



# International Quality Review

Kuwait International Law School

**Review Report**

February 2023

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## About this review

This is a report of an International Quality Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Kuwait International Law School. The review took place from 7-9 February 2023 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Mark Hunt
- Professor Anca Greere
- Nina Cupric (student reviewer).

The QAA Officers for this review were Ms Tess Winther and Dr Yue Song.

International Quality Review (IQR) offers institutions outside the UK the opportunity to have a review by the UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The review benchmarks the institutions' quality assurance processes against international quality assurance standards set out in Part 1 of the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#).

In International Quality Review, the QAA review team:

- makes conclusions against each of the 10 standards set out in Part 1 of the ESG
- makes conditions (if relevant)
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- comes to an overall conclusion as to whether the institution meets the standards for International Quality Review.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section: [Key findings](#). The section [Explanations of the findings](#) provides the detailed commentary.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission. A dedicated section explains the method for [International Quality Review](#) and has links to other informative documents. For an explanation of terms see the [Glossary](#) at the end of this report.

## Key findings

### Executive summary

Kuwait International Law School (KILAW) is the only private law school in Kuwait, offering legal education leading to two-year paralegal studies, LLB and LLM degrees under licence from the Kuwait Private Universities Council by the Amiri decree no 144 for 2008. Preparations to establish KILAW commenced in 2004 and the physical construction began in early 2010. The first cohort of students was enrolled in March 2011 with 253 students. As of 2022, KILAW has 2,340 students in all programmes, 122 faculty members, and 80 administrative staff. A total of 3,140 students have graduated across all programmes as at the end of the academic year 2021-22.

KILAW's vision is to be: 'A model university that provides distinguished education, develops legal, auditing and norms capabilities, and adopts critical thinking'. KILAW's newly developed vision, mission, objectives and values have been developed upon the implementation of the new strategic plan 2021-2025.

The vision emerged from the notion that excellence in legal education should be achieved by embedding critical thinking within the curriculum. The goal was to provide legal education characterised by local, regional, Arab and international dimensions by introducing modern pioneering educational methodologies with less emphasis on traditional lecturing and teaching delivery modes.

The Kuwait International Legal Studies and Research Centre (KILRC) at KILAW was established in 2012 to support and fund research that enriches the knowledge and effectiveness of legal practices. KILRC is also concerned with providing professional training for lawyers, government employees and civil servants to contribute to the development and progress of society. The Kuwait International Legal Training Institute (KILTI) works under the supervision of KILRC. Its main objective is to provide professional training programmes to both the public and private sectors in the legal sphere and other fields. The Community Service Centre was formed in 2019. The Centre develops plans, rules and procedures that facilitate applications for community service programmes. The Centre offers training programmes to develop legal capability in various fields, especially for legal professionals, individuals, and workers in the legal sphere in both public and private sectors.

Major changes since its accreditation in 2017 include the offering of two new programmes: LLM Law and Financial Transactions; and a Diploma in Law. Both programmes have run since 2020. Also a new academic agreement with Manchester University - School of Law in June 2022 and a new academic agreement with Durham University - School of Law in September 2022. Establishing the programme of KILAW future leaders to enhance quality management. KILAW's newest building, the 'Sports and Students' Activities Building' is ready to receive students and faculty members. The Sports and Students' Activities Building includes a fully equipped auditorium, halls for students' social and extracurricular activities, gymnasiums, swimming pools, classrooms, a training centre, halls, offices, meeting rooms, an in-door sports facility and a cafeteria.

KILAW has adopted a precautionary approach and identified the key challenges facing KILAW to ensure its sustainable future and viability. The key challenges are as follows:

- securing jobs for graduates
- extending the international student population
- maintaining internal and external scholarships and assistance
- reducing reliance on Government-funded students
- recruitment and retention of well qualified administrative staff and faculty members

- preparing future leaders for the institution
- recruiting talented and competent expertise
- adding additional income streams (in addition to the current tuition fees)
- maintaining and enhancing KILAW's reputation for excellence
- achieving a model for higher education for the region.

KILAW's institutional design supports a pragmatic approach to addressing challenges identified. KILAW's Academic Advisory Board provides supportive and critical inputs and expertise. KILAW's Board of Trustees provides financial and administrative oversight and expertise. The School's academic agreements also support KILAW in addressing challenges.

In reaching conclusions about the extent to which Kuwait International Law School meets the 10 ESG Standards, the QAA review team followed the evidence-based review procedure as outlined in the handbook for International Quality Review (June 2021). The University provided the review team with a self-evaluation document and supporting evidence. During the review visit, which took place from 7-9 February 2023, the review team held a total of eight meetings with the President, senior management team, academic staff, professional support staff, students, alumni and external stakeholders. The review team also had the opportunity to observe the University's facilities and learning resources in Kuwait City.

In summary, the team found two examples of good practice and was able to make 12 recommendations for improvement and enhancement. The recommendations are of a desirable rather than essential nature and are proposed to enable the University to build on existing practice which is operating satisfactorily but which could be improved or enhanced. The team identified two conditions that the University must satisfy to achieve QAA accreditation.

