هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب

Education & Training Quality Authority

Kingdom of Bahrain - مملكة البحرين

Directorate of
Higher Education Reviews
Programme Review Report

Gulf University

College of Engineering

Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering

Kingdom of Bahrain

Site Visit Date: 31 October – 2 November 2022

HA070-C3-R070

Table of Contents

Acronyms

ABET	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
APR	Academic Programme Review
BIDE	Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering
BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CIDA	Council for Interior Design Accreditation
CILO	Course Intended Learning Outcome
CoE	College of Engineering
CQAC	College Quality Assurance Committee
CTLAC	College Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee
DHR	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews
GU	Gulf University
HEC	Higher Education Council
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HoD	Head of Department
IET	Institute of Education and Technology
IT	Information Technology
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PGA	Programme Graduate Attribute
PIAB	Programme Industrial Advisory Board
PILO	Programme Intended Learning Outcome
QADC	Quality Assurance and Development Center

SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SIS	Student Information System
SSU	Student Service Unit
UTLAC	University Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   *4*

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 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 judgements 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 judgement, 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 judgement 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.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   *6*

II. The Programme's Profile

Institution Name*	Gulf University
College/ Department*	College of Engineering/Architectural & Interior Design Engineering
Programme/ Qualification Title*	Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering
Qualification Approval Number	-
NQF Level	-
Validity Period on NQF	-
Number of Units*	53
NQF Credit	-
Programme Aims*	1. Provide stimulating learning environment that is social in nature including virtual and physical facilities where graduates' knowledge, skills and competencies related to interior design engineering theoretical background, applications, thinking, problem solving, communication, ICT, numeracy, autonomy, responsibility and context will be developed and interrelated. 2. Prepare graduates for high level commitments of the interior design engineers' professional practice to Introduce and operate the multifaceted nature of design and engineering sciences to create assured capable graduates who are eligible for entry level of interior design engineering profession and/or for enrolment in further higher educations. 3. Equip graduates with all round communications skills needed to conceptualize, develop and present design ideas and projects' details that facilitate production, manufacturability, execution of the design and enrich the interactive dialogues within the design process of interior spaces and products. 4. Educate graduates to create, develop, provide, manufacture and maintain sustainable interior spaces, economical services and green products for local regional community, with an understanding of engineering aspects and methods that consider cost, life cycle design, durability, workability, and substantiality of projects, products, and services with awareness of the cultural, social, environmental and global context.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022

7

	5. Equip graduates with the process of exploration, critical thinking and creativity skills through a well-balanced and organized academic progression and succession of theoretical, practical and experimental pedagogies through physical and virtual simulation, that enable them to solve design and technical problems of space, such as aesthetic, function, ergonomics, building services technology, thermal comfort, life safety, health, wellbeing, and materials' life cycle cost.
	6. Build graduates' holistic awareness of their leading role in creating applicable interior design of different types of the built environments within local and global markets and familiar and unfamiliar contexts, by providing wide range of collaborative activities with partners form the academia, community and industry to reinforce the opportunities for informal leaning and developing interpersonal skills.
	7. Prepare graduates to be entrepreneurs in their own business and reflective practitioners, contributors and initiators in the development and management of their societies with excellence in leadership skills, ethical responsibilities, professional attributes and cooperation with clients and professionals from other disciplines.
Programme Intended Learning Outcomes*	1. **K-TU:** Demonstrate understanding of engineering scope and applications in the field of Interior Design with reflection on building types, components, systems, physical properties and sustainability principles.
	2. **K-TU:** Demonstrate critical knowledge of design principles and vocabularies, spatial characteristics and values, design inputs and processes within global perspective of Interior design engineering practice and understanding of market changes and business.
	3. **K-TU:** Demonstrate comprehensive understanding of historical changes, contemporary movements, and related design theories of built environment to recognize the interrelations of social, economic, cultural, physical and environmental contexts with engineering solutions and design decisions for interior spaces and products.
	4. **K-TU:** Demonstrate in depth awareness of integrating engineering and technology methods and standards with interior design solutions and practice with emphasis on materiality, construction, structure, services, sustainability, transportation, manufacturing, feasibility and inclusivity vary according to geographic location.
	5. **K-PA:** Apply evidence based and systematic interior design process and engineering methodology to produce holistic interior design engineering solutions with respect to client, society's needs and relevant regulations.
	6. **K-PA:** Examine illumination strategies, acoustical treatments methods, colour schemes composition, thermal comfort standards, indoor air

quality, technical installation standard, materials properties, and finishes quality, taking into considerations safety, human wellbeing and sustainability of interior environments.

7. **K-PA:** Produce professional design and engineering documentations to facilitate comprehensive design discussions, appropriate budgeting and organized execution of interior design spaces and products.

8. **S-A:** Critically analyse projects constrains, interpret users' needs and assess interior design investments utilizing design, technical, and engineering contemporary knowledge and skills.

9. **S-PS:** Create multi axial interior design engineering solutions for spaces, products and services within interior environments to solve functional, technical, and execution issues while considering human wellbeing cultural, social and sustainability factors.

10. **S-PS:** Evaluate design solutions and alternatives to support appropriate decision making in light of local and global interior design and engineering trends, codes and industry.

11. **S-C:** Communicate effectively, in written, verbal and graphical forms, with design and engineering communities as well as with clients and societies at large to present the development and execution phases of interior design project while adhering to convincing arguments and ethical defence.

12. **S-IT:** Deploy digitalized applications to simulate and examine physical, structural, ergonomic, functional and aesthetic aspects of interior design engineering solution within virtual and experimental environments.

13. **S-N:** Perform mathematical methodologies and interpret varied numerical, physical and graphical data to associate engineering knowledge and skills with efficient interior design processes and practices.

14. **C-A:** Employ independent and lifelong learning competencies in diverse contexts through research, Self-assessment, and self-motivation to extend in depth learning, professional development and adaptability.

