



مجلس التعليم العالي
Higher Education Council

Achieving Excellence Together

Kingdom of Bahrain Higher Education Universities and Institutions
Annual Report 2012

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HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
PRINCE KHALIFA
BIN SALMAN AL KHALIFA

THE PRIME MINISTER
OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN



HIS MAJESTY
KING HAMAD
BIN ISA AL KHALIFA

THE KING
OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN



HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
PRINCE SALMAN
BIN HAMAD AL KHALIFA

THE CROWN PRINCE,
DEPUTY SUPREME COMMANDER
AND FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

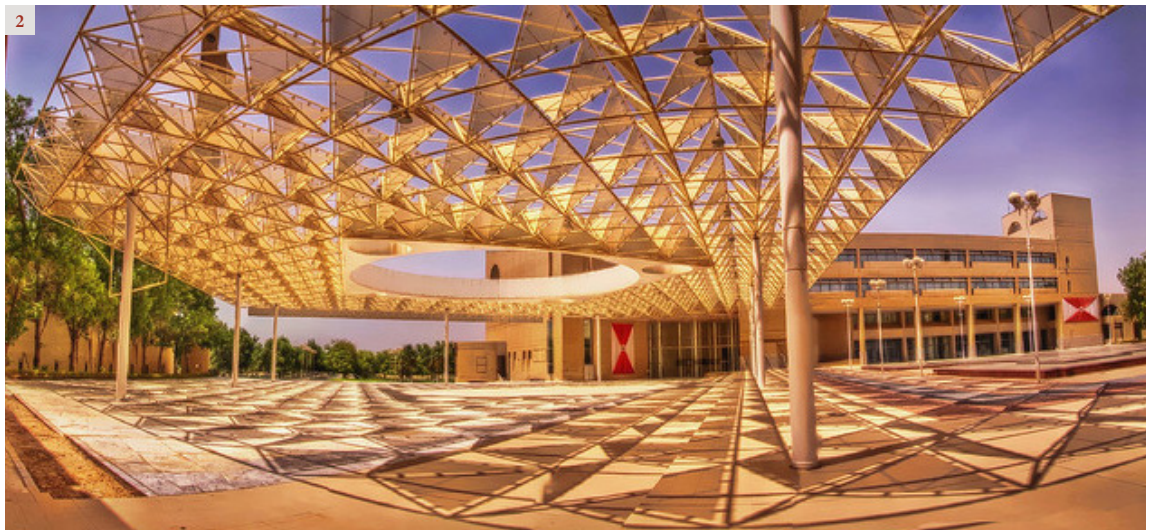
Overview

This first annual report of the Higher Education Council (HEC) gives an outline of the activities in the higher education sector in Bahrain. The report begins with presenting some performance indicators for higher education, including key data about students and staff, and a general analysis of the year 2012.

The report then showcases events that took place in the year 2012 to demonstrate the diversity and forward thinking agenda of the higher education sector. The Higher Education Council concludes by reporting on the progress made and the key initiatives undertaken by the HEC, with an outlook towards the future.

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1. Higher Education Council in session.
2. University of Bahrain campus.
3. The General Secretariat of the Higher Education Council (Dr Riyad Hamzah) and undersecretary for resources and services (Sh.Hisham bin Abdulaziz Alkhalifa) at the skills for the 21st century workshop.

Foreword by the Minister



It gives me great pleasure to introduce this annual report of higher education to the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Higher Education Council has taken big steps this year to respond to the needs of students and employers by being intent on raising the standards of higher education. The HEC endeavors to compete at an international level and construct a knowledge economy that meets the vision of 2030. The ambition through higher education is to give all students skills that prepare them for life in the 21st century. In trying to actualise this ambition, the HEC has worked with some of the world's best experts during the past 12 months. For instance, the world's number one university, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, visited Bahrain this year to hold an unprecedented higher education forum.

The HEC made tough decisions in 2012 regarding suspending student enrollment and, in some cases, capping student numbers for relevant institutions. These decisions have been made in order to protect the future of students and to give higher education institutions the time to implement improvement plans. The clear message from the HEC is that every student must be provided with a quality education, and universities must focus on bringing the best quality to their teaching and learning, their internal systems, and their research.

This report seeks to monitor the higher education sector and its progress along the following themes:

- A profile of higher education
- Data and analysis of higher education
- Higher education quality
- Higher education achievements
- Key decisions made by the HEC
- A look towards the future

In conclusion, it gives me great pleasure to express my gratitude to His Majesty, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince of Bahrain, Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and the Prime Minister, Prince Khalifa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, for what they have been doing all these years to support and develop higher education and enhance its progress.

Dr Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi

Minister of Education

Higher Education Council Chairman

Prologue by the General Secretary



The year 2012 was my first full year in post and it represented a year of transition – a paradigm shift. The focus has been to improve the overall quality of the sector by putting students and their future at the heart of decision making.

Through regulation and audit, the HEC has been able to make key decisions regarding programme status and student enrollment based on evidence. The sector has a clear responsibility to produce students with skills that are relevant to the 21st century and to provide qualifications that have international value. The year 2012 has marked the first milestone in fulfilling these ambitions.

Transforming the sector will take time. However, the intentions have been made clear that higher education institutions must work towards international standards quickly, and sub-standard education will not be accepted. Institutions must focus on having curricula that equip students with the skills that are required in the 21st century, such as problem solving, critical thinking, and use of digital technology. Furthermore, institutions should be focusing on effective teaching methodologies and high quality of instruction and research. They should also provide well-equipped buildings and infrastructure, and their governance structures need to have transparency.

Both students and staff should feel proud to belong to their institution; they should feel proud of what they study each day and of the contribution that they make in terms of teaching and learning. It is of vital importance to Bahrain that through higher education, we are able to produce students who will become future leaders, employees, entrepreneurs and citizens who will help the country achieve its long-term economic vision. Graduates of the future must be the job creators and the skilled workforce that drive the economy.

Whilst there is much left to do to achieve the vision of a world-class higher education system, there is no doubt that 2012 was the year in which a big step in the right direction was taken. For example, more focus was given to reviewing and analysing student data and labour market requirements. In addition, working in partnership with all key stakeholders was initiated through projects, the results of which can be seen throughout this annual report.

In order to help support higher education institutions, the HEC has provided a series of quality improvement workshops by inviting some of the world's best experts as well as institutions to Bahrain. The 2012 higher education forum was led by the world's number one institution, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Over 450 delegates attended this three day forum which not only provided insight and learning tools, but also proved inspirational.

The year 2013 will be a challenging year for the higher education sector but with key projects already kick-started and the continued support from colleagues and partners, we expect continued progress.

Dr Riyadh Hamzah

General Secretary of Higher Education Council

Historical Overview

Until 1968, there was no institution of tertiary education in the Kingdom and Bahraini students had to travel abroad in order to pursue their higher education aspirations. Bahrain experienced two waves of development of tertiary education institutions. The first wave started in the late 1960s and culminated in 1984 with the opening of the University of Bahrain (UoB). This period was marked by the establishment of public institutions of higher learning such as the Teachers College in 1966, Gulf Technical College (renamed later as Bahrain Polytechnic) in 1968, the College of Health Sciences in 1976, the College of Arts, Science and Education and the Arabian Gulf University in 1979 (Madany et al., 1988 : 411). UoB was created by the merger of the Bahrain Polytechnic and the College of Arts, Science and Education. During the 2000s, Bahrain experienced a boom in private tertiary education; twelve private institutions were established during that decade. In contrast, only one public institution, Bahrain Polytechnic, opened its doors in 2008, serving as a centre of professional and technical education. The wave of Higher Education Institutions' (HEIs) development which started in the 2000s is linked to the transition from an economy dependent on natural resources and to the changing population needs.

Below is the table illustrating current Bahraini institutions and the year of their establishment.

Name of Institution	Year of Establishment
Ahlia University	2001
Gulf University	2001
The Kingdom University	2001
University College of Bahrain	2001
AMA International University	2002
Arab Open University Bahrain Branch	2002
New York Institute of Technology	2003
RCSI Medical University of Bahrain	2004
Delmon University for Science and Technology	2004
Applied Science University	2004
Royal University for Women	2005
Talal Abu Ghazaleh University College	2012



Bahrain Polytechnic students celebrate Bahrain National Day.