Overall, the team concluded that Kuwait International Law School **meets** all the standards for International Quality Review **subject to meeting specific conditions**.

In accordance with the published IQR handbook, the review process was extended to allow KILAW to meet the conditions in Standard 1.1 and Standard 1.9, and for the review team to confirm that it has done so successfully.

KILAW provided an action plan within four weeks of receiving the draft report. This was required to address the specific conditions set by the review team, as well as respond to any other recommendations and set out any plans to capitalise on any good practice identified.

The published IQR methodology requires that once the institution has completed the necessary actions and submitted relevant evidence to QAA, a follow-up desk-based analysis will be undertaken to determine whether the institution has now satisfied the conditions set and consequently meets the IQR standards. A report recommending whether to revise or retain the original outcome will then be submitted to QAA for a final decision.

In accordance with the published IQR methodology, KILAW submitted further evidence in October 2023.

The review team considered the further submission and confirms that, in order to address the condition in Standard 1.1, KILAW has developed clear policies and procedures to define clear relationships between various committees in the governance structure, strengthen quality assurance procedures and the senior management's oversight on QA, and define, formalise and further develop the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance and strategic management of KILAW.

Regarding the condition in Standard 1.9, the review team acknowledged the significant amount of work undertaken by KILAW to improve the ongoing monitoring and programme review procedures. In particular, the QAA team was clear that KILAW has developed clear policies and procedures to include more detailed course reports, developed and formalised processes for acting upon feedback in a timely, relevant and systematic manner, issued clear guidelines for communication with stakeholders, and defined, formalised, and further developed the stakeholder involvement in ongoing monitoring and programme review activities.

In view of the action plan and subsequent additional evidence presented against the conditions set against Standard 1.1 and Standard 1.9, the review team considered that the conditions had been addressed and both Standard 1.1 and Standard 1.9 are now **met**.

The review team recommended that further work should be done to ensure the updated QA policies and ongoing monitoring and programme review procedures are fully and effectively implemented. KILAW's actions against all recommendations will be further considered at the mid-cycle review stage.

These revised outcomes were ratified by QAA in January 2024 to confirm that the conditions in Standard 1.1 and Standard 1.9 have been addressed and therefore all 10 ESG standards are **met**.

## QAA's conclusions about Kuwait International Law School

The QAA review team reached the following conclusions about the higher education provision at Kuwait International Law School.

### European Standards and Guidelines

Kuwait International Law School meets eight of the 10 ESG Standards and Guidelines. The standards not met by Kuwait International Law School are:

- Standard 1.1: Policy for quality assurance
- Standard 1.9: Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes.

### Conditions

The review team confirmed that all ESG Standards are met, and lifted the two **conditions** below placed on Standard 1.1 and Standard 1.9 following further submission of evidence by KILAW in October 2023:

- To further embed and strengthen quality assurance processes as part of strategic management and ensure consistent oversight and full effectiveness of all stages of the quality assurance cycle (ESG Standard 1.1)
- To develop ongoing monitoring of programmes and effectively implement periodic review processes, including by strengthening communication approaches and stakeholder involvement (ESG Standard 1.9).

Following KILAW's further submission in October 2023, the review team confirmed that the conditions have been addressed and therefore both Standard 1.1 and Standard 1.9 are **met**.

### Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at Kuwait International Law School:

- support for staff research, which includes staff contribution to the KILAW annual international conference and the KILAW research journal (ESG Standard 1.5)
- the high level of staff commitment, high quality of planning, and clear dedication to students' success within the Students Development and Competitions Department (ESG Standard 1.6).

### Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to Kuwait International Law School:

- ensure QA policies and procedures address the relationship between committees in the governance structure, and contribute to strategic management, as well as develop the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance (ESG Standard 1.1)
- develop and publish a learning, teaching and assessment strategy including a more detailed and clear procedures concerning the external examiners (ESG Standard 1.3)

- review the terms of reference of the external examiners committee, develop clear written procedures for the appointment of external examiners and specify the maximum appointment term for external examiners (ESG Standard 1.3)
- formally respond in writing to 'all' recommendations in each external examiner report on an annual basis, and that the report is formally considered and responded to by the Academic Advisory Board (ESG Standard 1.3)
- develop a formal process of issuing and verifying graduation documents, potentially through the pre-existing Publication Standards Committee (ESG Standard 1.4)
- develop an institutional strategy and operational forward plan for the 'continuous professional development' of staff which brings together all the current methods of support into one overarching strategy (ESG Standard 1.5)
- strengthen and consistently embed the role of academic and administrative advisors, as well as focusing on how the service is communicated to students (ESG Standard 1.6)
- improve ongoing use of institutional data and dashboard to enhance the timeliness of strategic and operational decision-making, including for data relating to monitoring and progression of students (ESG Standard 1.7)
- develop and apply accessibility criteria to all internal and public information (ESG Standard 1.8)
- develop a formal sign-off procedure to ensure the accuracy of public information and to enable it to maintain quality of public information, especially in tight turnaround (ESG Standard 1.8)
- ensure the updated ongoing monitoring and programme review procedures are fully and effectively implemented, engaging internal and external stakeholders and taking into consideration their feedback (ESG Standard 1.9)
- strengthen action-planning approaches, to include forward-thinking projections, build in the maintenance of good practice, integrate action plans generated from various review activities and correlate these with strategic plans and internal quality assurance procedures (ESG Standard 1.10).