15. **C-R:** Contribute ethically towards the development of the profession within environmental, social, and economical responsibilities and interdisciplinary approaches.

16. **C-R:** Lead and collaborate effectively in interdisciplinary teams in varied types of projects with initiative and decision making responsibility.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   *9*

	17. **C-C:** Manage efficiently time, resources, and projects within defined and undefined context to achieve personal and organizational goals with consideration of relevant codes and regulations.

* Mandatory fields

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   *10*

III. Judgement Summary

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The Programme's Judgement:
Confidence
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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	Addressed
Indicator 2.3	Physical and Material Resources	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	Addressed

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022　　　　　　　　　*11*

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

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   12

IV. Standards and Indicators

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Standard 1

The Learning Programme

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

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Indicator 1.1: The Academic Planning Framework

There is a clear academic planning framework for the programme, reflected in clear aims which relate to the mission and strategic goals of the institution and the college.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The Bachelor of Interior Design Engineering (BIDE) at Gulf University (GU) was first offered in 2012-2013. The BIDE programme is offered at the Architectural and Interior Design Engineering Department, under the College of Engineering (CoE). The last periodic review of the programme was conducted in the academic year 2017-2018 and the revised programme has been implemented starting from the academic year 2018-2019. The Panel, thus, confirms that the programme is relevant, fit for purpose, and complies with existing regulations for Offering/Developing Academic Programs and Courses at GU.

- At GU, potential risks are identified at the institutional as well as the programme level. From the interviews, the Panel learnt that the latest update of the Risk Management Plan occurred in September 2020 and that the following update is planned to take place in the academic year 2022-2023.

- The BIDE programme has not yet been placed on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Nonetheless, the programme adopts mapping and confirmation exercises following the Mapping Policy and Procedures of Mapping Programmes to National Qualifications Framework to align the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) with the appropriate NQF level.

- The Programme's title is 'Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering'. The Panel confirms that the title is consistently documented on the university website and documents in general including certificates and transcripts.

- The BIDE programme has a total of seven aims which, according to the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) are reviewed based on the standards of professional and accreditation bodies

like Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), the Engineering Council, Institute of Education and Technology (IET), Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA), etc. and through benchmarking. The Panel notes that these aims are appropriate, and they are also consistent with the college and university missions and strategic goals. However, during the interviews with the relevant stakeholders, the Panel noticed that they were not aware of the Programme Aims. Therefore, the Panel recommends that GU should share and discuss the Programme Aims with external stakeholders to amplify engagement with industry and the community.

- During interviews with the senior management and faculty, the Panel learnt that the programme is willing to apply for the ABET and CIDA accreditation. The Panel suggests that a proper research and self-assessment study are conducted separately to identify the required amendments for international accreditation in compliance with the updated ABET and CIDA standards (2022), with a focus on research-based case studies immersed into the curriculum.

Indicator 1.2: Graduate Attributes & Intended Learning Outcomes

Graduate attributes are clearly stated in terms of intended learning outcomes for the programme and for each course and these are appropriate for the level of the degree and meet the NQF requirements.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- GU has a set of generic University Graduate Attributes and another set of Programme Graduate Attributes (PGAs). These PGAs are mapped to the University Mission, the University Graduate Attributes, the Programme Aims and Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs), which the Panel finds appropriate. The Panel acknowledges the fact that 'Sustainability' is one of the PGAs, however, the Panel is of the view that the PGAs should focus more on soft and practical skills and enhance academic writing and research skills.

- The Programme Specification clearly states the PILOs. The Panel examined the (17) PILOs and finds them measurable, and appropriate for an undergraduate Interior Design degree. In addition, PILOs are aligned with the NQF requirements (strands and sub-strands). PILOs are clearly mapped to the PGAs and to the programme aims.

- The SER states that the CILOs were developed based on benchmarking with similar programmes and courses at local, regional, and international universities. The Panel examined the provided Sample of Course Benchmarking and finds it incomprehensive. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should conduct a more comprehensive benchmarking in major courses such as the studio-based courses. Evidence of mapping

the CILOs to the PILOs was provided but there was no sufficient evidence of how the CILOs are linked to the topics that are covered in the courses. Therefore, the Panel advises that such matrix should be developed by the BIDE programme.

Indicator 1.3: The Curriculum Content

The curriculum is organised to provide academic progression of learning complexity guided by the NQF levels and credits, and it illustrates a balance between knowledge and skills, as well as theory and practice, and meets the norms and standards of the particular academic discipline.

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

- As per the BIDE programme study plan, the BIDE programme consists of 136 credit-hours that students must complete over four years (eight semesters) in order to graduate. The programme study plan clearly indicates the list of pre-requisites for each course, including the number of lecture, studio or laboratory hours. The Panel is of the view that the study plan demonstrates appropriate year-on-year and course-by-course progression, with clear pre-requisite requirements and a suitable workload.

- The Panel notes that Sustainability is incorporated in the curriculum, e.g. in 'Sustainability' (SUS301), 'Sustainability Engineering and Design' (ENGLI351), and 'Smart and Sustainable Interiors' (ENGU452) courses. Following the interviews with faculty, the Panel learnt that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations are also introduced in SUS301 in addition to an overview on sustainability. The Panel appreciates the focus on sustainability and the introduction of the United Nations SDGs in college required courses. However, the Panel suggests changing the title of SUS301 from 'Sustainability' to 'Introduction to Sustainability' or 'Principles of Sustainability' and introducing it in the second semester of the second year. Furthermore, the Panel suggests changing the title of (ENGI351) from 'Sustainability Engineering and Design' to 'Sustainable Design and Engineering'.

