) course is awarded three credit hours. Currently, it is a compulsory course for all university students that is ought to be taken either at the end of the third year or beginning of the fourth year of studies. The selection of an

internship placement is made by the Department of Interior Design and the Professional Relations Directorate to ensure that students get the experience and practice in a professional Interior Design company to contribute to the achievement of the Intended Learning outcomes (ILOs).

During the site visit, the Panel reviewed a sample of the internship evaluation forms and noted that the students had good grades in the on-site supervisor's evaluation sheets especially in communication skills, which was confirmed through interviews conducted with the internship supervisors and stakeholders. They highlighted that the students' employability skills are acceptable, but they need more improvement in 3D presentation skills specially 3D Max software.

It is also worth noting that the assessment criteria in the evaluation forms are generic in that they are limited to common skills such as attendance, punctuality, teamwork, critical thinking, and do not reflect specifically interior design skills and knowledge. Consequently, the Panel urges the College to revise the assessment criteria for the internship to ensure that all aspects of assessment are based on regional and international standards of Interior Design field.

Overall, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 1.6: *ensure that the BID programme is provided with teaching and learning documents that include all the information relevant to the programme.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

Ahlia University has teaching/learning approaches to support the fulfilment of the CILOs and PILOs. These approaches are based on a variety of methods focusing on team-based project work but also include independent problem-solving methods, group discussions, and debates, practical sessions, and searches using the internet and a variety of library resources including electronic databases.

To address this recommendation, the programme team has developed brochures/handouts for the BID programme that reflect their teaching and learning approaches and provide students with awareness regarding the nature of the BID courses. The documents include 'Design Studio Protocol and Etiquette', and 'Design Studio Rules, and Visual Plagiarism' that contains aspects related to detecting plagiarism related to design. Moreover, the BID programme is supported by Guidelines for Undergraduate Project (INTD499) along with a special assessment rubric for ID programme.

In light of the submitted evidence before and after the site visit, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is fully addressed. The Panel also advises the College to

collect all the teaching and learning regulations, rules and approaches in one document to facilitate the delivery of information to the students.

Recommendation 1.7: *revise the plagiarism policy and procedures and include visual plagiarism and copyright regulations.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

To address this recommendation, new rules and procedures included in the document 'Design Studio Rules and Visual Plagiarism' were developed to cover the regulations related to plagiarism and its detection. These procedures include Visual Plagiarism and Copy Regulations. Moreover, the 'Guidelines of Graduation Project' document (INTD499) was revised to include academic conduct and graduation project supervising procedures. The Panel confirmed through the interview session with students that they are aware of the rules and regulations of plagiarism and all their research papers and reports should be checked through Turnitin. Furthermore, all interviewed students were aware of the visual plagiarism and design studios rules and etiquette.

Interviews conducted with staff members during the site visit revealed that no plagiarism cases were detected during the last academic year. The Panel acknowledges the developed procedure on plagiarism especially the visual plagiarism to reflect the specificity of Interior Design field and ensure the prevention of academic misconduct. However, the Panel urges the College to include clear disciplinary actions for the detected cases of the plagiarism in the plagiarism policy and procedures. Therefore, this recommendation is partially addressed.

2. Indicator 2: Efficiency of the Programme

This section evaluates the extent to which the BID programme of AU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2017, under Indicator Efficiency of the programme; and as a consequence, provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 2.1: *benchmark and revise the programme admission requirements to be in line with good practice for such discipline.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

The progress report explains that AU revised its admission policy internally by the Department Council, College Council, and Admission and Exemption Committee; and the revised policy has been implemented since the first semester of the academic year 2018-2019. Informal benchmarking of the policy was conducted with two local, three regional and two international universities. The Panel was provided with the revised admission policy and notes that admission to the BID programme is governed by general requirements and a subject-specific requirement which is an aptitude test with a minimum passing score of 60%. The Panel studied the profile of the applicants and notes that most of them scored higher than 60% in the aptitude test, as stated in the admission requirements.