Distribution of Higher Education Institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain	
Regional Higher Education Institutions	
14.	Arabian Gulf UniversityGulf University
Public Higher Education Institutions	
15.	College of Health Sciences
16.	University of Bahrain
17.	Bahrain Polytechnic
Private Higher Education Institutions	
1.	Arab Open University
2.	Ahlia University
3.	Kingdom University
4.	University College of Bahrain
5.	Gulf University
6.	Royal University for Women
7.	AMA International University
8.	New York Institute of Technology
9.	RCSI-Medical University of Bahrain
10.	Applied Science University
11.	Delmon University for Science & Technology
12.	Talal Abu Ghazaleh University College of Business
13.	Birla Institute of Technology-Closed





1. Students at Bahrain Polytechnic.
2. University College of Bahrain students in New York.
3. AMA students.

Facts about Bahrain's Higher Education

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

During the past few years, Gulf Council Cooperation (GCC) countries have been experiencing improvements in their higher education and, comparatively, Bahrain's share of these societal improvements has been both quicker and bigger. The last decade marked Bahrain's higher education boom when twelve private universities were opened to address the need for top quality higher education in the country. This exponential growth in the higher education sector manifests itself when it is compared with the tertiary education during the 1990s with only three public universities as centres of higher education.

Bahrain's determination for greater sustainability requires substantial economic reforms, the base of which should be provided by a high quality higher education. The Bahraini government initiated the transition from an oil-based economy through major investments in industry such as building an aluminium plant and a ship-repair yard as well as encouraging entrepreneurship and diversification into the sectors of energy, financial services, transport and communications, inviting the higher education to feed the industry with its local experts. Hence, the large-scale proliferation of higher education mentioned earlier was necessary to address the needs of a growing society determined to transform an economy pivoted

on oil to a knowledge-based economy that engages a highly skilled workforce of both genders.

As a result of the HEC's efforts in reforming the higher education, Bahrain has very quickly become an attractive destination for international students who continue their post-secondary education overseas. International students comprise an impressive 21% of Bahrain's total student population, making Bahrain share the top position with Australia (Figure 1) while the OECD (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) average stands at nearly 7% and UK and USA's proportions of international students are 15% and 4% respectively.¹ The student analysis section of this report will elaborate more on the student structure.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN BAHRAIN

Just as the HEC has developed since its inception in 2006, so have the institutions serving higher education in Bahrain. In order to regulate the rapid expansion in higher education institutions, a number of decrees were issued:

- Decree No. 3/2005 – Higher Education Law
- Decree No. 29/2006 – Formation of General Secretariat of

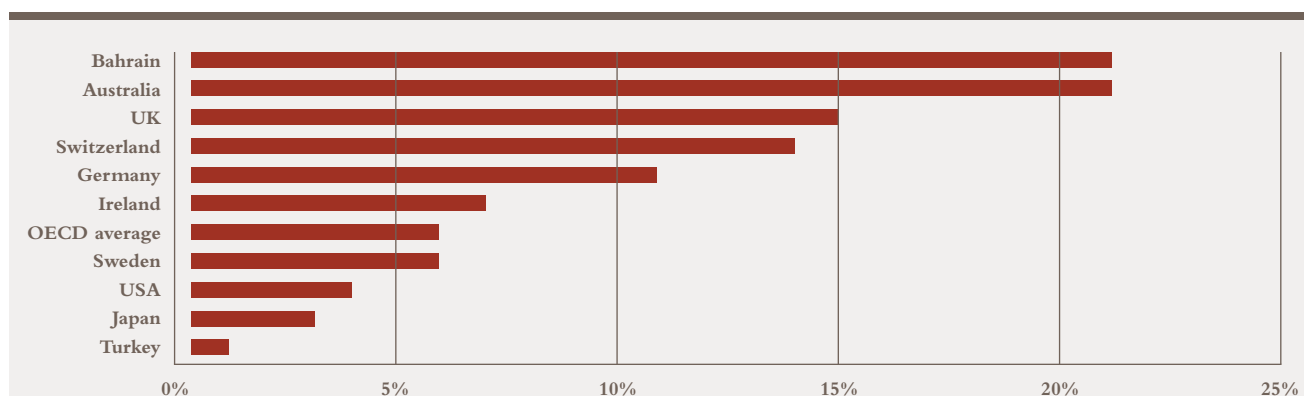


Figure 1 – International students as a proportion of total student population in post-secondary education

¹ Source: Swedish Universities and University Colleges, Short Version of Annual report 2012



1. Kingdom University Campus.
2. RCSI campus.

Higher Education Council (GSHEC) within the Ministry of Education

- Decree No. 74/2006 – Formation of Higher Education Council (HEC)

The Council of Higher Education was formed according to law No. 3 for the year 2005 under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education and a number of other members, not fewer than ten of whom have the relevant expertise and academic background.

All universities, both private and public, are controlled by the Higher Education Council (HEC) which was established in 2006 in order to regulate, promote and monitor the higher education sector. The council is chaired by the Minister of Education and it has ten other members. The Secretary General of the HEC is Professor Riyad Hamzah who was appointed to this position in May 2011.

The HEC's mandate is three-fold: improving the performance of universities, monitoring and evaluating provision, and regulating new study programmes. The HEC is concerned with university affairs in various aspects – administrative, scientific, research and students – which include the preparation of the general policy for higher education and scientific research, creating regulations regarding the admission of students to institutions of higher education as well as proposing amendments to the laws and regulations of higher education in light of the development of the general policies in the Kingdom, and issuing regulations and resolutions organising the academic, financial and administrative affairs with respect to higher education. Furthermore, it sets the terms and criteria for the licensing of different types of higher education institutions (including private higher education institutions), prepares annual reports on higher education performance issued by higher education institutions and competent governmental authorities, recommends appropriate remedies for such performance and actions for its development, prepares annual reports for the cabinet on higher education and scientific research status with relevant recommendations and promotes private investment in higher education.

It is important to mention that the organisational structure of the Secretariat General of the Higher Education Council (SGHEC) comprises the Scientific Research Directorate, in addition to two other directorates reporting to the Under Secretary for Evaluation and Accreditation; the Accreditation and Licensing Directorate and the Evaluation and Follow-up Directorate, all playing a significant role in supervising higher education institutions and following up their affairs in different fields. All directorates are overseen by the office of the General Secretary.

Institutional context

Universities in Bahrain are divided into the three categories of public universities, private universities, and regional universities.

Public universities

Public universities in Bahrain are as follows:

- University of Bahrain (including Bahrain Teachers College and College of Health Sciences)
- Bahrain Polytechnic

Private universities

Private universities in Bahrain are as follows:

- Ahlia University
- AMA International University
- Applied Science University
- Arab Open University
- Delmon University for Science & Technology
- Gulf University
- New York Institute of Technology, Bahrain branch – closing in 2014
- RCSI-Medical University of Bahrain
- Royal University for Women
- Talal Abu Ghazaleh University College
- The Kingdom University
- University College of Bahrain

Regional universities

There is only one regional university in Bahrain, Arabian Gulf University.

Facts about Bahrain's Higher Education (*continued*)



University of Bahrain (Sakhir campus).

THE UNIVERSITY OF BAHRAIN

Established in 1986, University of Bahrain (UoB) is the only national university in the Kingdom of Bahrain, with a history that dates back to the 1960s. With a total area of 156,607 square metres, University of Bahrain is comprised of 10 colleges:

- College of Arts
- College of Business Administration
- College of Engineering
- College of Information Technology
- College of Law
- College of Science
- College of Applied Studies
- Bahrain Teachers College
- College of Physical Education and Physiotherapy
- College of Health Sciences

University of Bahrain is at the time of publishing home to 889 full-time faculty members (519 males and 370 females) of whom nearly 40% are international, and UoB's administration affairs are handled by 1,167 administration staff (664 males and 503 females), 10% of whom are foreign talents.