## **Explanation of the findings about Kuwait International Law School**

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a [brief glossary](#) at the end of this report. A fuller [glossary of terms](#) is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the [review method](#), also on the QAA website.

## Standard 1.1 Policy for quality assurance

**Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.**

### Findings

1.1 Kuwait International Law School (KILAW) is licensed by the Private Universities Council (PUC), strictly following PUC accreditation requirements. There is a regular process which KILAW undergoes to receive confirmation of its compliance with the accreditation requirements. The most recent PUC assessment was carried out in May 2019, with the PUC granting KILAW a four-year academic and institutional accreditation. The next accreditation process is scheduled for Autumn 2023.

1.2 Under PUC requirements, KILAW operates a system of Associated Universities (AU), with Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in place. Although not a PUC requirement, KILAW has established an Academic Advisory Board (AAB) to support its quality assurance processes internally. Recommendations from assessment reports generated by these structures are considered as part of the processes for managing quality assurance activities. Developments in relation to these recommendations are reported on, and the President is confirmed along with the management team to oversee these reports.

1.3 KILAW has a Quality Assurance Policy (QAP). The processes and procedures used to implement this policy are described in the Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH). The QAP has a formal status and is published on the KILAW website. The QAP is divided into five main sections: General standards of quality assurance; Students' standards of quality assurance; Faculty members' standards of quality assurance; Programmes' standards of quality assurance; and Administrative departments' standards of quality assurance.

1.4 KILAW also has recently updated a Quality Assurance Policy for Distance Learning for the LLB and LLM programmes as well as the Distance Learning Quality Assurance Operational Regulations. These were particularly relevant during the pandemic. At the time of the review visit, KILAW had fully reverted to face-to-face delivery. Online elements were only retained for the Learning Management System used for all the programmes of KILAW.

1.5 There are clear responsibilities set out for reviewing the quality assurance framework and the corresponding policies. These are, in the main, attributed to the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office (QAAO). The QAAO considers and evaluates quality assurance reports in comparison with different policies, specifically the Quality Assurance Policy and the academic accreditation standards.

1.6 More recently, the QAP was updated during the academic year 2019-20, with approval from the Deanship Committee, the School Council and the Board of Trustees, and then again in 2021, with School Council approval. As a matter of policy, the updated review cycle is normally once every three years. KILAW confirmed that when changes occurred there would be ample communication towards staff and students and training, as necessary, to embed the changes. However, the review team was provided with no examples of consolidation of changes via these activities, and only a few stakeholders could confirm having participated in the activities.

1.7 As described by KILAW, the Quality Assurance Structure consists of the Board of Trustees, the President, the Deans, the School Council, the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office (QAAO), the Academic departments and the Administrative

departments. The Board of Trustees is the highest authority in KILAW that oversees adherence with the QAP, regulations and bylaws to ensure proper implementation. The President, School Council and the Dean maintain oversight of the QAP and report on its compliance to the Board of Trustees. The Dean and School Council have specific roles in relation to academic provision, specifically review of programmes. Various examples of approvals by the Board of Trustees were presented to the review team, including in relation to the admission system, grading procedure and the self-evaluation document (SED).

1.8 KILAW has noted that the QAAO sets the academic year's priorities and suggests actions regarding the quality assurance procedures to be taken. The QAAO reports to the Vice President as well as to other members of the higher administration, such as the President and the Dean. It was noted that the QAAO keeps all the reports and action plans from various internal and external activities and cross-checks where there might be overlap. However, the review team requested several times for evidence of integration of the outcomes from the quality review processes which was not made available. The team also sought to understand how the committee structure supports such integration so that escalation and oversight could be effectively managed across all areas of activity.

1.9 During the review visit, the review team explored how the QAP and its corresponding processes were being used in strategic decision-making and sought to have examples which could demonstrate all stages of the quality cycle, from planning, implementation, monitoring, review and feedback to stakeholders who had contributed efforts to these processes. The review team inquired into where oversight was achieved and how integration of various quality assurance assessment procedures is obtained to ensure streamlining of responses and appropriateness of actions. The review team maintained this focus throughout various meetings, especially as it was trying to gauge the effectiveness of KILAW's arrangements since the initial QAA accreditation. This also included a focus on KILAW's response to the 2017 recommendations, one of which highlighted the need for integration of quality assurance process and more clarity in respect of committee structure oversight. The review team concludes that whereas much of the oversight was attributed to the President, it was unclear how other structures interacted to maintain a clear focus on quality assurance outcomes. It is suggested that KILAW clearly define the relationship between various committees in the governance structure to ensure that quality assurance processes are implemented consistently and relevantly across all areas of provision.

