



## University College of Bahrain

### Action Plan to Address the Comments and Recommendations of QAA for the IPA Report

The final comments of QAAO were as follows:

The team made 6 recommendations for improvement and enhancement. The recommendations are of a desirable rather than essential nature and are proposed to enable the University to build on existing practices which are operating satisfactorily but which could be improved or enhanced. **The team identified 1 condition that the University must satisfy to achieve QAA accreditation.**

The QAA review team identified the following **condition** that must be fulfilled before all the European Standards and Guidelines can be deemed met at University College of Bahrain. The condition must be addressed within 12 months:

UCB review the newly developed Quality Assurance Policy to ensure its fitness for purpose in guiding the MBA programme forward and that the policy be clearly integrated into strategic and operational planning and functions to further a systemic approach to quality assurance and enhancement and foster a culture of quality and ensure that this culture is reflected in all the activities of the MBA programme. **(Standard 1.1 [para 1.27])**

**Overall, the team concluded that the University College of Bahrain meets all the standards for International Programme Accreditation subject to meeting a specific condition.**


The QAA review team makes the following 7 **recommendations** to University College of Bahrain.

- Designs a more robust tool for stakeholder feedback that would have an impact on the academic development of the MBA program (ESG Standard 1.1 **[para 1.21]**)
- Further leverage the Industry Advisory Board to consider how a co-curricular MBA programme focused on soft skills development for career advancement might be devised. (ESG Standard 1.2 **[para 2.8]**)
- UCB develops a policy and process for Mitigating Circumstances that covers all instances where MBA students' completion of assessment may be impacted (ESG Standard 1.3 **[para 3.14]**)
- Consider opportunities for continuous professional development for those teaching on the MBA which encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies in teaching and assessment (ESG Standard 1.5 **[5.9]**)
- The MBA programme develops enhanced analysis tools and uses these to develop thematic reports that inform the decision-making process. (ESG Standard 1.7 **[para 7.5]**)
- Establish a website management policy to support the maintenance of the website (Standard 1.8 **[para 8.6]**)

UCB reviewed the report of QAA about International Programme accreditation (IPA) and proposes the following action plan, taking into consideration the recommendations and comments, that will be finalized before May 2025.

**Approved by: University College Council (UCC): Minutes of Meeting Number 1 for 2024/2025 Dated 5 September 2024.**

**Dr. Rana Sawaya – UCB President**

Signature: 54E0F46D24ED4B2...

**Date:** 9/16/2024

## Definitions

<b>UCB</b> – University College of Bahrain
<b>UCC</b> – University College Council
<b>QAAO</b> – Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office
<b>QAAC</b> – Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee
<b>LTARC</b> – Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Review Committee
<b>HoD</b> – Head of Department
<b>IAB</b> – Industry Advisory Board
<b>MPRC</b> - Marketing and Public Relations Committee
<b>IT</b> – Information Technology
<b>SSU</b> – Student Support Unit
<b>CEU</b> – Community Engagement Unit
<b>MoM</b> – Minutes of Meeting

Standard 1.1 Policy for quality assurance: Not met					
QAA Comments or recommendations	Proposed action(s)	Responsibility for action	Timeline	Evidence of successful implementation	Completion date
<p>1.6- The Quality Policy defines the quality assurance approach based on the following five principles: continuous improvement; stakeholder involvement; compliance; academic integrity; and protection against intolerance and discrimination. The policy references the quality assurance model - Plan, Do, Check, Act - and identifies both external and internal quality assurance as the main pillars of quality assurance in the institution. External quality assurance is identified within the activities of external review and benchmarking. <b>[102, 1.3 QA Policy]</b>. However, the team concluded that the newly approved Quality Assurance Policy was not sufficiently detailed to guide the University in developing consistent decision-making processes and improvement steps that would build towards a culture of quality over one of compliance</p>	<p>UCB will review its Quality Assurance policy to ensure that it guides the University in developing consistent decision-making processes and improvement steps, hence building a culture of quality. The newly approved Quality Assurance Policy at UCB will be sufficiently detailed to guide the University in developing consistent decision-making processes and improvement steps that would build towards a culture of quality over one of compliance.</p>	<p>President, departments, Committees (Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee) QAAC</p>	<p>1 month</p>	<p>Revised Quality Assurance Policy Reports, Procedures of continuous review of administrative processes</p>	<p>March 2025</p>