From the progress report, submitted evidence and interviews, the Panel learned that the general admission requirements include scores of secondary school certificate along with English and Mathematics Placement Tests. The Panel notes that regardless of track of study, applicants graduating with a minimum score of 60% in their secondary school certificate or its equivalent are admitted into the BID programme; whereas those with less than 60% go through the conditional acceptance by presenting their portfolios and passing an interview which is conducted by the Head of the Department (HoD) to ensure that these applicants have the required skills for the BID programme. Furthermore, they are also encouraged to take two general elective courses to give them the opportunity to check if the BID programme suits their interests or not and if they are still willing to enroll in it. All in all, the Panel is satisfied that this recommendation has been fully addressed.

Recommendation 2.2: *recruit more faculty with interior design degrees and assess the workload of faculty members to ensure that they have sufficient time for research and community engagement activities.*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

From interviews, the Panel learned that although one faculty member was recently recruited, the total number of faculty member is still five in the BID programme; and did not change since the last review excluding one who is on study leave to get her PhD. There are two Assistant Professors, one will get her PhD soon, two full-time Lecturers along with one part-time Lecturer who join the programme team as needed. These academic staff members are supported by two Laboratory Assistants since the academic year 2018-2019 compared to one during 2017-2018. The progress report clarified that one of the Assistant Professors has submitted an application for promotion and it is under process. From interview, the Panel learned that student to staff ratio is 20:1. The Panel is, however, still concerned with the low number of specialist faculty teaching within the programme. Therefore, it is recommended that the College should attract and recruit more staff members who are specialized in the Interior Design field; and ensure that they teach courses that are in the area of their expertise.

With respect to staff workload, it is as per the Higher Education Council (HEC) regulations as clarified from the progress report and confirmed during interview sessions. Interviewed staff members clarified that they are able to manage their time between teaching and research as the working environment encourages them to conduct research either individually or in collaboration with each other. However, the Panel noticed that more research output is needed by all faculty members as only one academic staff member is active in conducting research. Consequently, the Panel urges the University to support and encourage the ID staff members to conduct more research and engage in community engagement activities other than organizing field trips to landmark places in Bahrain. Considering all the above mentioned, the Panel considers this recommendation as not addressed.

Recommendation 2.3: ensure that the facilities meet both students and staff needs and provide them with properly dedicated and equipped laboratories, studio and model making spaces, samples/material library, equipment for plotting and printing.

Judgement: Fully Addressed

The Panel was provided with a document listing all the dedicated laboratories for the BID programme along with studios and with the purchased software and hardware. From touring the facilities, the Panel notes that computer laboratories are well-equipped with projectors, display screens and the latest versions of licensed software that support the updated curriculum such as: Revit, 3D Max, Auto CAD and Photoshop. The Panel also notes the addition of a material room dedicated to storing the materials used in tutoring the students. Furthermore, the Panel notes that there are good printing facilities such as a plotter and 3D printer in addition to sufficient work areas assigned to students within each studio. During interview sessions, both staff

and students expressed their satisfaction with the current facilities and the services provided. The students also informed the Panel that they use the plotter in printing their final projects. The Panel appreciates the notable improvement in AU physical and material resources and agrees that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 2.4: *expand the study area and enrich the library with additional references related to the BID programme.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

To address the recommendation, a wide variety of physical references were purchased and added to the library for enhancing and updating the Interior Design specialized resources. According to the progress report, 34 textbooks and 81 references in the area of working details, furniture design, hospitals, museums, lighting, and specialized software manuals, etc., were added.

The Panel visited the library and was informed that each course in the updated study plan has a list of textbooks and recommended readings that are available in the library. Moreover, the Panel found dedicated study spaces available for student use where they can search knowledge databases, electronic journals. In meeting with students, the Panel learned that the resources available for students are adequate and relevant to their studies and in particular to the design courses. In addition, interviewed students informed the Panel that they use the library resources to complete their essays and assignments as well. The Panel acknowledges the efforts of the programme team in updating and enriching the library with resources that support the BID programme; and advises the College to keep BID resources and references current and adequate. Considering all the above mentioned, this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 2.5: *enhance the learning environment and establish links with regional and international professional associations and bodies in line with AU's strategic plan.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report clarifies that the Interior Design Department has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Bahrain Contemporary Arts Society to enable its students to use the society's facilities and attend the workshops and exhibitions that are organized by the society. Furthermore, field visits have been organized by AU's Professional Relations Directorate to take students to different types of interior design companies and landmark places in Bahrain, in order to expose students to their designing styles.