1.10 The review team found that, whereas there is a wealth of quality assurance activity, especially promoted via external assessment engagement, KILAW was mainly reactive in its quality assurance approaches and frequently did not effectively close the feedback loop to convince all its stakeholders of the validity and relevance of its actions. While KILAW does respond to recommendations made from external bodies, it was observed that action-planning and reporting were performed in silos, with KILAW not taking an overarching approach. The review team identified a risk in relation to the potential for KILAW to effectively use the quality assurance procedures it has set out for itself to inform strategic decision-making and forward planning. This is particularly important, as KILAW has determined ambitious aims for itself via the Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and these ambitions see KILAW aiming for growth in student numbers and programmes offered, as well as for a change in status to university. It is suggested that KILAW strengthens both its quality assurance procedures and its oversight to directly and effectively contribute to strategic management and embeds all stages of the quality assurance cycle across all areas of development, including teaching and learning, research and community engagement. This will prove particularly relevant for KILAW to sustain its growth aspirations and to conduct effective change management.

1.11 As an important part of the quality assurance process focuses on academic integrity, the review team noted that KILAW had identified and reported an issue with some incidents

of cheating in examination. Although cases of cheating were presented as decreasing, this was still creating a side concern for staff and students. The review team found that plagiarism was seen as being equally problematic, given the fact that some cases of the examination formats did not resort to essay-based assignments, hence less opportunity for plagiarism. Students confirmed that they believed the approach being taken was preventive, that is helping students to avoid rather than penalise breaches. Plagiarism was explained to them and they considered they were aware of steps they needed to take to uphold academic integrity practices. Students also indicated that as far as they knew plagiarism software was applied by staff for Arabic and English text.

1.12 KILAW notes that it is committed to providing equal opportunities to all students and staff. The review team probed if there is any real or perceived discrimination which stakeholders might be subject to. Staff and students confirmed that the KILAW commitment is visible in employment, promotion, admission, and examination practices, respectively, with this process being observed as transparent and clear.

1.13 KILAW understands the value of internal and external participation in quality assurance processes and strives to develop relevant levels of engagement with different stakeholder groups. KILAW promotes a system of student representation with students invited to actively take part in the main committees. Students also reported being confident and honest in their responses to surveys. Teaching and administrative staff reported that their feedback was heard and proposals made would be, in the main, considered in formal discussions.

1.14 Employers, professional, statutory and regulatory bodies national to Kuwait are a pool KILAW can draw on to drive developments. Alumni, although willing and open to collaborations, have been less engaged in quality assurance processes. The review team notes that collaborations are set up with key stakeholders who have the potential to provide relevant support to KILAW on its quality journey. However, KILAW has noted that some activities are less formalised, organised ad hoc, frequently via individual contacts rather than a collective engagement and do not have a cyclical approach to be repeated at regular intervals. It is suggested that KILAW should clearly define, formalise and further develop the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance and strategic management of KILAW to ensure a level of regularity of interaction.

1.15 The review team sets the **condition** that KILAW should give immediate attention to its oversight arrangements and the usability of quality assurance outcomes for strategic decision-making as this will be imperative to sustain the growth that KILAW has projected for itself. As suggested above, KILAW should:

- clearly define the relationship between various committees in the governance structure to ensure that quality assurance processes are implemented consistently and relevantly across all areas of provision
- strengthen quality assurance procedures and its oversight so as to directly and effectively contribute to strategic management and embed all stages of the quality assurance cycle across all areas of development, including teaching and learning, research and community engagement
- clearly define, formalise and further develop the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance and strategic management of KILAW to ensure a level of regularity of interaction.

1.16 KILAW should address the condition set and provide evidence of its implementation **within 12 months**. Overall, the review team found standard 1.1 to be **met subject to meeting the condition**.

1.17 KILAW submitted further evidence in October 2023 which was scrutinised by the review team to determine whether the three elements of the condition had been met. The team's findings are as follows:

**The review team recommended that KILAW clearly defines the relationship between various committees in the governance structure to ensure that quality assurance processes are implemented consistently and relevantly across all areas of provision. The further submission demonstrates that:**

- the Quality Management Structure (QMS) has been reviewed and updated to include clear relationships among various committees in the governance structure
- Terms of Reference of KILAW Council and its committees have been reviewed, updated and approved to ensure that quality assurance processes are integrated and actioned
- a new committee, the Governance and Compliance Committee (GC Com.) has been established to oversee the implementation, monitoring and compliance with the Quality Assurance Policy (QAP)
- the revised Quality Management Structure has started implementation with meeting minutes of the committees recorded.