Perhaps one of the biggest advantages that UoB brings to its students is its low faculty/student ratio of 1:14 which is quite impressive internationally when it is compared with MIT's faculty/student ratio of 1:8, as the world's number one university. This clearly shows the importance of teaching quality in Bahrain's higher education.

Nearly 6,000 freshmen are admitted to UoB every year and the university, at the time of writing, is educating more than 18,000 students, of whom 68% are female. In 2012, UoB had 2,382 graduating students and it is estimated that since its establishment, the university has delivered 47,000 graduates to the society.

A total of 82 programmes are offered at UoB in different levels; diploma (24), bachelor's (34), postgraduate diploma (3), master's (14), and PhD (7). Also, UoB hosts many specialised centres for further knowledge expansion, which include centres for scientific publishing, Nano-technology, and quality assurance as well as study centres for Western/Eastern languages.

In terms of publications, the University of Bahrain publishes many international as well as regional journals including the International Journal of Computing and Digital Systems, the International Review of Contemporary Learning Research, the International Journal of Computing and Network Technology, and the Journal of Educational and Psychological Studies. It is worth noting that nearly 5,000 papers have been published in UoB since 1986, of which 1,431 have been listed in the Web of Science with almost 6,406 citations.

Furthermore, quite a number of programmes offered by UoB have received accreditation by major international and local associations, which are listed below:

- BSc in Chemistries accredited for the period 2009–2014 1st cycle by Canadian Society for chemistry (CSC)
- BSc in Chemical, Civil, Electronics and Electrical, Mechanical Eng., and Process Instrumentation and Control all accredited for the period 2009–2014 1st cycle by Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)
- BSc in Computer Science, Computer Engineering, and Management Information Systems all accredited for the period 2010–2015 1st cycle by (ABET)



Visit by e-government to the University of Bahrain.

- BSc in Business Management Programme Confidence rating by the Higher Education Review Unit (HERU) of the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET) in 2010
- BSc in Law Confidence rating by the Higher Education Review Unit (HERU) of the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET)

As a result of UoB's constant aspirations to excel in the global higher education, according to the latest QS World University Rankings, the university is now ranked 601st out of more than 20,000 universities worldwide.

Bahrain's biggest university has also taken major environment-friendly steps to be the pioneer of the country's Green movement. Some of the Green initiatives implemented by UoB are as follows:

- Using water aerators (60% more efficient use of water)
- Managing agricultural waste; producing special fertilisers
- Using solar flashing LED studs for UOB's local roads (lasting 20 years)

THE STRUCTURE OF PROGRAMMES

Student aids and scholarships

In 2012, the Ministry of Education awarded almost 2,500 scholarships and grants to students to allow them to move into higher education – many of these awards went to students from public schools. These scholarships help students study in a University in Bahrain or, in some cases, in the UK or other countries, which is a key step towards globalisation of the higher education sector in Bahrain.

Distribution of programmes

The following data is based on the information collected at the end of the academic year of 2012 for private institutions.

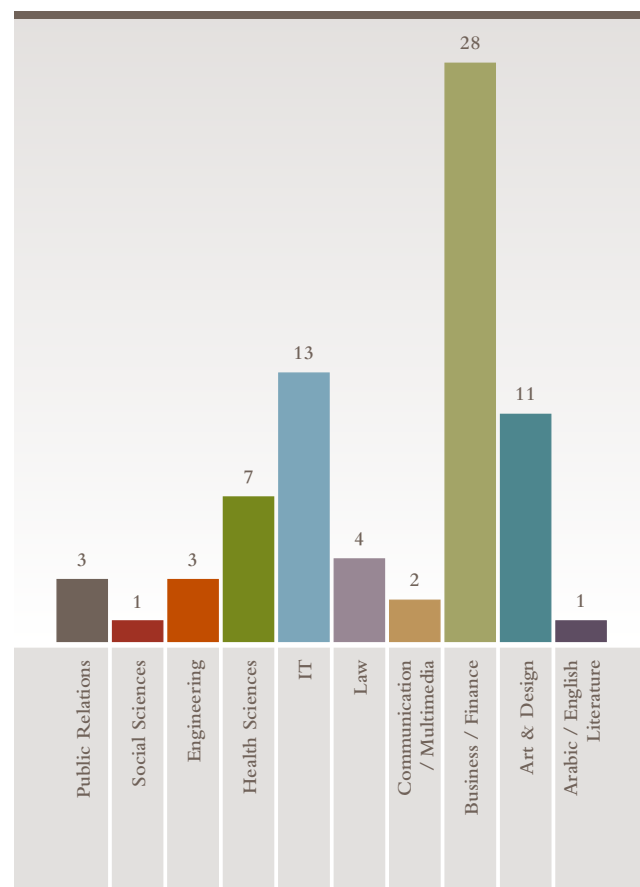


Figure 2 - Distribution of programmes available by subjects, Sep 2012, all private institutions

Facts about Bahrain's Higher Education (*continued*)



Kingdom University Students celebrate Bahrain National Day.

Over the course of the year, the HEC suspended enrolment of students into programmes that were not meeting standards. As a result, this restricted the number of programmes available for students to enroll into 73 programmes at bachelors' and masters' level within private universities – clearly, the focus is on quality rather than quantity. On the other hand, the Kingdom of Bahrain grants annually a number of scholarships abroad for PhD students.

The distribution of students is illustrated in Figure 3, with the University of Bahrain (UoB) hosting more than 15,000 students. It should be noted that Bahrain Teachers College and the College of Health Sciences are included in this number as both form part of the UoB.

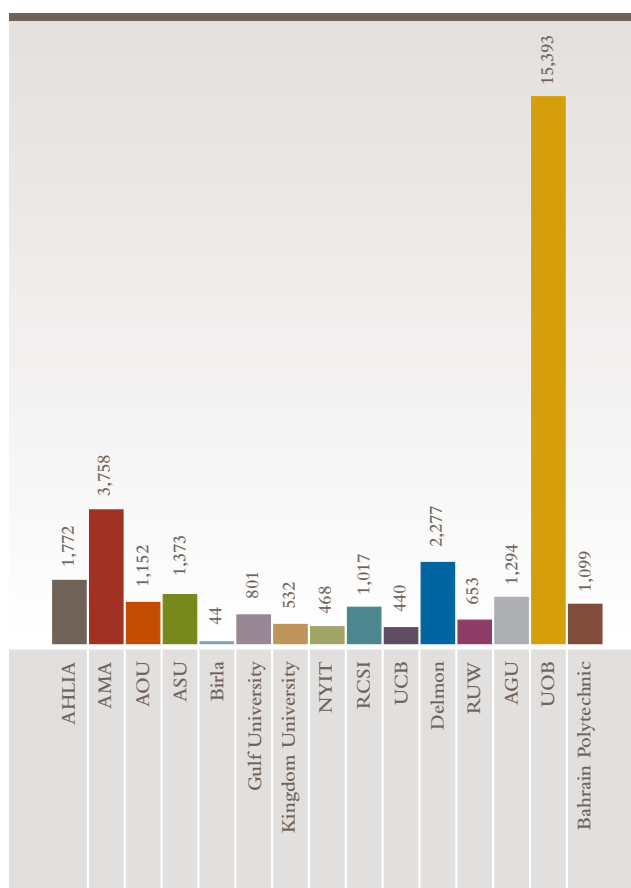


Figure 3 - Number of students by university in 2011-2012 (public and private)



1. AMA football team.
2. Engineering student at Bahrain Polytechnic.
3. Medical lab at RCSL.

Trends and developments in Bahrain's higher education

STUDENT ANALYSIS

The total number of students in higher education for the academic year 2011/12 stands at 32,327, with the gender breakdown showing 60% for females and 40% for males (Figure 4). These gender statistics are quite common globally, with Sweden having similar percentages for male and female students.

The main reason cited for this gender imbalance is that more women than men apply for degree certificates; in addition, women typically have lower dropout rates than males do. Furthermore, 55% of students are studying in public or regional universities compared with 45% in the private sector (Figure 5).