The Panel was provided with reports written by ID students along with presentations after each visit, which is appreciated by the Panel as a way of enhancing their informal learning. However, the Panel notes that regional and/or international links with professional associations and bodies are currently still absent. Furthermore, the Panel is of the view that students need to be engaged in off-campus activities on a regional or international level, such as cultural exchanges, study tours, and exhibitions amongst other activities, as per BID programmes offered in other institutions regionally or and internationally. Therefore, the Panel considers this recommendation as partially addressed.

3. Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates

This section evaluates the extent to which the BID programme of AU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2017, under Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 3.1: *develop a mechanism to aggregate the assessment data to demonstrate the achievement of the programme intended learning outcomes and graduate attributes.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

A new procedure was developed by the University to assess the achievement of CILOs for all the assessments conducted during the semester. The process requires that each instructor prepares a Course Assessment Workbook (CAW), and the HoD prepares the PILOs Achievement File, which is based on the mapping of CILOs to PILOs. ILOs are considered attained once 60% or above are achieved and the results are discussed in the Department Council meeting at the end of each semester. Through reviewing the PILOs Achievement File for the first semester of the academic year 2018-2019, the Panel noted that the PILOs were attained and exceeded the 60% ratio. The Panel also notes that Graduate attributes are reflected in the aims of the BID programme and embedded in its PILOs.

The Panel notes that AU has an Assessment Manual which includes the mechanisms of the moderation policy. Through these mechanisms, the programme team verifies the assessment methods and the alignment of assessment tools with the specified ILOs to ensure that the assessments collectively measure to what extent a student has achieved the PILOs.

From interviews, the Panel learned that an external assessor has been appointed to ensure the accuracy, consistency, and fairness of assessments. The Panel reviewed samples of the external assessor's reports and confirmed the existence of a consistent approach to externally assess a sample of the moderated students' work. The Panel acknowledges that there is a clear mechanism to ensure the alignment of assessment with outcomes to ensure the academic standards of the BID graduates and concludes that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.2: *regularly conduct a comprehensive formal benchmarking against leading interior design programmes and professional body standards.*

Judgement: *Not Addressed*

The Panel was provided with an undated benchmarking study which was produced as a result of an informal web-based benchmarking process against three international equivalent programmes. Through reviewing the benchmarking study, the Panel noted that the benchmarking of the curriculum involves a systematic analysis of the course domains and number and weight of courses in each domain that collectively form the structure of the programme in addition to course contents. These alignments, while helpful, do not effectively inform the focus and direction of the BID programme as the benchmarking activities conducted are limited to curriculum and do not include other items such as students' work and available resources.

During the site visit, the Panel noted that formal and rigorous benchmarking has yet to take place and through the interviews, the Panel was informed that the College requested a collaboration *via* a formal benchmarking with some ID programmes, but it has not received any response yet. Consequently, the Panel urges the College to follow up and expedite the formal benchmarking activities to cover items related to ID resources, students' achievement and graduation projects' outcomes in order to verify the academic standards of the programme and its graduates with similar programmes offered locally, regionally and internationally. Therefore, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is not addressed.

Recommendation 3.3: *take the necessary actions to ensure the implementation of the plagiarism policy across all assessment tasks and evaluate its effectiveness.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

As mentioned earlier in Recommendation (1.7), a 'Design Studio Rules and Visual Plagiarism' procedure was developed to cover the visual plagiarism related to design work; and to prevent plagiarism by asking students to submit their assignments through Turnitin. Furthermore, updates in the content of the Guidelines for Undergraduate Project (INTD499) was done to state that the students project commonality should not exceed 20% of the text (in phrases of six or more matching words), excluding the reference list. Supervisors are also requested to manually peruse highlighted text in Turnitin to verify the absence of plagiarism even where commonality is below 20%. According to the BID progress report all the related procedures were implemented from the First Semester of the academic year 2018-2019.