**The review team recommends that KILAW strengthens both its quality assurance procedures and its oversight to directly and effectively contribute to strategic management and embeds all stages of the quality assurance cycle across all areas of development, including teaching and learning, research and community engagement. The further submission demonstrates that:**

- Quality Assurance Policy (QAP) and Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH) have been reviewed and updated to strengthen the strategic oversight and engagement with various stakeholders in quality assurance procedures
- a quality assurance calendar has been introduced to include administrative and Quality Assurance events and activities to ensure clear quality assurance process and contribution to strategic management, such as regular committee meetings and minutes; the review of the documents related to regulatory policy and procedures; staff training and development
- the Governance and Compliance Committee has committed to ensure compliance with quality and governance standards by relevant parties and its adherence to the QMS and QA Calendar.

**The review team recommends that KILAW should clearly define, formalise, and further develop the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance and strategic management of KILAW to ensure a level of regularity of interaction. The further submission demonstrates that:**

- external stakeholder engagement in quality assurance has been formalised in the Quality Assurance Policy (QAP) and Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH). The plans for engaging with parents, employers and alumni have been developed
- a quality assurance calendar has been introduced to include communication schedules with different internal and external stakeholders, ensuring stakeholder engagement within quality assurance processes and meeting stakeholder groups regularly with KILAW key management entities.

1.18 The review team considered the further submission and can confirm that KILAW has developed clear policies and procedures to: define the relationship between various committees in the governance structure; strengthen quality assurance procedures and the senior management's oversight on QA; and define, formalise and further develop the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance and strategic management of KILAW. Considering more time will be needed before the effectiveness of implementing the updated Quality Management Structure (QMS) and quality assurance approaches can be fully evaluated, the review team has concluded the condition has been addressed and Standard 1.1 is **met**. The review team **recommends** that there will be further work necessary to ensure QA policies and procedures developed to address the three recommendations in this Standard are fully and effectively implemented, meaning that further work should be done to:

- ensure the clear relationship between various committees in the governance structure so that quality assurance processes are implemented consistently and relevantly across all areas of provision
- strengthen the quality assurance procedures and the oversight to directly and effectively contribute to strategic management and embed all stages of the quality assurance cycle across all areas of development, including teaching and learning, research and community engagement
- formalise and develop the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance and strategic management of KILAW to ensure a level of regularity of interaction.

## Standard 1.2 Design and approval of programmes

**Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications' framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.**

### Findings

2.1 The SED confirms that all programmes are designed to align with the KILAW vision and mission and must reflect its goals and values, including alignment to KILAW's strategic plan. In addition, programmes must be consistent with the higher education goals of the State of Kuwait, meet the market and labour needs of the region, and provide a competitive edge for KILAW graduates. KILAW aims to provide its community with qualified and distinguished individuals in legal studies with the highest academic and professional competences.

2.2 The Regulation Manuals Parts 1 and 2 published in 2019 set out KILAW's approach and requirements for the approval of new programmes at departmental level. Senior staff confirmed that training had been undertaken on the new arrangements. Additionally, staff receive regular circulars providing updates and regular meetings are held with the head of department. New programmes are subject to a staged process outlined in each regulation manual.

2.3 Programme development utilises QAA accreditation. QAA granted KILAW a five-year accreditation of its law programmes in 2018. The accredited programmes include the Bachelor of Laws (LLB), Master of Laws, English Foundation Programme for the LLM and the Paralegal Diploma programme. The next review cycle is scheduled to take place by QAA in 2023. KILAW received International Academic Accreditation for the English programme from the Commission on English Language Programme Accreditation (CEA) USA, in 2019. It was evident that KILAW has continued to review and expand the range of legal courses taught in English, which enables students to compete in the labour market.

2.4 A proposal to add a new academic programme may be submitted by a wide range of bodies at KILAW. Major changes are considered and approved by the Board of Trustees. All programme changes are published in the student guide. In accordance with KILAW's vision and strategy and to meet the requirements of the Private Universities Council (PUC), KILAW operates two committees for the approval and preparation of programme curricula: the advisory committee and curriculum committee. One PUC requirement is for KILAW to include an agreement with an associate University to align its curricula with another international law school. Achievement of this requirement is through an association with the University of Warwick, and via consultation with a range of external higher education professionals. This approach blends the needs of local priorities and international foundations. The international dimension of KILAW programmes is underpinned through delivery of compulsory English courses and a range of electives aimed at providing students with an employment advantage. This is supported by input from legal industry professionals and stakeholders including local employer advisory groups who provide effective external input to scrutiny of academic programme proposal.

2.5 Faculty members contribute to academic programme design and development. For example, through general faculty meetings which are held twice per semester. Proposals are also considered at academic department and committee meetings or via School Council

meetings. Professional services staff confirmed that they were represented on the curriculum committee and noted that final approval for any new programme is not given until all resources have been allocated.

2.6 KILAW periodically meets with employers to ensure educational outputs meet labour market needs for specialised legal professionals. Employers share views, provide suggestions and focus on the main subjects and skills that law graduates require. Feedback from employers is discussed by the Deanship Committee and the Curriculum Committee and follow-up actions are further discussed in future open meetings. Students met by the review team confirmed that courses gave them the skills and knowledge required to enter the legal employment market. Academic staff confirmed that knowledge of local employers was strong, many provided model lectures or were invited to co-teach on certain programmes. In addition, employment fairs at KILAW enabled students to engage directly with employers and provided a network of placements.