The vast majority of students are studying bachelor's and master's degrees, or diploma courses that lead to bachelor's degrees. Currently, students are able to gain access to PhDs only through three institutions in Bahrain – University of Bahrain, Ahlia University and Arabian Gulf University (Figure 6).

The HEC is committed to quality; hence, the focus remains on getting high quality graduate programmes in place for students rather than allowing many PhD programmes to start up. This approach is consistent with our neighbours, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), who, at present, do not have any PhD courses available.

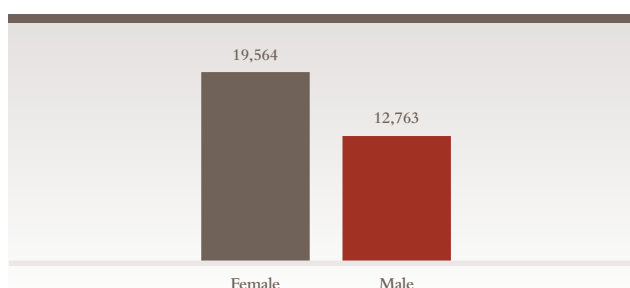


Figure 4. Students enrolled by gender

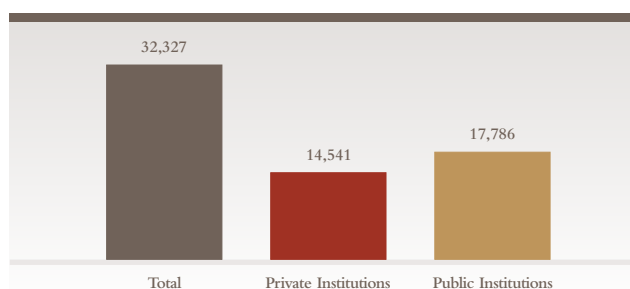


Figure 5. Students by institution (private & public)



Applied Science University graduation ceremony.

More than 50% of students are studying a business-related programme, which correlates to the high number of business related degrees offered (figure 7). Following a report by the HEC based on labour market needs, it is clear that imbalances exist both in the programmes offered and in the student intake. Further work needs to be done by the sector to develop more health professionals and teachers, especially with the expanding population, the changing demographics within Bahrain, and the increasing demand for education.

Currently, the subject areas of health, engineering, and law have less than 10% of the total number of students each, which does not match the future labour market needs of Bahrain. In order to develop a more balanced higher education sector, more students must be attracted to the arts, law and information technology (IT). Furthermore, more programmes need to be developed within the health sector, social sciences, energy, technology and the creative sectors in order for Bahrain to move towards a knowledge economy. The HEC is firmly committed to understanding and acting on labour market findings and reports.

Our recent analysis of the future needs of Bahrain has acted as a catalyst to develop a more balanced and employer-influenced higher education sector.

When considering the high percentage of students studying business-related degrees, it is worth looking into this matter in an international context. Many countries experience the dominance of a particular programme being studied at their universities by students at degree level. One such example is Sweden where 44% of all students are studying law and social sciences.²

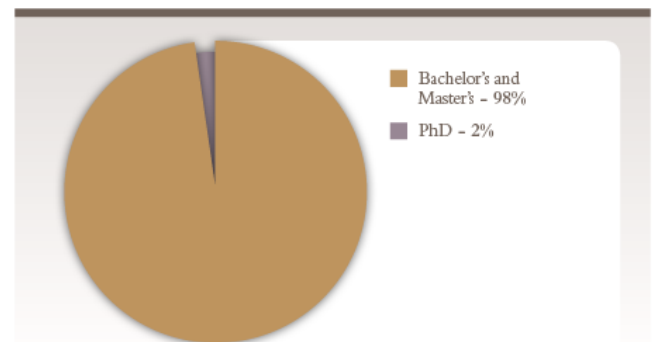


Figure 6. Students enrolled, graduate vs post graduate

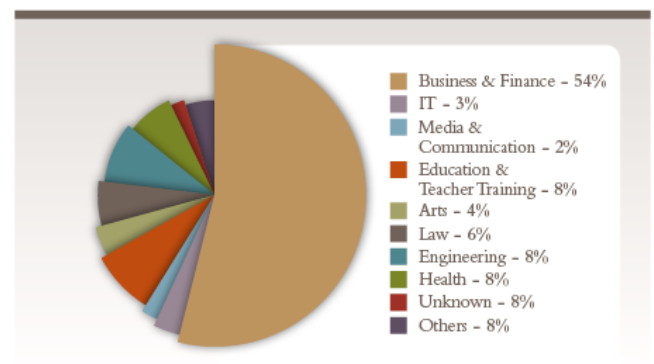


Figure 7 Students enrolled, graduate vs post graduate

² Source: Swedish Universities and University Colleges, Short Version of Annual report 2012

Trends and developments in Bahrain's higher education (*continued*)



Biotechnology Lab in Arabian Gulf University.

Bahraini students comprise 79% of all students in higher education (figure 8), while a significant number of students are from Kuwait and KSA (figure 9). There are students from most GCC counties studying in Bahrain including Iraq, UAE, Qatar, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. It is interesting that an increasing number of students from India and Pakistan are coming to study in Bahrain.

As a trend, it is expected that more students will study in Bahrain for a number of reasons; Strategically, Bahrain is well-positioned for travel around the Gulf; also, the country offers a good lifestyle for overseas students looking for diversity and opportunity. More importantly, however, as the HEC works towards a higher education sector based on quality and international recognition for all students, this should encourage students from abroad to study in Bahrain.

STUDENT INTAKE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Whereas the number of students in public institutions has remained consistently high, there has been an overall drop in the numbers for private institutions (figure 10). This drop can be attributed to a ban on student intake for some private universities in order to give them the opportunity to focus on improving their quality. For instance, two institutions are no longer recruiting as they are closing (Birla, closed in 2012, and NYIT will be closing in 2014). HEC's resolutions had their impact on controlling the institutions' intake of students in relation to the programmes' assessment level through assigning specific numbers of students to specific programmes and in accordance with the evaluation score of the Quality Assurance Authority. Also, new enrollments to suspended programmes were banned.

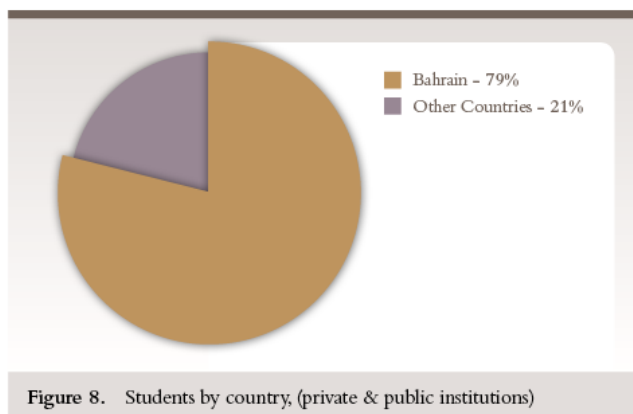


Figure 8. Students by country, (private & public institutions)

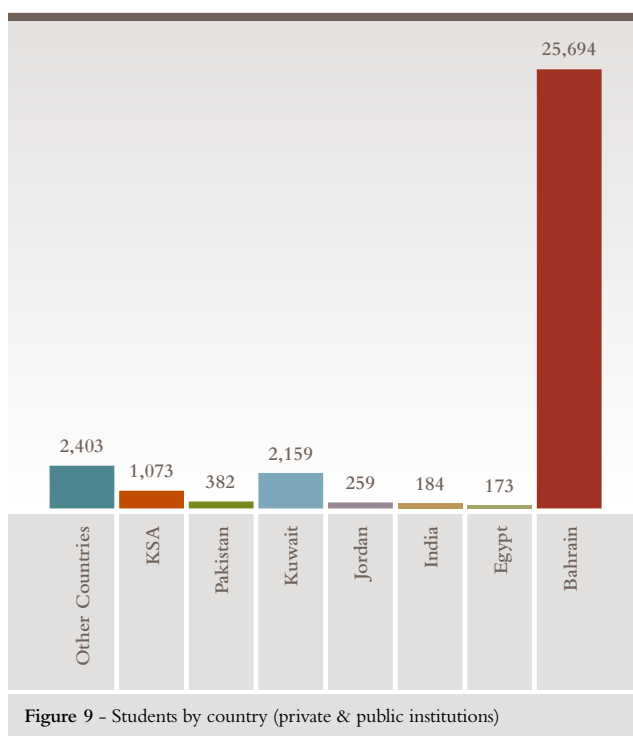


Figure 9 - Students by country (private & public institutions)



University College of Bahrain campus.