- The course contents cover most of the expected areas of Interior Design in term of depth and breadth. The Panel notes that healthcare, social impact, inclusiveness, and hospitality design are not sufficiently covered in the curriculum. The Panel also notes that Universal Design is not offered as an independent course, but is immersed in some projects. The interviews with the external stakeholders confirmed that there is an urgent need for specialists in hospitality design, which is a fast-growing sector of Interior Design and Engineering within the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Gulf region. They all also stressed on the importance of 3Ds Studio Max software being the most required software for visuals production and to provide opportunities for graduates. The Panel is of the view that Interior Design today is a fast-moving field requiring that new courses need to be added to the study plan to cope with the recent development. Therefore, the Panel recommends

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   *15*

that the College should update the curriculum in the next periodic review of the programme to include independent courses on Universal Design and Hospitality Design. The College may also consider adding courses such as Architectural and Design NFTs, Introduction to Metaverse and Virtual Environments, with Virtual Reality and Mixed-Reality.

- The programme study plan reflects a balance between theory and practice, and between knowledge and skills in the curriculum. The SER states that 'graduation project provides the opportunity to demonstrate the balance between theory and practice and between knowledge and skills in the context of Interior Design Engineering discipline'. The Panel examined 'Interior Design Engineering Graduation Project' (INDE413) course with its two pre-requisites (INDE412) and (ENGI451) and consequently suggests that a research thesis/theory-based component for the Capstone Project should be introduced in the first semester of the fourth year prior to developing the design and overall drawings of the Graduation Project in the final semester.

- Despite the fact that one of the BIDE Programme Aims, notably (Aim #7), states that the programme aims to 'prepare graduates to become entrepreneurs', the Panel notes that the University does not have an actual business incubator. Hence, the Panel advises GU to create an incubator where potential entrepreneurial initiatives can be developed in realistic collaborative projects between professionals and students. The Panel examined textbooks and the provided samples of Book Requisition Purchase Requests and found that they are of recent editions and up-to-date.

Indicator 1.4: Teaching and Learning

The principles and methods used for teaching in the programme support the attainment of programme aims and intended learning outcomes.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The University has a Teaching and Learning Policy and Procedures. The Panel notes that the most common teaching methods are lectures, studio group assignments, discussion panels, Laboratory activities, seminars, site visits, and case studies. The Panel found these teaching methods to be generally appropriate for the delivery of the programme.

- E-learning is not explicitly mentioned in the University Teaching and Learning Policy, while mention of a virtual learning environment which is linked to the Learning Management System (LMS) was included. The Sample Course Report and e-learning utilisation report provide evidence of satisfactory use of a range of teaching methods and strategies at both face-to-face and e-learning set-ups. Virtual site visits and online guests'

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022 16

talks were provided during the Covid-19 pandemic, covering the learning outcomes and courses requirements.

- The BIDE programme's teaching and learning strategy is specified in the Programme Specification. According to the strategy, the BIDE programme at GU is harmonious with the teaching philosophy adopted by the College and the University in the Teaching and Learning Policy. Studios and laboratories are natural interactive learning environments due to the nature of the BIDE programme where projects and series of activities are created to ensure students are engaged and enthusiastically participating in developing their concepts. Students are empowered to take responsibility of their own lifelong learning skills development. Interviews with the Senior Management, Admin staff, e-learning center, Information Technology (IT) & laboratory assistants ensured that students have access to facilities and resources at all times. GU provides informal and non-formal learning opportunities to students through field visits, guest speakers and participation in competitions. However, the Panel noticed the absence of specific guidance on lifelong learning in the Teaching and Learning Policy and the Programme Specification. The Panel recommends that specific guidance on lifelong learning should be included in the Teaching and Learning Policy and the Programme Specification; and suggests developing affiliations with regional or international organisations and associations relevant to the Interior Design discipline for overall engagement and professional career development.

Indicator 1.5: Assessment Arrangements

Suitable assessment arrangements, which include policies and procedures for assessing students' achievements, are in place and are known to all relevant stakeholders.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- GU has an Assessment Policy and Assessment Procedures which are satisfactorily explained and are appropriate for the type and level of the BIDE programme and are aligned with the Higher Education Council (HEC) requirements. These policies are available on the University's website for all stakeholders.

- The SER explains that a variety of assessment methods are used to cover both formative and summative assessment. Information on the assessment methods such as Sample Project Rubric, Graduation Project Rubric, and Marking Scheme provide evidence that the criteria and mechanisms for marking are appropriate. According to the SER, feedback is provided within one week from the assessment. During the interviews, students confirmed that they receive feedback on their assessments promptly and often with no delays. Samples of Instructor Feedback on Assessment and Samples of Formative Feedback on Moodle were provided. However, the Panel noticed that feedback given during the preparation of graduation project was frequently *via* WhatsApp

communication between faculty and students. Such communication is not a formal means of communication that can document students' progress. Therefore, the Panel recommends that all feedback on assessment and rubrics should be communicated *via* formal means, such as the Learning Management System and formal emails.

- There are also appropriate provisions for internal and external moderation as outlined in the Assessment Verification and Moderation Procedures. In addition, several procedures and mechanisms are available to address academic misconduct and appeals by the students and these are outlined in the Guidelines on Student Academic Honesty, Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures, the Handbook on Integrity and Originality of Student Work, and the Student Complaints and Grievance Procedures. The Panel received samples of Students' Major Assessment Appeals and found them appropriate in terms of sequence leading to decision.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   *18*

Standard 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 2.1: Admitted Students

There are clear admission requirements, which are appropriate for the level and type of the programme, ensuring equal opportunities for both genders, and the profile of admitted students matches the programme aims and available resources.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- GU has an Admission Policy and Admission Procedures which are published and communicated to students in the Programme Brochure, Programme Manual and on the University's website. The admission criteria include a high-school certificate with a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) not less than 60%, an interview and placement tests in Mathematics for Architecture and Interior Design, Computer skills, English language Proficiency and Knowledge, and Skills in Interior Design. The Panel notes that the University applies the admission procedures consistently.