2.7 In order to ensure that KILAW keeps pace with the changes in legal practice and to prepare students with the skills and qualifications required in the labour market, the following additions have been made to the course portfolio: Master of Law and Financial Transactions approved December 2020 and Diploma of Law approved December 2020. Other course additions have included: Advanced Criminal Law Course for LLM programme; Legal Research Methodology (404E) in the preparatory stage for the LLM programme; The Intellectual Property Course for the LLB Programme; Technology Transfer and Commercialisation Law Course for the LLB Programme; and Anti-Corruption Law & Recovery of Stolen Assets.

2.8 Courses offered by KILAW are designed to be sequential, with each course building upon the previous one. Programmes have a defined curriculum and study plan which provides students with a progression route through courses. Students met by the review team confirmed that the progression between levels was sequential. Some compulsory modules were restrictive and options to choose a different route were limited. KILAW does respond to feedback from students, but students noted that not all feedback was acted upon by the institution.

2.9 KILAW publishes an annual student guide and brochure for each course programme. These publications are available on KILAW's website, in the admission and registration hall and in the library. In discussion with students, they confirmed that the student guide was clear and provided the curriculum information required.

2.10 The student workload is regulated and published in the student guide. The bylaws indicate that the normal academic load of full-time students is 15 credits, whereas the normal academic load of part-time students is 12 credits. The graduation period for full-time students is four years, for part-time it is five years. Students can take more or less credits, subject to meeting the requirements and approval of the Student Affairs' Committee. Students met by the review team were clear about the requirements and expectations detailed in the student guide.

2.11 KILAW is committed to involving students in programme design and course development and listening to their opinions and feedback. Impact of student feedback on course development included the Master of Law & Financial Transactions where the basic understanding of financial and mathematical operations was problematic. The outcome of student feedback led to more time being added to specific course units and the impact of the changes led to an improvement in student grades.

2.12 Through the scrutiny of course documentation provided by KILAW, and through discussions with a range of staff, students and external stakeholders during the review visit,

the review team tested KILAW's approach to the design and approval of programmes and found it to be effective.

2.13 The review team observed evidence of a clear connection between programme approval processes and KILAW's strategic aims and objectives outlined within its strategic plan. The team received programme development documentation which demonstrated that KILAW was working with its published regulatory manuals. Processes also aligned with institutional strategy and articulated use of learning outcomes as part of the course design process.

2.14 The review team met a range of teaching staff who had been involved in the design stage of the course development process. Discussions with staff confirmed involvement and access to the development of validation documentation for all programmes on which they taught. Staff feedback contributed to new and improved course offerings. Externality was evident in a number of advisory committees. Colleagues met by the review team confirmed that KILAW's programme development processes were aligned to other systems outside of Kuwait.

2.15 External expertise and external accreditation is used extensively at KILAW; for example, QAA accreditation of all course programmes, accreditation of the English programme by the CEA, and regular curricula oversight by University of Warwick. It was evident that KILAW draws on and collaborates with local legal experts in programme development.

2.16 KILAW programmes involve a period of practical training. Students can choose from a number of topics, such as, Field Training; Moot Court; Legal Clinic or International Competitions. During the review visit, students described an overall satisfaction with the practical training programmes. The review team confirmed that the emphasis on professional practice has been embedded within curriculum design and enhances graduate employability.

2.17 The review team was interested to learn more about KILAW's plan for the development of a new School of Governance and Systems, noting that the development was aimed at supporting the transformation of KILAW to a University. The new school intends to offer five undergraduate and two postgraduate degrees and was being overseen by an Executive Committee. In addition, KILAW was also developing a PhD programme which had received initial approval to proceed by the School Council. The review team noted that the new School of Governance and Systems and the PhD programme were subject to approval by the Private Universities Council (PUC) which at the time of the review visit had not yet been concluded. The PhD programme was expected to start in 2023 or 2024.

2.18 Course leaders complete a course review at the end of each semester and propose any adjustments to delivery or amendments to the curriculum. Discussions are led by the Head of Department with proposed amendments being proposed to the Curriculum Committee. Periodic reports from course leaders on academic courses are submitted at the end of each semester.

2.19 As part of its periodic evaluation and review of programmes and courses, the Curriculum Committee in 2019 organised two working groups with the aim of reviewing courses offered by international universities and then comparing these with those offered by KILAW. The review confirmed that KILAW was achieving its goals in terms of the entirety of its mission and its academic curricula.

2.20 The review team concludes that KILAW has robust processes for the design and approval of its programmes. Course programmes are designed to meet the objectives set, including the intended learning outcomes which result in qualifications that are clearly

specified and communicated, and align with UK and European qualifications and credit frameworks. Overall, the team concludes that Standard 1.2 is **met**.

## Standard 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

**Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.**

### Findings

3.1 KILAW's mission is to achieve excellence in legal education by providing its community with qualified legal professionals. It does this through applying best practices in administration, academic and social fields and by providing distinguished education that depends on critical thinking.