<p>1.12- The team found that although there seems to be evidence of documents in place to allow the standard to be met in principle, it wanted to test the effectiveness of the policies and procedures and the efficacy of the quality assurance cycle that UCB claims to deploy</p>	<p>UCB will implement the Process to test the effectiveness of the policies and procedures &amp; the efficacy of the QA cycle.</p> <p>UCB will strengthen the quality assurance cycle by conducting more frequent reviews, engage staff and other key stakeholders to collect input (e.g. feedback loops) on correct procedures as well as conducting workshops to ensure that all stakeholders are well-informed and can execute the policies effectively.</p>	<p>All Departments, Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee QAAO</p>	<p>2 months</p>	<p>Developed Operational plan</p> <p>Documented feedback from stakeholders</p> <p>Workshop activity reports</p> <p>Evidence of completed reviews</p>	<p>November 2024</p>
<p>1.14- It was noted that course reports were not reflective and simply document maintenance of the status quo via mostly checklists. There were no clear explanations for the exam results in some of the courses that were uploaded as evidence (for example in one course, the results were reported to be normal distribution where clearly it was skewed 73.4% A, A-) <b>[123 sample course file folder – 06. end of course report, Grad 204 end of year report]</b> This is also apparent in the internship and moderation reports provided, where the nature of the query is simply to</p>	<p>UCB will provide training to faculty on how to use deeper reflection in the course reports and emphasize the importance of identifying areas for improvement, analysing outcomes and making data-driven recommendations.</p>	<p>All Academic Departments, Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Review Committee (LTARC), QAAO</p>	<p>1 month</p>	<p>Meetings with student's representative, WS for students</p> <p>Revised Course Report Template</p> <p>Faculty training workshop activity report</p>	<p>October 2024</p>

<p>verify that the papers and the procedures are in order rather than a true reflection of the essence of the audit itself. <b>[Audit on Internship – 119- IQA Moderation report, Library Gap analysis]</b> which is a check list of the available books for the courses for the BA department.</p>	<p>QAAO will test the effectiveness of the internal audit process and the internal moderation process that will ensure the quality of the documents uploaded in the end-course report. In addition, a training workshop is put in plan about CILOs assessment and end of course report.</p> <p>The QAAO will also work with the library representatives in deploying the new Library audit analysis, which includes information about the activities of the library (Visitors: Students, Staff, Community, Internet access, etc.)</p> <p>UCB will revise the report templates for internship audits, moderation, and library gap analysis to include sections that require a more thorough reflection on the processes, outcomes, and areas for</p>			<p>Revised Templates</p>	
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	improvement, rather than just verifying compliance.				
<p>1.15- UCB administers stakeholder surveys, [129] yet there is insufficient external stakeholder involvement (some surveys did not meet the participation ratio targeted) [Appendix 1]. The provided evidence was of the results and final analyses and reflected a high degree of satisfaction with low marginal differences. Furthermore, some of the submitted evidence included statements from student surveys in employer's survey; thus, questioning the integrity, validity, and reliability of these reports.</p>	<p>UCB has already a clear plan for the surveys concerning students, employers, Staff, alumni, and the responsibility of these surveys and due dates are will-defined.</p> <p>Stakeholders survey inputs are considered as one of the inputs in the annual evaluation process in the published annual review report. Actions incorporate inputs from direct and indirect measures such as the stakeholders' inputs. Such actions will be communicated to the stakeholders. This communication will be formalized through updating the current policy related to stakeholders' surveys.</p>	<p>SSU, CEU, QAAO</p>	<p>15 days</p>	<p>WS, Webinars, other activities</p> <p>Documentation of recorded feedback</p>	<p>March 2025</p>