- Students who fail to pass the placement tests are provided with foundation courses in the first semester. The preparatory courses include IT and skills in Interior Design, Basic Mathematics for Architecture and Interior Design, Computer Skills, and Foundation English 1 & 2. GU monitors the performance of students in the preparatory courses and their progression in the programme later on and it seems that these remedial measures support student retention on the programme.

- GU has clear policies and procedures for student transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning. The Panel looked at samples of applications for transfer students and a filled sample of equivalence form and found them satisfactory. The Panel observed during interviews with students that they were pleased with the measures the University is taking to facilitate admission into the programme.

- GU reviewed its admission policy and criteria in 2017-2018 in light of benchmarking, the performance of the students, market research, feedback from external reviewers and Programme Industrial Advisory Board (PIAB). In addition, the preparatory courses were

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022

19

reviewed in 2020-2021. Placement tests are also subject to benchmarking and are sent to external verifiers to determine their appropriateness.

Indicator 2.2: Academic Staff

There are clear procedures for the recruitment, induction, appraisal, promotion, and professional development of academic staff, which ensure that staff members are fit-for-purpose and that help in staff retention.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- GU has appropriate policies and procedures to attract and retain qualified academic staff which are in line with HEC requirements. The recruitment procedures start with a need analysis at the college level; subsequently, the Human Resources Department prepares a job advertisement and implement the recruitment procedure. Shortlisting of candidates is undertaken by the Department. The list of selected candidates is sent to the Interview Committee for interviews and final selection. The names of the approved candidates are sent to the Human Resources Department to draft the offer and the final documents are sent to the president for final endorsement.

- Appropriate induction, which is in line with the Staff Induction Policy and Procedures, is offered to newly-hired staff on three phases: pre-arrival, on–arrival and the on-going induction. GU has policies and procedures for staff appraisal which takes place at the end of the academic year and an enhanced faculty appraisal form has been implemented starting from 2019-2020. The Panel was provided with the Faculty Promotion Guidelines and Procedures and a sample of a successful application to view and found it satisfactory. GU has a Research Policy and Conduct of Research Procedures which are deployed and have resulted in research outputs by BIDE faculty.

- A total of 22 faculty members contribute to the BIDE programme. Of those, 15 (or 68%) have a PhD and seven have a Master's degree. The Panel examined the faculty profile and found that they have appropriate educational qualifications, specialisations, and professional experience. However, the Panel observed that currently there are only three full-time faculty members who are specialised in Interior Design Engineering. Six courses are taught by one person in the mapping of programme domain to staffing which indicates that there is an urgent need to hire more faculty within the Interior Design domain. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the University should recruit more faculty members with an Interior Design background to support the continuous rise in the number of students. The Panel noted with appreciation the faculty's and staff's commitment to the programme in which they are professionally embracing their teaching and management roles, including the committees load assigned to them.

- GU has Staff Development Policy and Procedures which are consistently implemented and linked to staff development needs. In addition, surveys are distributed after each training session by the Staff Development Unit to collect feedback. GU has a Staff Retention Policy and Procedures. The retention rate in the BIDE programme has increased to 100% in the year of 2020-2021 from 66.6% in the previous years.

Indicator 2.3: Physical and Material Resources

Physical and material resources are adequate in number, space, style and equipment; these include classrooms, teaching halls, laboratories and other study spaces; Information Technology facilities, library and learning resources.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- There are 18 classrooms dedicated to the BIDE courses, which are all equipped with projectors and smartboards and can accommodate up to 25 students; one lecture hall; one seminar room; four computer laboratories which can seat 23 students each; and an auditorium with a capacity of 800. During the campus tour, the Panel noticed that the laboratories and the workshops are well-maintained and kept; however, they need equipment, and this was addressed in the maintenance plan. The campus tour has indicated that there are general computer laboratories that are open for students, and one creative laboratory that is equipped with all the needed software for the BIDE programme. This Creative Laboratory is also used to teach the technical software needed, and this is adjacent to the Design Studio. During the interviews, students expressed their concern regarding having only one creative laboratory which faces high demand from students and since the programmes available in that laboratory are not available in any other general laboratory on the campus. Therefore, the Panel advises the University to have another creative laboratory for the use of BIDE students.

- Students have access to a Wi-Fi network and a range of applications and systems to support the delivery of the BIDE programme, including the Student Information System (SIS), the LMS, and Microsoft and Adobe software suites. Specialised software is also provided to meet the needs of the BIDE programme and that includes DIALux Evo, VELUX, AutoCAD, Revit, etc. During the campus tour, the Panel learnt that the University ensures that the updated programmes are installed for the students and a double license is provided to faculty and students.

- GU's library is accessible to the students at appropriate timings and days of the week, staffed with two full-time staff and one part-time student. The Panel found during the campus tour that the number of the interior design physical books and journals is very limited, and hence recommends that the University should increase the number of and update the list of the physical books and journals on Interior Design in the main library.

The adequacy of the library services is evaluated as part of the General Satisfaction Survey and the course evaluation survey. The results of these surveys showed a good satisfaction rate. Students and staff satisfaction with the IT services is measured as part of the General Satisfaction Survey.

- GU has a Health and Safety Policy and associated Health and Safety Plan, and has formed a Health and Safety Team An infirmary with a nurse is available on campus providing students and staff with access to first aid and primary care. The Panel was satisfied with the arrangements in place to ensure health and safety on campus, however, the Panel suggests having the phone number of the infirmary distributed and posted within the campus.

Indicator 2.4: Management Information Systems

There are functioning management information and tracking systems that support the decision-making processes and evaluate the utilisation of laboratories, e-learning and e-resources, along with policies and procedures that ensure security of learners' records and accuracy of results.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The SIS is used to record students' data throughout their enrollment at the University. The Panel notes during the SIS demonstration that it is comprehensive and covers all aspects of the student life from admission to graduation, including course registration, grades, fees payment, academic advising logs, and appeals. The system also generates a range of different reports which facilitate decision-making. In addition to the SIS, the GU's LMS, MOODLE, is used to provide students with access to course materials, upload assignments, attend live online assessments. MOODLE generates a wide range of reports including the achievement of CILOs and PILOs and facilities utilisation reports. The Panel appreciates the robust and functional student information and LMS available to students and staff at GU which are used to effectively manage students' data and records, and support the delivery of courses and programmes. Moreover, laboratory utilisation reports are generated using LabStats and these reports are shared with the programme management for decision making purposes.