3.2 It also aims to contribute effectively to consolidating the values of justice, integrity and the rule of law for Kuwait. As the majority of teaching staff are actively working in their respective legal fields or undertaking research, they are able to engage students with direct examples of current work practice.

3.3 KILAW defines critical legal thinking as the ability of a student to analyse text, statement or case and provide sound, logical thinking and criticism to develop legal opinion based upon evidence and sound judgement. KILAW believes that a successful education process depends on well qualified teachers, well designed programmes and students who are essential partners in the educational process.

3.4 KILAW has a commitment to face-to-face delivery and encourages faculty to adopt a range of teaching methods in the classroom. Delivery modes consider the different learning styles of students and nature of materials being covered. Students are encouraged to engage in dialogue and debate through both group discussions and student presentations. KILAW adopts a range of teaching methods in the classroom: power point; audio and visual recordings; role play; group discussions; student presentations; research projects and use of the library. In addition to traditional mode of in-person delivery, KILAW allows for modules to be taught in other modes including online, intense, and joint. Each provides different opportunities for learning and adds flexibility to the learning environment. PUC allows different modes of delivery if they are regulated by KILAW.

3.5 The review team learnt that KILAW encourages student autonomy with textbooks and online resources to support classroom activities. Teaching staff challenge students to develop a range of skills including analysis, arbitration and criticism. Students are guided to consider legal processes they will encounter in practice. Delivery of courses takes place in morning and afternoon slots with the LLM taking place in the evening to support students in employment. Students met during the review visit confirmed that the range of practical training activities and internships, together with the support to take part in competitions did encourage student autonomy in learning.

3.6 The review team concluded that the learning and teaching practices of KILAW encourage students to take an active role in supporting the learning process and by employing a variety of pedagogical methods. However, the review team would advise KILAW to keep under review its student number growth targets in relation to its learning and teaching practices if it is to retain its student-centred approach to learning. There is a risk that this could be reduced or lost if not planned for sufficiently.

3.7 As KILAW does not currently have a written and published learning, teaching and assessment strategy the review team **recommends** that KILAW develop and publish one which defines its approach to student learning opportunities; development of its academic disciplines; enhancement to curriculum design; the range of support provided to students;

and the embedding of employability throughout a student's courses of study. The strategy would also benefit from defining the support provided for both faculty and support services staff, and KILAW's strategy for English as a medium of instruction.

3.8 KILAW delivers compulsory and elective courses in English on all programmes, in order to enhance students' English proficiency and support career opportunities. Six compulsory legal courses are taught in English, with 26 being taught in total. The School Council and Board of Trustees reviews the courses approved for delivery in English. From the evidence available to the review team, KILAW has effectively embedded support for study in English into programmes. The support has clearly facilitated bilingual study in the student body. The review team also noted the English Language Department was awarded accreditation in April 2019 by the Commission on English Language Programme Accreditation (CEA). Students met by the review team confirmed that the progressive approach to learning in English had improved overall English capability, which was also supported by teaching staff and teaching assistants.

3.9 The review team considers that KILAW has continued to take a proactive approach to supporting students in language acquisition through the provision of teaching assistants, who attend classes and support students by clarifying issues addressed in lectures. Teaching assistants also conduct weekly study groups/tutorials and keep regular office hours for one-to one support.

3.10 KILAW effectively encourages students to develop a wide set of skills and competences through practical training activities which support classroom activities. The department for students' development and competitions, designs, develops and delivers programmes to underpin and support the practical training activities. Student feedback demonstrates that practical training support is popular. Students can choose one practical training course from the following: Field Training, Moot Court, Legal Clinic, or International Competitions. Diploma programme students undertake practice field training twice, once per year. Training is undertaken at a variety of governmental and private entities.

3.11 Through discussion, the review team learnt that extracurricular workshops, offered by experts in a range of legal fields, are offered to develop specialised skills; for example, serving judicial writ rules, legal execution of judgements and securities. In addition, local, regional and international competitions underpinned by academic and financial support are provided to students who wish to participate. Competition with other countries deepens student knowledge and understanding of international law and international relationships. Students have participated in a number of local, regional and international legal competitions. Recent competitions have been held with the College of Law at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. A comprehensive programme of study-related field trips are undertaken to support student learning, for example the Palace of Justice Kuwait, Prison administration and Syrian refugees camp in Jordan.

3.12 The Student Guide is the main document that details the student learning journey and includes information about students' rights and responsibilities, academic conduct, support services and the complaints procedure. The guide also describes graduation requirements as well as programme duration and study system. The Guidance and Orientation Office assists students in planning their programme of study, monitoring their progress at registration and graduation, and explaining registration rules and regulations. The office was the main point of contact during the recent pandemic period.

3.13 Students are members of KILAW committees. Student representatives regularly meet with the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs on a formal and informal basis to discuss student feedback in relation to concerns and interests and to facilitate the swift resolution of issues.