	<p>Besides, QAAO employed a data analytics person to work with IT department to analyse the data of surveys</p> <p>UCB will improve stakeholder engagement by using diverse channels to reach a broader range of stakeholders and ensure multiple inputs.</p>				
<p>1.16- The team found no evidence that the results and recommendations of the surveys are incorporated into the enhancement plans or have an impact on enhancing the students' educational experience. For example, although the QAA Office disseminates the results to all departments, urging them to integrate essential skills and employer's recommendation into the curriculum, the team found no tangible evidence that this advice was incorporated in the plans. <b>[Appendix 1 – employer feedback report 20-21]</b> Faculty members were aware of students' surveys and feedback but did not acknowledge nor mention any of the stakeholders' feedback. <b>[M2, M4]</b></p>	<p>As stated earlier, Stakeholders survey inputs are considered as one of the inputs in the annual evaluation process in the published annual review report. Actions incorporate inputs from direct and indirect measures such as the stakeholders' inputs. Such actions will be communicated to the stakeholders. This communication will be formalized through updating the current policy related to stakeholders' surveys.</p> <p>QAAO in collaboration with HoDs will ensure that the</p>	<p>All Departments, IT, QAAO,</p>	<p>Done</p>	<p>List of surveys, Survey analysis for 2023-2024 Department Council meeting minutes evidencing the discussion of stakeholder feedback</p>	<p>September 2024</p>



	<p>recommendations are taken in consideration with tangible evidence</p> <p>QAAO in collaboration with HoDs will ensure that stakeholder feedback is reviewed, discussed and documented as a crucial part of the Department Council meeting agenda and/or any other relevant channel.</p>				
<p>1.17- The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office conducted several training and information sessions and workshops to prepare faculty and staff for the accreditation visits that the institution underwent. There were mock interviews and workshops for each of the visits. [M2, M4, M5]. The team did not find that the newly approved Quality Policy guided the university in developing and consistent decision-making processes and improvement steps that would build towards a culture of quality over one of compliance</p>	<p>The QAAC will continue to involve all parties in implementing the newly approved Quality Assurance Policy at UCB which will build towards a culture in developing consistent decision-making processes.</p> <p>UCB will ensure that all training and workshops are closely aligned with the newly approved Quality Policy</p> <p>UCB will provide regular updates to faculty and staff about the Quality Policy, its importance,</p>	<p>QAAC, QAAO, UCC</p>	<p>Done</p>	<p>Policies Workshop activity report Meeting minutes discussing the significance of the Quality Policy Internal</p>	<p>June 2024</p>

	and how it affects their work through various channels such as meetings, internal communications, etc.				
1.18- The team was also of the opinion that there was a lack of clear strategic objectives regarding the strategic direction of future accreditation procedures for both the institution and the MBA. This can be explained by the lack of university-wide operational plans and the absence of an institution-wide quality culture, and practices guided by a comprehensive Quality Assurance Policy and linked to strategic planning	UCB future strategic objectives concerning future institutional, or MBA accreditation are studied in developing the new strategic plan.  UCB will implement workshops to help faculty and staff understand the new strategic objectives, quality assurance policy, and their roles in supporting accreditation procedures.	Strategic planning committee, QAAO, QAAC, UCC	October 2024	Workshop Activity Report	March 2025
1.19- The team found that the practice of internal quality assurance within the University is focused on the academic programmes with little evidence submitted to prove the continuous review of the administrative processes, nor the overall administration of any other process within UCB. In meetings with administrative staff, no evidence was provided to reach a different conclusion; only a few attendees indicated that	QAAO currently practices a continuous review including all administrative departments. All committees and administrative departments work as per the QAA policies.  QAAO will deliver more evidence to demonstrate the	HoDs, Staff, QAAO, UCC	Starting semesters	Revised Quality Assurance Framework which includes administrative Processes	Continuous