- All of GU's student's records and assessment results are stored securely on the SIS which can only be accessed by users with privileges. Regular data back-ups are made in line with the Backup and Restoration Policy and Procedures. Overall, GU has appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure the security of its data and records.

- The Panel was provided with samples of the certificates and transcripts awarded to students. During the interview with the admission and registration personnel, the Panel learnt that the issuance of the certificates takes around ten days. The Panel concludes that

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   22

certificates are issued in a timely manner and are accurate in describing the achieved learning by the students.

Indicator 2.5: Student Support

There is appropriate student support available in terms of guidance, and care for students including students with special needs, newly admitted and transferred students, and students at risk of academic failure.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- BIDE students have access to appropriate support services which facilitate the development of their academic skills and offer them access to social and professional opportunities. These include a range of services, workshops and counselling provided by the Student Service Unit (SSU), the library, the IT Department, the Teaching Excellence and Technology Center.

- There are clear policy and procedures concerning the internship and career development. Students on the programme are supposed to receive career guidance from the Internship and Career Development Office. However, the Panel learnt from interviews that some tasks such as conducting market research and preparing reports on available vacancies are done by the academic staff rather than the Career Development Office. The Panel recommends that GU should enhance the role of the Career Development Office in scoping the market and searching for opportunities for industrial training.

- The Alumni Office represents another aspect of students' support provided by GU to the BIDE students after graduation. During the interviews with the alumni, the Panel was informed that alumni keep in touch with their instructors after graduation.

- The SSU conducts a formal student orientation for all students at the beginning of every semester in line with the Student Induction Policy and Procedures. This is done in liaison with other units and departments, such as the Admission and Registration Unit, Student Support Office, library, and IT Department, to ensure students are informed about all of the support services available to them.

- GU has an Academic Advising Policy and Procedures. All faculty are assigned students to advise. Students are expected to meet their academic advisors at least once every academic semester and the outcomes of the meetings are recorded using the Advisor-Student Meeting Form.

- GU's Equal Opportunity Policy contains provisions which ensure equal opportunities for both genders, and a Disability Policy to support students with disabilities and special needs. Female students are members of the student council and there is a female basketball

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   23

team at GU. Students with special needs are identified upon admission to ensure that they receive appropriate support. Physical facilities include elevators, access ramps and disabled toilets.

- GU has a Student at Risk Procedure which describes the process for identifying at-risk students and the kind of support provided. A report on students at risk of academic failure is prepared by the Head of Department (HoD) and shared with faculty members which contains some suggestions to help students raise their CGPA. The Panel received evidence of follow-up advising arranged for at-risk students and found it appropriate.

- Student support services are regularly assessed using the Student General Satisfaction Survey. This survey is, then, analysed by the Quality Assurance and Development Center (QADC) in collaboration with the IT Department and the SSU. Enhancements have been done at GU based on the outcomes of the survey. Stakeholders are informed about changes made based on their recommendations through the You Said We Did Bulletin.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   *24*

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Standard 3

Academic Standards of Students and Graduates

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

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Indicator 3.1: Efficiency of the Assessment

The assessment is effective and aligned with learning outcomes, to ensure attainment of the graduate attributes and academic standards of the programme.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The BIDE programme deploys a variety of assessment methods. These include juries, reflective reports, practical examinations, problem solving exercises, laboratory assessments, learning journals, etc. All assessments are governed by GU's Assessment Policy and Procedures. The Panel viewed the full range of assessments in the course files and found that they are generally aligned with current practices in terms of level and complexity. The validity and reliability of the assessments is assured through internal verifiers and moderators who review the assessments before they are released to students and post-assessment based on student's performance. During the interview with external moderators, it was noted that the rubrics used to assess project briefs are not detailed enough. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should revise and modify the marking rubrics to ensure an in-depth grading of assessments.

- The assessments in each course are aligned with and mapped to the CILOs and this is documented in the Course Specifications. In addition, all CILOs are mapped to PILOs. CILOs achievement is calculated at the end of each semester. The Panel examined a sample of CILO Measurement of Courses and found them appropriate. The Panel requested evidence of PILOs achievement but was informed that the measurement of CILOs and PILOs has been recently plugged in to MOODLE and, therefore, no reports are available for a complete cohort at the moment.

- There are mechanisms for monitoring the implementation and improvement of the assessment process. This is primarily done through moderation and internal and external verification (See Indicator 3.3).

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   *25*

Indicator 3.2: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is ensured through the consistent implementation of relevant policies and procedures that deter plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct (e.g. cheating, forging of results, and commissioning others to do the work).

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The policies and procedures relating to academic integrity have been discussed in Indicator 1.5, and they are well-communicated to the staff and the students at GU. The SER states that students are made aware of academic integrity during induction, in the first class of each course, and through MOODLE. The Panel finds that the policy and procedures relating to academic integrity are well-disseminated and known by the stakeholders.

- Turnitin is used to detect similarity in any written assignment submitted through MOODLE while Google image and TinEye are used for image plagiarism detection. The Panel confirmed during the interviews that for assignments and written projects, the allowed similarity percentage varies from 15% to 20%.

- Cases of academic misconduct are recorded, and penalties vary based on the kind of infringement; whether minor or major. From the evidence provided, the Panel notes that academic misconduct is limited to cases of students cheating in examinations, and no student disciplinary penalties were taken. During the interviews, the senior management, faculty, and administrative staff confirmed that no major violations requiring severe disciplinary actions or dismissal were recorded at the BIDE programme level.