During the follow-up visit, the Panel confirmed from interviewed students that they are well-informed of the plagiarism procedures in detecting and dealing with plagiarism cases and academic misconduct. In addition, from examining course files and provided samples of Turnitin reports, the Panel confirmed the implementation of plagiarism procedures, and noted that no cases were detected in Fall 2018 semester. However, consequences to being caught with plagiarism should be clearly specified in the policy. The Panel acknowledges the arrangements in place to ensure that the

assessment policy and procedures are consistently implemented and is satisfied with the progress made. The Panel also acknowledges that these arrangements have just been introduced, and it is still early to evaluate their effectiveness. Hence, this recommendation is considered partially addressed.

Recommendation 3.4: *revise the course intended learning outcome/ assessment mapping in all courses in line with the revised programme intended learning outcomes and graduate attributes.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

According to BID progress report, a course revision was made for all the courses including already existing courses and newly developed courses. The revision included a revision of the ILOs to assure the appropriate level of courses by using National Qualifications Framework terminology, selection of appropriate assessment methods to assess the ILOs and ensuring the use of appropriate weights of assessment to assess the ILOs.

Despite all these provisions, the examination of Curriculum Skills Map 2018-2019 indicated that there is a misalignment of the PILOs with some courses specifically for the theoretical courses. For example, Human Factors in Design (INTD312), Academic English II (ENGL102) and Research Methods in Interior Design (IDRM498) are theoretical courses in their nature, however, they are aligned to the PILOs that reflect design creations, practical and technical skills C01, C02, C03, B03.

Moreover, Intermediate Retail Interior Design Studio (INTD312), as an intermediate design studio is not aligned with the PILO C02 that reflects the design skills. Furthermore, there are some support courses that have been mapped to 13 PILOs which make them equivalent to (INTD499) Final Project in Interior Design and the advanced design studio courses. These courses are: Sustainable Design (INTD413), Environmental Control Systems (INTD406), Human Factors in Design (INTD12) and Academic English courses (ENGL201) & (ENGL202). Therefore, the Panel urges the College to revise the Curriculum Skills Map 2018-2019 to ensure proper alignment between the PILOs and the courses, that subsequently ensure the accuracy of assessing the achievement of PILOs and graduate attributes.

Notwithstanding the above, the Panel finds that the CILO/ assessment mapping in the provided courses is appropriate. Through examining the provided samples of the internal verifications files, the Panel noted that there are clear internal post-assessment moderation processes, whereby the mapping and alignment of assessment components to the CILOs, and the results of this moderation are used by the HoD to advise course instructors of any modifications needed. Considering all the above mentioned, the Panel considers this recommendation as partially addressed.

Recommendation 3.5: *develop mechanisms to revise and assess the effectiveness of the internal verification/moderation processes.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

Internal moderation is governed by AU Assessment Manual V.4 and adapted by the BID programme team. According to the Manual, pre-assessment moderation of written examinations is carried out before the administration of the examinations. The Panel confirmed *via* interviews with academic staff members and the provided evidence the consistent implementation of the process by involving course instructors and the follow-up process of HoD to ensure that it is thoroughly conducted; and that improvements are made to each course syllabus or assessment prior to handing it over to the students. Furthermore, representative from Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA) thoroughly explained the revised process and how they check and ensure the implementation of the internal moderation process through a unified matrix used at University level. From the evidence provided, the Panel notes that the programme maintains the internal verification and moderation process and the effective implementation of the comments to ensure the improvement of course assessments and the level of student achievement. Hence, this recommendation is considered fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.6: *ensure the academic standards of graduates and that students' work including graduation projects is appropriate for the programme type and level.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

To address the recommendation, a specialized rubric for Graduation project (INTD499) final assessment was developed to ensure that clear measures to assess students' skills are in place in order to achieve graduate attributes. In addition, the ID Department organized a one-day event 'BID Project Day' and invited industry professionals to evaluate the graduation projects and upper-level projects 300/400 as a tool for supporting the students to progress through gaining professional feedback. The Panel reviewed the evaluation sheets of the industry members for graduation projects and noted that they gave the students marks ranged from A to B grade which is considered an indication of the acceptable level of the work of the final year students.

The Panel notes that assessment rubrics for ID courses are being utilized by some of the programme team and have been confirmed by interviewed students and staff. Nevertheless, reviewing the course files demonstrated that the rubrics are not being used by the instructors in marking the assignments in some courses, such as Building System & Interior Codes (INTD306) and Research Methods in Interior Design (IDRM498). Therefore, the Panel urges the College to ensure that the assessment rubrics are applied to all the courses offered in the ID programme.