<p>they conduct surveys at the end of some events, and but no real systematic internal review took place [M5]. This was attributed to the fact that the new Quality Assurance Policy has only been in effect since January 2024 [M8] though it is acknowledged that a Quality Manual has been in place since 2019 (updated in 2023).</p>	<p>continuous review of the administrative process (HR, Students services, Media)</p> <p>QAAO will expand the quality assurance framework to include administrative processes.</p> <p>Update the membership of the quality assurance committee to involve representatives from the administrative departments</p>			<p>Evidence of the updated Quality Assurance Committee</p>	
<p>1.20- In summary, UCB has created policies and procedures around quality assurance but there is significant weakness in demonstrating that these policies and QA measures have a real impact on the enhancement of the educational programmes (MBA). The team concludes that the lack of an adequate Quality Assurance Policy has impacted UCB’s ability to formulate and operate a cohesive and coherent quality assurance system.</p> <p>As a result, the quality culture of UCB remains one of compliance rather than evaluation and continuous</p>	<p>UCB is implementing a continuous improvement cycle through its quality assurance policies which enhances the Quality assurance culture within all the stakeholders (Students, alumni, IAB, academic &amp; administrative staff)</p> <p>UCB will develop a mapping document that links each element of the QA Policy to</p>	<p>All departments, Student's Council, Alumni council, HoDs, IABs, QAAO Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee (QAAC)</p>	<p>June 2024</p>	<p>IABs Meetings, HoDs presentations in the meeting, Recommendation</p> <p>Detailed mapping document</p>	<p>Done and continuous</p>

<p>improvement. Though the team acknowledges the approval of a Quality Assurance Policy in January 2024, it has not seen evidence of how such a policy informs Strategic Planning. Though it is further acknowledged that a new Strategic plan is currently under development, UCB evidencing the link between policy and planning would give confidence that a systemic approach to QA is being implemented.</p>	<p>specific objectives and actions within the Strategic Plan.</p>				
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<b>Standard 1.2 Design and approval of programmes: Met</b>					
<b>QAA Comments or recommendations</b>	<b>Proposed action(s)</b>	<b>Responsibility for action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Evidence of successful implementation</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<p>2.8- The team therefore formed the view that UCB demonstrably engaged employers via the operations of its IAB,</p> <p>The team recommends that it further leverages the Industry Advisory Board (IAB) to consider how a co-curricular programme focused on soft skills development for career advancement might be devised.</p>	<p>UCB will continue engaging Employers during the meetings of the 3 IABs in June 2024 and the recommendation of QAA will be taken in consideration.</p>	<p>HoDs, IABs, QAAO</p>	<p>Done</p>	<p>IAB MoMs</p>	<p>Done and continuous</p>

<b>Standard 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment: Met</b>					
<b>QAA Comments or recommendations</b>	<b>Proposed action(s)</b>	<b>Responsibility for action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Evidence of successful implementation</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<p>3.14- The team explored how UCB approaches the management of mitigating circumstances that MBA students may have when undertaking assessment, as the Assessment and Moderation Policy [324] does not cover this area. Although it was evident from oral testimony that individual students on the MBA had been appropriately supported [IQR M5], the team were unable to establish which documented policy and procedures were utilised when students felt unable to complete an assessment within the stated timeframes (notwithstanding the existence of a process for those that missed exams, as set out in the Procedures for Appeals for Missing Exams.</p> <p>The team therefore recommends (3) that UCB develop a policy and process for Mitigating Circumstances that covers all instances where students’ completion of assessment may be impacted</p>	<p>UCB will develop a policy and process for Mitigating Circumstances (separate or part of the assessment policy) that covers all instances where students’ completion of assessment may be impacted</p> <p>UCB will update the Assessment and Moderation Policy to include the process for mitigating circumstances. To address such instances.</p>	<p>QAAO, QAAC, UCC</p>	<p>December 2024</p>	<p>New policy, MoMs of QAAC, and UCC</p> <p>Revised Assessment and Moderation Policy</p>	<p>January 2025</p>