Indicator 3.3: Internal and External Moderation of Assessment

There are mechanisms in place to measure the effectiveness of the programme's internal and external moderation systems for setting assessment instruments and grading students' achievements.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- Formal procedures for internal and external moderation/ verification of assessments and the selection of moderators/ verifiers are detailed in the Assessment Verification and Moderation Procedures. These processes are managed by the College Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (CTLAC) and University Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (UTLAC). The Panel found that there are appropriate procedures for selecting the internal and external moderators/ verifiers.

- Pre-moderation of assessment happens internally and externally for major assessments, i.e. mid-term and final examinations in addition to the pre- and final jury criteria to ensure

the validity, reliability and fairness of assessment. The Panel looked at samples of internal and external verifier forms and found them appropriate. Post-moderation of assessment also happens internally and externally for the midterm and final examinations to ensure the consistency and fairness of grading. The Panel received samples of internal and external moderator forms and found them appropriate. However, during the interview with the external verifiers, the Panel found that they are not provided with samples of the students' work. The Panel, thus, recommends that the BIDE programme should send samples of the students' work to the external verifiers to ensure the fairness of grading.

- The CTLAC and UTLAC oversee the implementation of the moderators/ verifiers' recommendations and external verifiers write follow-up reports on the implementation of their recommendations. Moreover, the effectiveness of the moderation and verification processes are ensured using different measures, e.g. feedback is collected from the course instructor as well as the HoD on the internal and external moderation/ verifications. The CTLAC and UTLAC also prepare reports on the moderation and verification process. All the collected feedback and reports have shown that the courses have benefited from the moderation/ verification processes which have enhanced the quality and complexity of assessments and have resulted in better alignment between course topics and CILOs.

Indicator 3.4: Work-based Learning

Where assessed work-based learning takes place, there is a policy and procedures to manage the process and its assessment, to assure that the learning experience is appropriate in terms of content and level for meeting the intended learning outcomes.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- Internships play a crucial role in connecting students to the Bahraini market at two levels: in year two and year four. The arrangements for the internship are detailed in the Internship Procedures. The Panel notes from the interviews that the roles and responsibilities are clear to the different stakeholders involved. The Panel examined samples of the reports submitted by students and concluded that the work-based learning process effectively contributes to the achievement of the PILOs and enhances students' employability by preparing them for the market and giving them the opportunity to put their knowledge in action. The benefit from students' perspective was confirmed by the students and alumni interviewed; the work placement providers interviewed were generally satisfied with the experience; nevertheless, the stakeholders thought that it would be better to have one longer internship instead of two short ones. The Panel, thus, recommends that the College should carefully evaluate the effectiveness of the internships, in terms of length and number, to ensure that they meet the industry's expectations.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   27

- The assessment arrangements of the work-based learning are transparent and consistent and benefit from a moderation process. Students and internship providers are clear about the assessment criteria, the feedback and reports that need to be submitted - they confirmed during the interview session that they receive adequate briefing and support.

- There is a quality monitoring procedure in place that is activated by gathering feedback and discussing it in the Department Council Meeting. The interviews have confirmed that feedback from the work placement providers is taken into account and acted upon promptly (such as the implementation of specific software- 3Ds Max in the programme). To enhance the overall process, and further to the feedback received during the interviews from students, alumni, and employers, there is a need for a better scoping of the labour market to create a register of the companies and firms in Bahrain, identifying and making sure internship opportunities are relevant and appropriate for the programme aims and goals (See recommendation under 2.5).

Indicator 3.5: Capstone Project or Thesis/Dissertation Component

Where there is a capstone project or thesis/dissertation component, there are clear policies and procedures for supervision and evaluation which state the responsibilities and duties of both the supervisor and students, and there is a mechanism to monitor the related implementations and improvements.

Judgement: *Partially Addressed*

- The 'Interior Design Engineering Graduation Project' (INDE413) course is offered in the last semester of year 4 and its successful completion is the condition to graduate from the programme. The Panel examined samples of students' graduation projects and found that there is a general lack in research and analysis/critical thinking. The projects are developed in terms of the design process, but they miss out on clearly explaining the design choices that are developed. There is some reference to case studies but there is no explanation or reflection on how these case studies were selected and why/how they are relevant for the project. Across the samples provided, the written component is very minimal and mainly descriptive; references, when given, are not compliant to academic standard (sometimes there are a list of google links). Therefore, the Panel recommends that the BIDE programme should benchmark the Capstone Project with similar courses in equivalent programmes and incorporate more research and critical thinking skills.

- The Capstone Project has clear policies and procedures for supervision and evaluation and these are effectively communicated to stakeholders. The topics and themes for the Capstone Projects are identified and discussed in the Department Council Meeting. The Panel thinks that they are relevant and current for the discipline, tackling some of the most important challenges such as the United Nations' SDGs. During the interviews, it has been

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   *28*

confirmed that all the Capstone/Graduation Projects identify topics that are relevant for the 'real life' in Bahrain.

- The Panel confirmed during the interviews that the HoD coordinates with the Department Council to assign supervisors to the graduating students. The selection of supervisors and jurors is based on the topic of the Capstone Project– this ensures an effective supervision process. The supervisors explained in the interviews that they hold regular meetings with students (every two weeks) to discuss the phases of the project and provide feedback for improvement. There are assessment procedures in place that are clear to all parties involved, are fair and sound and benefit from moderation and quality enhancement.

Indicator 3.6: Achievements of the Graduates

The achievements of the graduates are consonant with those achieved on equivalent programmes as expressed in their assessed work, rates of progression and first destinations.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- Assessments on the BIDE programme are moderated internally and externally to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and aligned with CILOs, with both pre and post moderation being undertaken (see Indicator 3.3) so that students' achievement can be verified based on careful scrutiny of the work submitted. The Capstone Project (see Indicator 3.5) reflects students' ability to innovate and create by applying the skills they have learnt. The internship component also ensures that students are able to apply concepts in a real-world environment and develop an understanding of the professional practice.