Whilst the demand for higher education within public universities will always remain high, it is also expected that demand will continue to exist for private provision. As the number of overseas students is expected to rise in future years, in addition to growing numbers of Bahraini students looking for higher education following high school graduation, it is expected that the competition to attract students will become increasingly intense.

TERTIARY ENROLLMENT

In 2009, Bahrain had a tertiary enrollment rate of 25.2% (Source: UNESCO); by 2012, this rate increased to 28.6% based on the data collected in 2012 – higher than the average for Middle East and North Africa, which is 26.6%. Tertiary level is the sum of all tertiary level students enrolled at the start of the school year, expressed as a percentage of the mid-year population in the 5 year age group after the official secondary school leaving age. Therefore, a total increase of over 3% in 3 years in the tertiary enrollment rate is an indication of the work being done by the Ministry of Education, schools and universities, collectively encouraging students to transcend beyond high school to tertiary education.

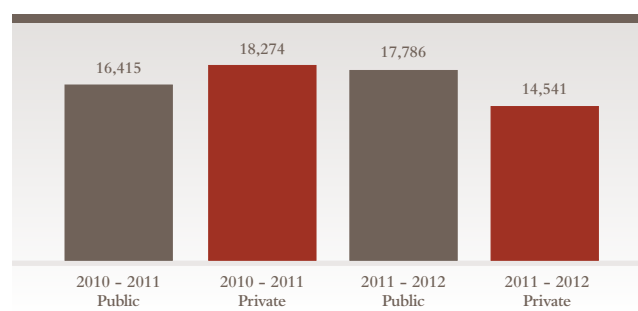


Figure 10. Trends in public and private institutions

Trends and developments in Bahrain's higher education (*continued*)



Fifteenth meeting, The Committee of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Gulf Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf.

TEACHER ANALYSIS

By and large, there are more full-time teachers in public universities than ever before. The total full-time equivalent number of teaching staff within all institutions is 1,557, with two thirds being within the public sector (Figure 11). Male teaching staff make up the majority of the teaching staff (figure 12). Currently, however, expectations are that this imbalance will adjust in the next few years as more females are expected to graduate and enter the teaching field.

The teacher/staff ratio in public institutions is 1:17.8, which puts Bahrain only slightly above the UK (1:16.5) and in line with countries such as New Zealand (1:17.2) and Turkey (1:17.8) (Source: OECD 2011). The staff/student ratio for private institutions is currently 1:25.8, which is expected to improve as some universities have been actively recruiting new teaching staff in readiness for the 2012/2013 academic year.

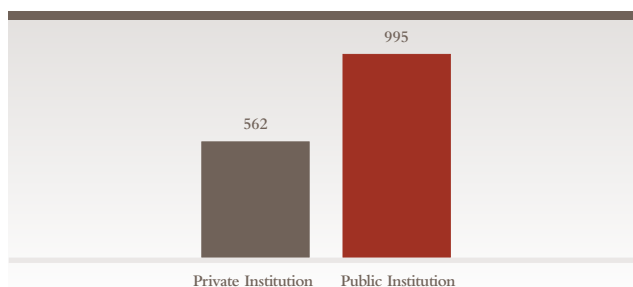


Figure 11. Teachers by institution (private and public)

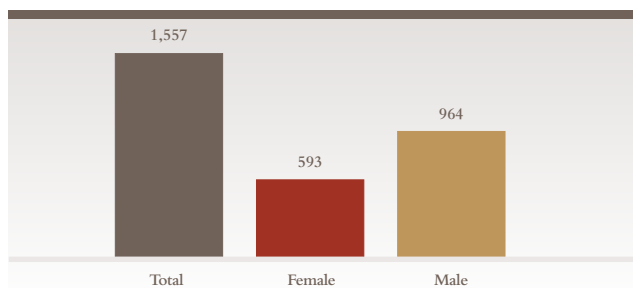


Figure 12. Teachers by gender (all institutions)



Arabian Gulf University campus.

GRADUATE ANALYSIS

In 2012, 5,419 students graduated from all universities in Bahrain (figure 13); The split between those who graduated from public and private universities are even. However, the number of females graduating is far bigger than the number of males (figure 14). One major reason for this disparity is that women constitute 60% of the student population. Another important reason is that the graduation rate for females is higher than the rate for males on a global basis.

Figure 15 illustrates a breakdown of all graduates in Bahrain's higher education with the graduates in business related degrees still forming the majority.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY

Based on the graduate data presented above, progress needs to be made in response to the needs of industry, both now and in the future. The sector, parents and students need to be guided to help close the supply gap that currently exists in the areas of health, engineering, technology, education, and science.

The gap will be closed by improving career guidance, raising awareness of labour market information, and gaining the views of employers. Through the "skills for the 21st century agenda", the HEC has already made efforts and it will continue to do so. The HEC is now, through reviewing accurate student data, making decisions on programmes based on the future needs and demands of Bahrain, which represents a fundamental shift in decision making. It is clear from our work with employers and Tamkeen (the Labour Fund) that the key skills required of students in today's world include problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, and a strong grasp of English as well as Arabic.

The year 2012 has seen the HEC get to grips with the changing needs of the employers and start to narrow the gap between industry's demands and the higher education.

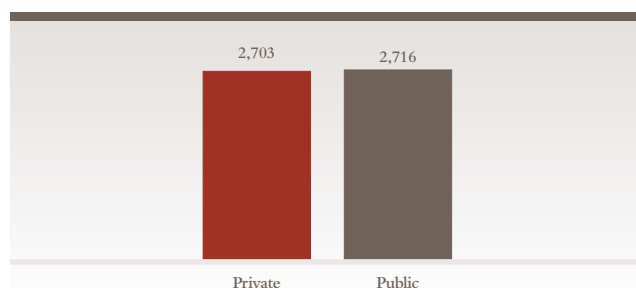


Figure 13. Bahrain graduates by institution, 2012

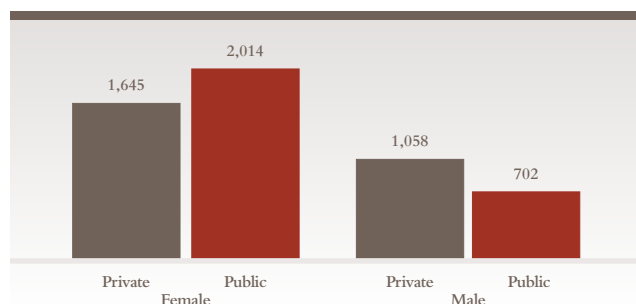


Figure 14. Bahrain graduates by gender and Institution, 2012

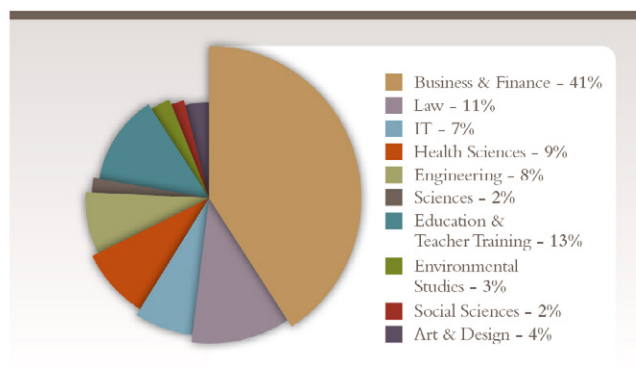


Figure 15. Bahrain graduates by programme (all Institutions), 2012



1. Skills for the 21st Century workshop with Prof. Veronica Bamber from Queen Margaret University.
2. Tiananmen Square visit by RUW students.
3. HEC winter camp activity 2012.