<b>Standard 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification: Met</b>					
QAA Comments or recommendations	Proposed action(s)	Responsibility for action	Timeline	Evidence of successful implementation	Completion Date
4.3- In line with government policy, there is currently no policy for addressing students with prior experiential learning.	UCB will develop a policy for prior experiential learning, when it is officially part of the government policy and accepted by the Bahraini Authorities.	QAAO, QAAC, UCC	February 2025	New Policy	March 2025 and continuous

<b>Standard 1.5 Teaching staff: Met</b>					
QAA Comments or recommendations	Proposed action(s)	Responsibility for action	Timeline	Evidence of successful implementation	Completion Date
No Recommendations					

<b>Standard 1.6 Learning resources and student support: Met</b>					
QAA Comments or recommendations	Proposed action(s)	Responsibility for action	Timeline	Evidence of successful implementation	Completion Date
No comments or recommendations.					

<b>Standard 1.7 Information management: Met</b>					
QAA Comments or recommendations	Proposed action(s)	Responsibility for action	Timeline	Evidence of successful implementation	Completion Date
7.5- During the visit, the team noted that the MBA programme makes use of the data collected at programme level by analysing it, for example comparing the registration and admission statistics for the MBA programme AY20-21 up to Fall of AY23-24. [MBA-QAA-ppt M1-IQA] Yet, the programme did not provide any evidence of actions or decision taken based on this analysis. The team recommends (5) the MBA programme develop enhanced analysis tools and use these to develop thematic reports that inform the decision-making process.	UCB will develop enhanced analysis tools and use it to develop thematic reports. This includes reports on progression, graduation, at-risk students, quality of advising, etc.  UCB will also hire a data analyst that would support this development and analysis, in coordination with the IT department.	BA HoD, MBA Director, MBA Academic Staff, QAAO	November 2024	MBA Analysis tools	December 2024



<b>Standard 1.8 Public information: Met</b>					
QAA Comments or recommendations	Proposed action(s)	Responsibility for action	Timeline	Evidence of successful implementation	Completion Date
8.6 The student handbook provides clear, accurate, objective, up-to date, and readily accessible information to prospective and current students, as well as other stakeholders. However, the UCB website [ <a href="https://www.ucb.edu.bh/admission">https://www.ucb.edu.bh/admission</a> ] does not contain up to date information the team recommends (6) UCB establish a website management policy to support the maintenance of the website.	UCB has developed a Public Information Policy including the management of the Website. The policy was approved by the University College Council on 9 <sup>th</sup> July 2024. A new website has been developed and the website has been updated according to the procedures outlined in this policy.	QAAO, MPRC, UCC Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee (QAAC)	Done, June 2024	New Public Information management policy	Done

<b>Standard 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes: Met</b>					
QAA Comments or recommendations	Proposed action(s)	Responsibility for action	Timeline	Evidence of successful implementation	Completion Date
No Comments or recommendations					

<b>Standard 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance: Met</b>					
<b>QAA Comments or recommendations</b>	<b>Proposed action(s)</b>	<b>Responsibility for action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Evidence of successful implementation</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
10.9- The above commitment in addition to the current submission provides ample evidence that the MBA programme is committed to undergoing cyclical external quality assurance reviews. Although the outcome of some of these visits might not always be positive (BQA recent review outcomes.) [1004] the team is of the opinion that improvement plans are put in place and acted upon.	UCB develops stronger commitment and follow through on the action plans resulting from external quality reviews to ensure rigour in the assurance of sustainable programme improvement.	QAAO, QAAC, UCC	Continuous	BQA Progress Report	Continuous

**-End of the Document-**