- The number of admitted students that successfully graduate, year-on-year progression, retention, and length of study are consonant with those on equivalent programmes. Graduates' destinations are monitored effectively to continuously ensure that academic standards are met. The Alumni Office keeps track of graduates' destinations for a period of three years from their graduation; they get in touch every six months to check career progression, and data in connection to their relevance to the workplace. The interviews with alumni and employers have confirmed satisfaction with the graduates' readiness for the workplace. Alumni confirmed that they were contacted by the University over a few years and employers demonstrated appraisal for the competencies that the BIDE students were exhibiting in the workplace. Alumni and employers' feedback is captured thought surveys. The comments by alumni and employers are elaborated and included in the Action Plan that identifies priorities and actions.

- The Panel explored during the interviews with the alumni to which extent the graduate attributes are relevant to the industry needs and to the development and evolvement of the Interior Design discipline in general and reached to the conclusion that creativity and

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022

29

innovation are areas to be enhanced in addition to the improvement of Digital Design skills. Moreover, the Panel could not find evidence in terms of the graduates' ability to join regulatory professional bodies such as the Council for Regulating the Practice of Engineering Professions (CRPEP) in Bahrain. Therefore, the Panel suggests the creation of student chapters with associations and organisations governing the Interior Design/ Architecture/ Engineering disciplines to enhance the programme's identity and relevance, as well as to connect faculty (through educators' forums) and students (through joint studios, competitions, chapters) to the International Design community.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   *30*

Indicator 4.1: Quality Assurance Management

There is a clear quality assurance management system, in relation to the programme that ensures the institution's policies, procedures and regulations are applied effectively and consistently.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- GU has a comprehensive articulation of policies and procedures that effectively regulate each aspect of the university system. Some of the areas where policies and procedures are in place are education (such as Teaching and Learning, Assessment, Admission, Internship, Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct Policy), administrative/support areas (such as Monitoring and Review System Policy, Recruitment Policy and Procedures, Staff Professional Development Policy). The institutional policies and regulations are clear and meet the programme's requirements. They are communicated to stakeholders through staff and student handbooks which are available on the university's website as well as on SharePoint. Students have confirmed during the interviews that relevant procedures and policies are communicated during the induction sessions. During interviews with faculty, it was pointed out that if there is any change or new implementation, this is promptly communicated by email or with a memorandum by the Dean or the President.

- There is a sound quality assurance management system in place which functions at multiple levels. The QADC is responsible for the implementation of the quality management system working hand-in-hand with the university's and college's quality assurance committees. The QADC conducts internal audits and makes recommendations for improvement. Then, the QADC sends the reports to College Deans and follows up the implementation of the improvement plans. According to the SER, the QADC is responsible for monitoring, reviewing, auditing, evaluating and continuously developing the University's internal quality assurance. Revision and enhancement processes are prompted by reports received from external experts. The quality assurance monitoring process involves all the stakeholders that give feedback through a series of surveys, committees and councils. Based on interviews with faculty members and supporting staff, the Panel found that the faculty and staff have sound understanding of the quality assurance system and their role in ensuring its effective provision.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   *31*

Indicator 4.2: Programme Management and Leadership

The programme is managed in a way that demonstrates effective and responsible leadership and there are clear lines of accountability.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The College of Engineering has an appropriate organisational chart for the management of the BIDE programme, with clear reporting lines that support communication and decision-making across the College. The Dean leads the College in its academic and administrative operations. The College of Engineering at GU comprises three Departments (Architectural & Interior Design Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and Electrical and Electronic Engineering) – the BIDE programme is offered by the Architectural & Interior Design Engineering Department. The Dean, the HoDs, the chairs of the College Quality Assurance Committee (CQAC) and CTLAC committees, faculty and one student nominated by Student Council are members of the College Council which is the body that monitors academic and administrative aspects. The College structure is supported by a series of committees, such as the CQAC, the College Teaching Learning and Assessment Committee and the PIAB with clear terms of reference.

- There are clear reporting lines at GU with all full-time and part-time staff reporting to the HoD for any academic and administrative aspect. The HoD (Programme Leader) is responsible at the department and programme level of all the activities aimed at ensuring the functioning of the programme. During the meetings, the HoD demonstrated leadership and granular knowledge of the programme in its many aspects. The HoD reports to the Dean who in turn reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Indicator 4.3: Annual and Periodic Review of the Programme

There are arrangements for annual internal evaluation and periodic reviews of the programme that incorporate both internal and external feedback and mechanisms are in place to implement recommendations for improvement.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The Policy for Programme Review and Development that describes the mechanism for annual internal evaluation and periodic reviews of the programme is well-structured and effective. The programme is reviewed annually through an annual review, and periodically (every 3-4 years) through a periodic review. The review process is in place to ensure the relevance of the programme in its many aspects.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022

32

- The annual review brings forward minor changes to the programme that need continuous update, such as course contents, development of teaching, learning, and assessment strategies, staffing, and learning resources. The process of the annual review includes all stakeholders - external reviewers, the PIAB, alumni, students, external verifiers, jurors and moderators. All the feedback and proposals get discussed in the Department Council. The minor changes identified are included in the improvement plan with its clear actions, timing and responsibilities to make sure that the implementation is timely and effective.

- The periodic review is a more substantial set of recommendations that are prompted by GU's vision and strategy and is underpinned by market research. Feedback from internal and external stakeholders is collected and contributes to defining areas of enhancement and/or development. The BIDE programme went through a comprehensive periodic review in 2017-2018 and a revised programme was implemented in the academic year 2018-2019. Outcomes of the periodic review include revision of key items such as revising curriculum, programme aims, PILOs, CILOs, and PGAs. After the Justification for Change Report is submitted and approved, it gets implemented at the university, college and programme levels. From the evidence provided and from the interviews with the different stakeholders, the Panel concludes that there is a proper mechanism in place for the implementation of periodic reviews.