It is worth noting that employers and internship on-site supervisors interviewed stated that the level of the students is within the level of the similar programmes in Bahrain, and they were satisfied with their communication skills and their sense of responsibility. However, some of the interviewed employers identified areas of improvement for the programme graduates that include the development of 3D presentation skills, especially 3D Max and professional practice awareness and practical experience. Furthermore, the external assessors stated that creativity and critical thinking in the students' work are within the level of the local students' work. Considering all the above mentioned, this recommendation is partially addressed.

Recommendation 3.7: *research the market to identify suitable training places, where several areas of interior design are fast growing in Bahrain.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

To address the recommendation, the BID programme established relationships with various companies in the field to enable securing suitable internship placements for the students, which is handled by the Professional Relations Directorate. Furthermore, a career day was held for the BID programme consisting of 17 organizations to provide students with opportunities to seek job placements. Interviewed students and internship supervisors confirmed that internes are placed in reputed organizations known for their interior design activities. This was also confirmed by representatives from Professional Relations Directorate as they stressed that they do their utmost to select and place internship students in reputed organizations to enhance students practical learning experience. Hence, this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.8: *revise the arrangements related to the capstone projects to enhance contact hours with faculty and to include external examiners.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

To address the recommendation, the graduation project (INTD499) course was revised to include six credit hours at Studio Laboratory to guide students and help them overcome their weaknesses and challenges in the way of fulfilling project phases and meeting deadlines. This in turn, enables instructors to follow up the progress of their students and provide them with ongoing feedback to ensure the quality and level of their graduation projects. From interviews, the Panel noted that both students and academic staff members are satisfied with the current arrangements. While, at the end of the semester, the final Graduation projects get assessed by both the project supervisor and a jury panel from industry to conduct the final oral assessments for the students. Interviewed students were satisfied with the support provided by their project supervisors. Hence, the Panel concludes that this recommendation is fully addressed.

Recommendation 3.9: *expedite the implementation of its plan of dividing the Advisory Board, enhance its independency and include interior design professionals with diverse interior design backgrounds, who are willing to meet more regularly to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

As stated in the progress report the College External Advisory Board has been split into two in order to focus on the special nature of the programmes. As a result, the BID External Advisory Board was formed in December 2017. The Board meets twice a year, and the meetings are documented and feedback is provided to the programme team on areas related to the revision of the new curriculum, internship placement and enhancing links with industry.

During site visit interviews with the Board members, they confirmed that many of their recommendations have been acknowledged and implemented in the revised study plan. Nevertheless, although the Board is comprised of local employers from different art and design background and alumni, the Panel noted that only a few of its members are specialized in Interior Design. As two of the Board members are experts in Architecture and Engineering, two with Art background and one is an ID graduate.

Accordingly, the Panel advises that the College improves the selection process of BID External Advisory Board members to include more members with ID background to enhance the delivery of the programme. Consequently, the Panel is of the view that this recommendation is partially addressed.

4. Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance

This section evaluates the extent to which the BID programme of AU, has addressed the recommendations outlined in the programme review report of May 2017, under Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance; and as a consequence provides a judgment regarding the level of implementation of each recommendation for this Indicator as outlined in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Recommendation 4.1: *monitor the annual evaluation process to ensure that it is effectively utilized by the Department.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

From the progress report the Panel learned that the BID programme went through an annual review in 2017-2018 and it was confirmed by the interviewed academic staff members that the review is regularly conducted. From interviews, the Panel was informed that internal stakeholders (students and faculty members) and external stakeholders (alumni, employers, and BID External Advisory Board) feedback was considered when conducting the ID annual review.

The Panel also learned during interviews that based on the annual and periodic reviews, practical aspects were added to 15 ID courses and one extra elective course was incorporated to the ID study plan in response to the alumni's feedback. Moreover, the internship course is a compulsory course now unlike its status before as it was not compulsory. Furthermore, employers and BID External Advisory Board suggestions to update ID software and providing more ID studios and laboratories were considered during the annual programme review as clarified and confirmed during interview sessions. The Panel studied the updated study plan and noted that the ID programme team has incorporated all the above mentioned. Moreover, interviews with students confirmed the introduced changes and ID employers appreciated that ID Department implemented their suggestions.