The HEC's Contributions

General Secretariat of the Higher Education Council invited the Coordinating Committee of the academic accreditation of the gulf cooperation council to hold sixth meeting in Bahrain.



KEY DECISIONS MADE

Decisions made by the HEC during 2012 hovered mainly around protecting students through raising academic standards, raising financial guarantees or by transferring students. The message has been made clear through these decisions that students come first, and poor quality of higher education will not be accepted, in order to provide the students with the necessary scientific skills qualifying them for post graduate studies inside as well as outside the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The decisions made are as follows:

- A new minimum amount that each university should pay as a financial guarantee was introduced together with a new risk based assessment method to determine the final amount for each university. The minimum amount now required is 500,000 BD compared to the previous amount of 100,000 BD;
- The suspension of new enrollments into programmes not meeting minimum standards across several universities was reinforced following the reports of QAAET and HEC's own audit;
- A license was granted to a new institution, Talal Abu Ghazaleh University College;
- Following the non-renewal of an agreement between Malaysia Open University and Arab Open University to deliver a master's programme in business administration, the HEC insisted that the programme should continue until all students have completed their studies and graduated;
- Students who were admitted illegally to Delmon University during 2009 are to have some of their fees returned and all those students would be transferred to other universities to continue their studies.

COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

The HEC is committed to improve the quality of the higher education sector and to help institutions develop their capability to advance. To that end, the HEC has conducted

institutional audits, with the help of international experts, to understand key issues and opportunities for the improvement of institutions. These evidence-based audits along with other key indicators have influenced the decisions made by the HEC to restrict student enrollment, as well as to impose restrictions on programmes being offered by some institutions until those institutions illustrate quantifiable improvements.

To support continuous improvement in the sector, the HEC has sponsored a number of professional development workshops during the year. These include strategy planning workshops for universities and working with key partners to deliver quality improvement workshops.

RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOLS

During 2012, the HEC invested more time than ever before informing school councillors, teachers and students about the current landscape of higher education in Bahrain. Specialists from the HEC visited secondary schools, both public and private, to inform school councillors and students about the current status of higher education and what programmes are available at universities.

The HEC has worked in partnership with Bahrain Polytechnic to inform schools as to what the future employment needs of Bahrain are, and what programmes should be offered based on the current labour market information. The HEC is also committed to signposting students and parents to the reports of the QAAET through the Ministry website.

Building on the work, Bahrain Polytechnic has been actively engaged in complementary research associated with the Council's project to develop national indicators, tracking across all higher education institutions through collaboratively run forums. A key finding from the project which was explored during these forums was that many businesses and industries want to employ Bahraini youth but "The skill gap for local staff is an issue" and "There is social & cultural issues/ unwillingness to take certain jobs". As a result of these very



Deans Ortiz and Hastings from MIT.

successful projects, Bahrain Polytechnic and the HEC decided to combine efforts to show the education sector as a whole how higher education could build the capacity and capability of its learners in the 21st century and make them employable and work-ready.

HIGHER EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT WORKSHOPS

Strategic planning workshop

In January 2012, universities participated in a workshop organised by the HEC in order to help universities develop their strategic plans as well as key performance indicators. In addition, universities were advised on capturing what makes each of them distinctive in their academic offering as the HEC began to review the higher education landscape. The HEC also provided consultancy support to universities to give feedback and suggestions to further improve their strategic plans.

Skills for the 21st century

As part of the HEC's drive to equip students for the business world, the HEC collaborated with Queen Margaret University (UK) to hold a workshop for all universities in order to guide them as to how they can provide students with key employability skills that employers require in the 21st century. Universities were advised on how to embed problem solving, critical and innovative thinking, teamwork, and project planning into the curriculum and on how to deliver these skills to students. Following the workshop, Queen Margaret University worked closely with several universities to help them, individually, review their curricula.

Professor Veronica Bamber from Queen Margaret University gave a presentation to Bahrain Polytechnic during a careers and schools session, and the next day, she up-skilled Bahrain Polytechnic's staff on strategies that had been effective in the UK. A self-audit tool presented by Professor Bamber was made available to reveal the extent of uptake of work-integrated learning across the different departments.

Innovation in teaching

As part of the HEC's strategy to improve teaching standards in higher education, the HEC in partnership with the British Council led the "Innovation in Teaching" workshop which was also facilitated by the University of Glamorgan (UK). Key outcomes of this two day workshop included understanding the role of learning outcomes, innovative teaching and learning for large groups, designing innovative assessment. The workshop used a range of practical exercises to reinforce learning especially regarding student assessment, using problem-based learning and teaching, and learning and assessment for learners.

Higher education forum with MIT

The world's number one institution, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, came to Bahrain to deliver six different workshops in three days. Over 450 education enthusiasts attended the three day conference, including all higher education institutions, presidents of all universities, members from the Ministry of Education, and colleagues from the Quality Assurance Agency for Education and Training (QAAET) and Tamkeen.

Deans Ortiz and Hastings delivered lectures and held workshops on the following topics of higher education:

- What makes a good university;
- Graduate assessment and metrics;
- Technology in education;
- Quality assurance in higher education;
- Professional development; and
- The role of research.

The forum received very positive feedback with an overall satisfaction rating of 92% from delegates. In addition, MIT provided a host of intellectual property to be given to all delegates, which will enable all universities to have access to MIT templates.

The HEC's Contributions *(continued)*

1. Academic leadership event with the British council.
2. Improving student outcomes workshop
3. Dean Christine Ortiz from MIT receives an award from Dr. Riyad Hamzah.



In conclusion, the educational forum with MIT was groundbreaking for Bahrain. It has not only provided a challenge to the sector to learn from the world's best, but it has also proved to be inspirational for institutions and faculty members. Finally, the event put higher education in Bahrain on the world map; it generated worldwide press and set the standard for similar types of events in the region, giving Bahrain thus an outstanding rank in the field of higher education.

Leadership in education

Research clearly shows that leadership is a key factor in the success of any educational institution. In partnership with the British Council and the University of Manchester (UK), the HEC was able to hold a two day workshop for all university presidents and deans on this important topic.

This workshop introduced delegates to leadership in the academic environment, using examples, case studies, and activities that prompted discussion, reflection and application. The workshop pointed out the principles that can be applied in a wide variety of circumstances. Some of the topics covered during this workshop were:

- The nature of leadership;
- The higher education context for leadership, including leading change and risk;
- The special features of leading and developing faculty;
- Leadership for teaching, learning, research, and community engagement.

RESEARCH PROJECTS AND SURVEYS

Understanding the labour market

During 2012, the HEC collected and analysed labour market information and employers' feedback through working closely with Tamkeen. As a result, the HEC has written two reports; the first one is a labour market analysis which reviews the higher education landscape against future labour market needs of Bahrain. What is clear from this report is that, currently, there are gaps within the areas of health, science, technology, energy, law, and the arts in the higher education sector.

The second report is called "skills for the 21st century", which highlights the importance of students having the key skills that employers need in the workplace, namely employability skills. The HEC has acted on this information to drive the agenda "skills for the 21st century". The key message is that all students must have skills that can provide them with social mobility and skills that employers actually need both now and in the future. A survey was conducted in partnership with Tamkeen and Aon Hewitt to examine the views of employers on the skills and attitude of graduates, the results of which will be made available in 2013 based on further policy work in this area.

Views of young people

The HEC, jointly with Tamkeen, launched the Qudurat student survey, which was designed to capture the voice of the young people and, in particular, assess how young people under the age of 25 feel about the world of work. It is vital for the HEC to understand the views of students and their expectations about employment so that the higher education sector can close any gap between expectations and the reality of skills needed by employers. The survey is being conducted throughout all universities with a report due early in 2013.

The results will be disseminated among universities and then will be acted upon. This is a further indication that students are at the centre of what the HEC stands for and that the voice of the students must be heard. Early findings however show that the majority of young people feel strongly patriotic, with a good work ethic, and that they have the determination to thrive at work. Importantly, over three quarters of those surveyed believe that education has prepared them well for their current job. The HEC will wait to see what the employers' results will show; however, the early findings show that there currently exists a strong platform of work ethic and values amongst young people that higher education needs to build on.