Indicator 4.4: Benchmarking and Surveys

Benchmarking studies and the structured comments collected from stakeholders' surveys are analysed and the outcomes are used to inform decisions on programmes and are made available to the stakeholders.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- There is a Benchmarking Policy and Procedures in place to establish criteria for selecting relevant reference points. The programme level benchmarking considers professional and accreditation bodies and higher education institutions. During the last periodic review (2017-2018), a desktop analysis was conducted where 24 universities were identified for reference. The analysis of benchmarked programmes gave the BIDE programme the confidence about the opportunity to have a programme able to offer engineering and interior design components. The same analysis has also provided ground for the programme structure and its accreditation requirements. However, Panel notes that the 24 institutions selected were not always relevant because some programmes have contents and ethos very different from the ones of the BIDE's. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the College should ensure that all the programmes selected in the next benchmarking exercise are relevant and have similar contents and ethos.

- GU has in place a comprehensive monitoring and reporting system that collects feedback from internal and external stakeholders, such as students, alumni, employers, and staff. The main mechanisms include Course Evaluation Surveys to get the evaluation of the faculty and the course, Exit Surveys to get the feedback from the graduating/exit level students, Student General Satisfaction Surveys to reflect the satisfaction of the students towards university services, Alumni Surveys to know about graduate employment and their career destination, Employer Surveys to provide feedback on skill gap and satisfaction of the employers with the GU graduates, Faculty Satisfaction Surveys, and Staff Satisfaction Surveys. The variety of surveys deployed by the BIDE programme gives a good perspective on how these different stakeholders are valued in the process of revising and implementing programme enhancements.

- Comments collected from students, staff, and external stakeholders are implemented and inform decisions on the planning of the programme. The stakeholders have confirmed in the interviews that the programme keeps them informed about the changes implemented, making sure all the participants are kept in the loop. In addition, students are informed about actions taken in response to their feedback through the You Said We Did Bulletin which is displayed around the campus.

Indicator 4.5: Relevance to Labour Market and Societal Needs

The programme has a functioning advisory board and there is continuous scoping of the labour market and the national and societal needs, where appropriate for the programme type, to ensure the relevancy and currency of the programme.

Judgement: *Addressed*

- The BIDE programme has a functioning PIAB with clear terms of reference. It includes experts from the industry, employers, as well as alumni of the programme. The PIAB meets twice per year and engages continuously in analysing the labour market and the national and societal needs, to ensure the programme is relevant. The members of the PIAB are aware of the programme aims and goals, and in the interviews, they demonstrated an understanding of their role in the continuous revision of the programme; nevertheless, the programme's functioning structure – PILOs and CILOs – needs to be properly communicated to the members of the PIAB to allow them to fully contribute to the revision process and appreciate the outcomes. (see recommendation under indicator 1.1).

- The HoD is the one responsible to set action/improvement plans to implement the suggestions provided by the PIAB. The feedback of the PIAB is used systematically to inform decision-making and to implement changes if needed. Therefore, the Panel appreciates the continuous relationship with employers and the acknowledgement of

their feedback – as part of the PIAB, internship supervisors, jurors and guest speakers - and the responsiveness to their feedback by the programme, ensuring that the programme is relevant in regard to employability and that academic standards are met.

- The BIDE programme conducted market research in 2019 to identify the current and future market needs for the BIDE graduates. Moreover, the programme conducted personal interviews with representatives from the industry to identify the skills and knowledge expected from the BIDE programme graduates. The BIDE programme has a mechanism in place in which the CQAC monitors the implementation of the improvement plan based on stakeholders' feedback through the first and second cycle of audits.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   *35*

V. 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 Interior Design Engineering of College of Engineering offered by the Gulf University.

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

1. The focus on sustainability and the introduction of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals- SDGs in college required courses.

2. The faculty's and staff's commitment to the programme in which they are professionally embracing their teaching and management roles, including the committees load assigned to them.

3. The robust and functional student information and learning management system available to students and staff at Gulf University which are used to effectively manage students' data and records, and support the delivery of courses and programmes.

4. The continuous relationship with employers and the acknowledgement of their feedback– as part of the Programme Industry Advisory Board, internship supervisors, jurors and guest speakers - and the responsiveness to their feedback by the programme, ensuring that the programme is relevant in regard to employability and that academic standards are met.

In terms of improvement, the Panel recommends that Gulf University and/ or the College of Engineering should:

1. Share and discuss the Programme Aims with external stakeholders to amplify engagement with industry and the community.

2. Conduct a more comprehensive benchmarking in major courses such as the studio-based courses.

3. Conduct a comprehensive review of the curriculum in order to ensure its currency and relevance to labour market needs and update the curriculum to include courses that keep up with recent developments in the field.

4. Include specific guidance on lifelong learning in the Teaching and Learning Policy and the Programme Specification.

5. Communicate all feedback on assessment and rubrics via formal means, such as the learning management system and formal emails.

6. Recruit more faculty members with an Interior Design background to support the continuous rise in the number of students.

7. Increase the number of and update the list of the physical books and journals on Interior Design in the main library.

8. Enhance the role of the Career Development Office in scoping the market and searching for opportunities for industrial training.

9. Revise and modify the marking rubrics to ensure an in-depth grading of assessments.

10. Send samples of the students' work to the external verifiers to ensure the fairness of grading.

11. Carefully evaluate the effectiveness of the internships, in terms of length and number, to make sure that they meet the industry's expectations.

12. Benchmark the Capstone Project with similar courses in equivalent programmes and incorporate more research and critical thinking skills.

13. Ensure that all the programmes selected in the next benchmarking exercise are relevant and have similar contents and ethos.

BQA

Academic Programme Reviews– Gulf University – College of Engineering – Bachelor in Interior Design Engineering – 31 October – 2 November 2022   *37*