From interviews with staff members, the Panel learned that after each semester (first, second and summer), the BID courses are evaluated by its staff members and any suggested changes are incorporated in the upcoming offering of the courses as long as these are minor and feasible, as major changes are left for the periodic reviews. The Panel was provided with an action plan of the annual review which was followed by the ID team to incorporate and follow up the implementation. Furthermore, to ensure the implementation of the process, the CAQA checks the conducted reviews and ensures that it is as per the annual programme review procedure and that quality assurance processes were adhered to by the programme team. This was confirmed

during academic staff interviews and representatives from CAQA. Considering all the above mentioned, the Panel considers this recommendation as fully addressed.

Recommendation 4.2: *communicate regularly with employers, and develop and implement a mechanism for the dissemination of survey results to make outcomes communicated back to relevant stakeholders.*

Judgement: *Fully Addressed*

From the progress report the Panel learned that the ID programme team has incorporated ID employers' and ID Advisory Board suggestions in improving and updating the ID study plan, as clarified in the previous recommendation. Furthermore, AU enhanced the communication with the employers and members of the Advisory Board by sending letters to inform them about the changes introduced to the BID programme in response to their suggestions and recommendations. Moreover, an annual social gathering is conducted to get informal feedback from ID alumni, employers and Advisory Board. From interviews conducted on site with employers and ID Advisory Board, the Panel confirmed that an ongoing channel of communication has been established. Both employers and ID Advisory Board members appreciate the efforts of the ID Department in enhancing the programme and updating it. Consequently, the Panel considers this recommendation as fully addressed.

Recommendation 4.3: *regularly and systemically scope labour market needs to identify long- and short-term trends within the interior design field.*

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

The progress report clarified that a detailed market need study was conducted by the ID Department for the programme in 2017-2018. From interviews the Panel learned that BID programme team has conducted this comprehensive study and updated the courses and upgraded software accordingly. As mentioned earlier in the Report, courses were updated and the Panel was provided with a list of the purchased software.

It is worth noting that one of the results of the market need study was related to 'Project Management' and this issue was raised by ID employers as an area to be considered by the ID programme team along with sales skills. All in all, although the Panel is satisfied with the ID programme team effort in conducting this study which covers the period from 2010-2019, it did not go beyond this period to clearly identify the upcoming trends in the ID field. Consequently, the Panel considers this recommendation as partially addressed and urges the College to conduct such studies on a regular basis.

5. Conclusion

Taking into account the institution's own progress report, the evidence gathered from the interviews and documentation made available during the follow-up visit, the Panel draws the following conclusion in accordance with the DHR/BQA Follow-up Visits of Academic Programme Reviews Procedure:

The Bachelor's Degree in Interior Design programme offered by Ahlia University has made adequate progress.

Appendix 1: Judgement per recommendation.

Judgement	Standard
Fully Addressed	The institution has demonstrated marked progress in addressing the recommendation. The actions taken by the programme team have led to significant improvements in the identified aspect and, as a consequence, in meeting the Indicator's requirements.
Partially Addressed	The institution has taken positive actions to address the recommendation. There is evidence that these actions have produced improvements and that these improvements are sustainable. The actions taken are having a positive, yet limited impact on the ability of the programme to meet the Indicator's requirements.
Not Addressed	The institution has not taken appropriate actions to address the recommendation and/or actions taken have little or no impact on the quality of the programme delivery and the academic standards. Weaknesses persist in relation to this recommendation.

Appendix 2: Overall Judgement.

Overall Judgement	Standard
Good progress	The institution has fully addressed the majority of the recommendations contained in the review report, and/or previous follow-up report, these include recommendations that have most impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. The remaining recommendations are partially addressed. No further follow-up visit is required.
Adequate progress	The institution has at least partially addressed most of the recommendations contained in the review report and/or previous follow-up report, including those that have major impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. There is a number of recommendations that have been fully addressed and there is evidence that the institution can maintain the progress achieved. No further follow-up visit is required.
Inadequate progress	The institution has made little or no progress in addressing a significant number of the recommendations contained in the review report and/or previous follow-up report, especially those that have main impact on the quality of the programme, its delivery and academic standards. For first follow-up visits, a second follow-up visit is required,