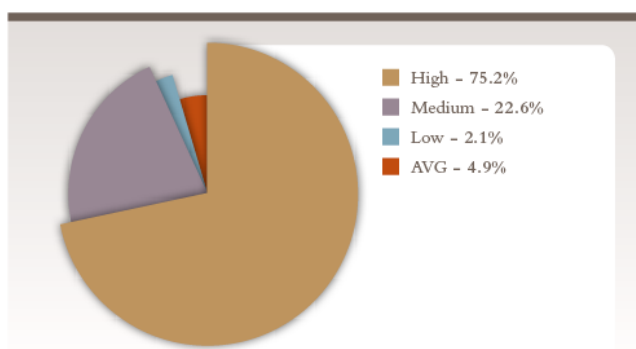


Figure 16. My personal work ethic inspires me and influences my approach to work on a daily basis

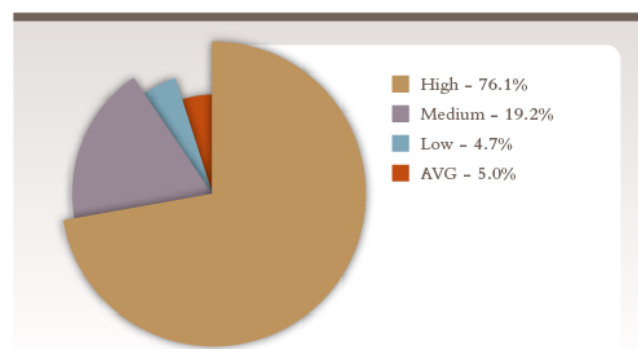


Figure 17. My work makes my community or my country a better place

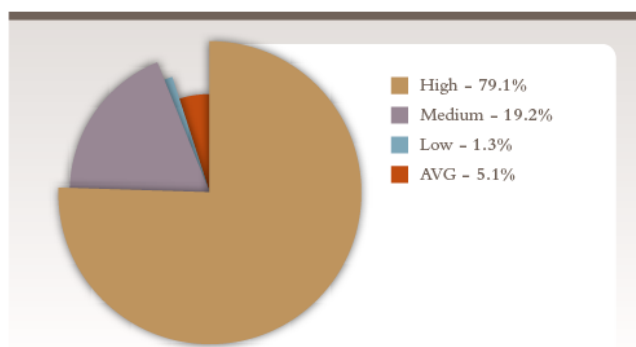


Figure 18. I have the necessary education, skills or experience to perform my current job

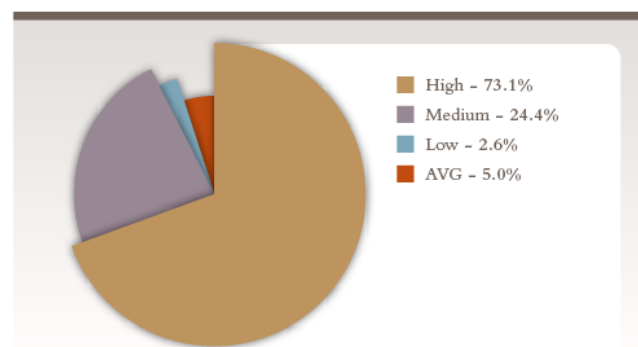


Figure 19. I am confident I can get through challenging times at work because I've been through difficulties before

The HEC's Contributions *(continued)*



Dr Helen Marshall leading the innovation in teaching event.

Scientific research

The HEC set up the first scientific research steering group with the purpose of fully understanding the status of research within Bahrain. The steering group's main focus was to explore the current issues surrounding research in the country, explore where the opportunities lay and create a blueprint for the development of a coherent national scientific research strategy.

The group was made up of researchers from most of the universities including the private institutions. As a result, the HEC has begun the process of selecting experts to develop the blueprint into a research strategy. It is expected that the National research strategy including key performance indicators will be published in 2013.

CONFERENCES AND TOURS

The GCC Ministers of Higher Education Conference

The 15th GCC education conference was hosted in the Kingdom of Bahrain; His Royal Highness, Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme, highlighted the need to invest and focus on the education sector and to raise standards. Additionally, efforts must be made to boost scientific research and to use international expertise to achieve goals.

The GCC Accreditation Meeting

The General Secretariat of the HEC invited the Coordinating Committee of the Academic Accreditation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to hold their sixth meeting in Bahrain, from 3–4 December 2012. The meeting was chaired by Dr Fatin Ibrahim Almoayed, Director of Accreditation and Licensing Directorate of General Secretariat of Higher Education Council.

The key commitments that were made during the fourth and fifth meeting of the Coordinating Committee are as follows:

- Start to establish a GCC network in order to ensure the quality and regional authority of the academic accreditation, estimate the required budget, and explore ways to finance it;
- The Gulf Network will be permanently held in Oman to ensure the quality of the higher education in GCC countries;
- Invite other countries to accelerate the establishment of national authorities for academic accreditation in order to secure the regional authority for accreditation and quality.



Student and professor at RCSI.

The HEC-UK study tour

The HEC staff members went on a study tour of Scottish universities in 2012 sponsored by the British Council. Key aspects of this tour included reviewing universities governance structures, development procedures of curricula, faculty development and private sector's role in higher education. As a result of this study tour, strategic relationships were built with universities to the extent that Queen Margaret University decided to work with the HEC in the "skills for the 21st century" agenda.

APPOINTMENTS AND COMMITTEES

Committees to provide expert guidance

This year the HEC formed four specific advisory committees to provide expertise and guidance to the HEC for their decision making. Committees were formed in the following key areas:

- Academic
- Engineering
- Administration and finance
- Scientific research

The key purpose of the committees is to review and report, provide expert analysis and feedback, and provide the HEC with informed recommendations.

Appointments and promotions

The following people achieved promotions in the year 2012:

Dr Farzana Abdulla Al-Maraghi,
appointed as Director of Scientific Research

Aisha Abdulla Salem Al.Tehmazi,
appointed as Head of Academic Accreditation for Colleges & Institutes

Nadia Abdoulla Homoud
appointed as Head of Academic Licensing for Universities, Colleges and Institutes

Thekayat Ali Ameen
appointed as Head of Accreditation Standards

Dr Shaikha Mufeez
appointed as Chief of Accreditation



1. Students and professor at Gulf University.
2. Higher education forum with MIT.
3. Library at RCSI.

Future Plans for Bahrain's Higher Education

FORWARD LOOK

The year 2013 is already shaping up to be a year of continued reform in pursuit of higher education excellence. An updated set of regulations will be introduced in order for the HEC to govern the higher education sector based on the latest developments.

The focus in 2013 is accelerated reform of higher education in Bahrain with the introduction of institutional accreditation at the centre of reform. International standards will be introduced and institutions will need to meet those standards in order to receive the HEC accreditation. This is expected to give the sector the impetus needed in order to work towards achieving a world-class higher education system.

The HEC will be encouraging the institutions to work closely with the industries in order to revise outdated curricula and produce graduates that will have the skills that the industries require. Additionally, it is of great importance that curricula and teaching methods embrace entrepreneurship and enterprise so that the sector produces job creators and not just employees.

Academic talent will be another scope of the HEC's focused endeavours through introducing a higher education teaching certificate which we expect to become mandatory for all teachers within five years. Quality of teaching and the views of faculty staff within Bahrain will be captured through the HEC's first online survey for university staff to be conducted in January 2013.

Student and faculty data will be captured by the introduction of a new online system which will allow the HEC to develop policies based on a comprehensive ongoing data collection. The HEC will be at the centre of decision making, reviewing students' and institutions' performance by means of the accurate data collected in the system.

Through partnership with Tamkeen, training and educational performance support workshops will be launched. These workshops, some delivered by international companies, will provide the sector with specific solutions to improve performance of institutions.

The HEC will build stronger relationships with the industry so as to collaborate more efficiently and create industry-based learning. When higher education works closely with businesses and the industry, it can transform economies and make that transformation sustainable.

Student and parents will have access to new student information sets that will bring all course information for all programmes into one place for the first time, through the website of the HEC Secretariat. Students in high schools will be able to review course information such as entry requirements, job opportunities and fees for all available programmes, allowing them to compare and choose institutions. Our intention is that students are given the most up-to-date and relevant information before making their higher education choices for 2013.

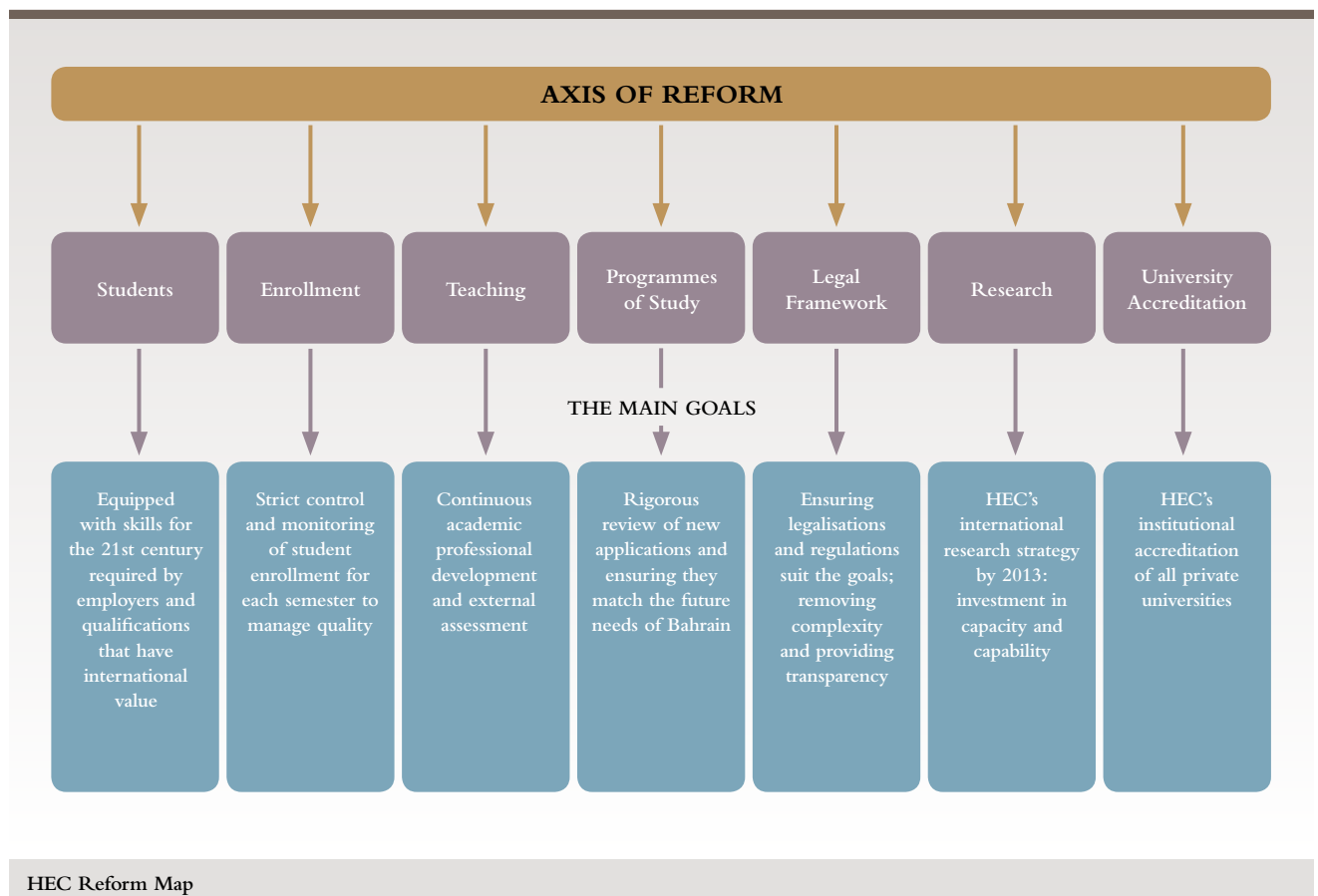
The year 2013 will also be the year when the first national scientific research strategy will be launched, which is expected to steer academics and institutions towards key areas of research that will benefit Bahrain.

Finally, national indicators will be introduced to the sector, and the key performance indicators will provide the whole sector with targets that will create a common goal that all those in the sector should be working towards achieving.



Visit to the Animal Welfare Centre by NYIT students.

In summary, higher education reform in Bahrain is expected to be driven forward with an accelerating pace. The constituents of reform are illustrated in the HEC reform map below.



Future Plans for Bahrain's Higher Education *(continued)*

BAHRAIN'S HIGHER EDUCATION OUTLOOK

Bahrain's diverse student population and its openness to all cultures and religions are promising indicators that this country will develop into the regional hub for higher education – similar to the East Asian educational hubs, Malaysia and Hong Kong. These two countries earned the title not only as a result of their outstanding higher education, but also as a result of rapid economic development, excellent tourism strategies, multinational investments, and the establishment of science and technology enterprises. Bahrain, too, has proved to be advancing in the same direction with an accelerating pace.

Bahrain is poised to be the country that educates talents and invests in their capabilities from a variety of nations to become future employees, entrepreneurs, citizens and leaders, who will help the country achieve its long term economic vision – Vision 2030.

HEC MEMBERS



Dr Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi
Minister of Education Higher Education Council, Chairman



H E Shaikh Mohammed Bin Essa Al-Khalifa
Advisor for Political and Economic Affairs
Court of the Crown Prince
Chairman of Tamkeen Board of Directors



Mr Kamal Bin Ahmed Mohamed
Minister for Transport
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Undersecretary at the Ministry of Labour



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Mrs Sabah K. Al Moayyed



Dr Ebrahim S. Jamal Al Hashimi
Higher Education Consultant



Prof Riyad Y. Hamzah
Secretary General of the Higher Education Council

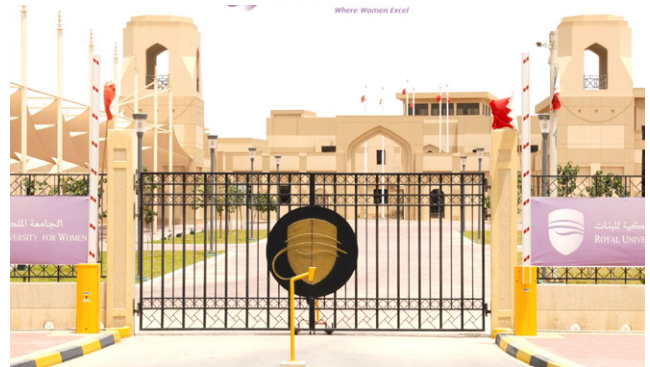
DIRECTORS OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION COUNCIL



Dr Muna Al Balooshi
Assistant Undersecretary for Evaluation and Accreditation



Dr Fatin Al Mooayyed
Director for licensing and Accreditation



Royal University for women campus.



Ms Nadia Bo Qais
Director for Evaluation and Follow up



Dr Farzana Al Maraghi
Director for Scientific Research

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Future Plans for Bahrain's Higher Education *(continued)*

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Prof Asmaa AbaHusain

Professor of geology and environmental science
programme manager
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Dr Abdulla Mohammed Alsadiq

Head of Business and Finance Studies
Deanship of Scientific Research
University of Bahrain

Dr Sadiq Mahdi Al-Alawi

Dean of the College of Applied Studies
University of Bahrain

CONCLUSION

To conclude this comprehensive report on Bahrain's higher education the General Secretariat of the Higher Education Council would like to extend its deepest gratitude to all those who contributed their hard work and supported us in compiling this report. We would also like to especially thank His Majesty, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince of Bahrain, Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and the Prime Minister, Prince Khalifa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, for their unfailing kindness and support. We sincerely hope that this report can provide the educators as well as the general public inside and outside Bahrain with a clearer manifestation of higher education in Bahrain. The General Secretariat of Higher Education Council is determined to produce such a report annually in order to keep Bahraini higher education sector, the public and higher education worldwide up to date.