3.14 KILAW considers assessment fair and carried out to the required quality standards. Staff training courses are organised in cooperation with representatives from the Associate Universities related to assessment, preparing assessment criteria, formulating exam questions. The most recent event was held in May 2022 - 'Good Practices of Preparing Exams and its Fundamentals' the UK experience, and delivered by representatives from Cambridge and Warwick Universities. The number of attending faculty members was 50.

3.15 The review team considers that teaching staff are qualified to assess student work. All faculty staff are required to adhere to the relevant assessment criteria and assessment processes. This is monitored by heads of department, the examination committee and the external examiners committee. In addition, peer observation of teaching is effectively undertaken to ensure the quality of staff performance.

3.16 To ensure that the quality of learning and teaching is robust, KILAW deploys both external and internal verification mechanisms. For example, members from the Academic Advisory Board and Associated Universities visit class sessions during their evaluation visits. Internally, visits are also conducted by Heads of Department, course leaders and members of the Deanship Committee. Evaluation feedback surveys are taken at the end of course by all students, the outcomes endorse the quality of provision delivered.

3.17 In response to the previous QAA IQR of 2017, KILAW has undertaken work on student learning outcomes which have been updated to ensure that objectives have measurable goals. Coursework assessment briefs have been developed to ensure specific assessment criteria are aligned to course learning outcomes. In addition, KILAW has developed a criterion reference system which defines in words each grade awarded to students.

3.18 To ensure the work on learning outcomes and assessment criteria has been effective, a number of monitoring methods have been deployed, including reflection and evaluation of course syllabi, audit reports provided to the external examination committee, reports from course leaders and heads of department, final grade reports and student survey reports.

3.19 Assessment criteria are added to each course profile and presented to students at the beginning of every semester in order that students can build confidence in their learning and improve performance. The different nature and characteristics of each course is taken into consideration when setting assessment criteria. Each course contains 100 marks. Student performance during the semester in one or more midterm exams is reviewed in addition to course activities, such as participation, research, projects, oral exams and homework which in total is worth 40 marks. The final exam (for courses with a final exam) is awarded 60 marks. Practical training courses have different assessment criteria according to the skills and learning outcomes of each course. Students endorsed the range of assessment methods used by KILAW and confirmed that assessment criteria were clear. Students felt supported to develop their skills and knowledge. Students with disabilities felt supported as KILAW provided alternative methods for assessment or support to undertake assessments and exams.

3.20 Academic departments ensure that all faculty members who participate in teaching are involved in the design of questions for final exams. The Head of Department agrees to the final exam papers and faculty members submit them to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, who chairs the examination committee. The higher examination committee conducts a full vetting of the final exams and takes account of comments from the external examiner's report. All exams and assessment methodologies are discussed during the periodical meeting of the faculty which is held twice per semester.

3.21 Students are assessed using various types of questions, for example multiple choice, true-false, essay writing answers, analysis questions in critical thinking, case analysis questions in critical style and comparative questions.

3.22 The examination committee has oversight of the arrangements for the examination processes and procedures. The committee meets at the beginning of the academic year and is chaired by the Dean and has representation from the departments. Members are required to be familiar with the remit of the committee and have previous experience in exam management arrangements. The committee handles all aspects of the exams process and manages the exams in accordance with KILAW regulations. Exam instructions are published in the student guide.

3.23 The external examiners committee consists of external examiners from the Associate Universities and other external organisations. External examiners (EE) visit KILAW during the examination period and provide a useful external overview of the processes, conduct of the examinations and marking. Each EE submits a detailed report to the President. EE reports follow KILAW's regular procedures for consideration and further decision. The review team noted that the external examiners committee did not have clear terms of reference, in addition KILAW did not have explicit written procedures for the appointment of external examiners, including role description, range of duties and confirmed period of appointment. From scrutinising the terms of reference for external examiners, the review team noted that the external examiner term of office was not specified. At least three current external examiners had been in place for a period of eight years, even though KILAW confirmed that the initial period was five years. External examiners met by the review team confirmed that they were not clear of the terms of reference for the external examiners committee, or the appointment terms for becoming an external examiner. The review team therefore **recommends** that KILAW review the terms of reference of the external examiners committee, develop clear written procedures for the appointment of external examiners and specify their maximum appointment term.

3.24 The review team scrutinised external examiner reports and noted that the external examiners had repeatedly requested a formal written response to EE reports. KILAW did demonstrate that individual items of action had been addressed, for example: the strict limits to the time students could enter and leave exam halls 2018; and the recommendation that there should be limits on the number of true/false questions in exams 2019. However, the review team did not see or receive evidence that formally responded to all of the recommendations made by external examiners in EE reports. The meeting with EEs also confirmed that there was limited closing down of the actions requested for reporting back to EEs. The review team therefore **recommends** that KILAW responds formally in writing to 'all' recommendations in each external examiner report on an annual basis, and that the report is formally considered and responded to by the Academic Advisory Board.

3.25 KILAW has a complaint policy and procedures in place to enable students to complain against decisions made by KILAW. The policy enables all enrolled students, and those seeking enrolment, to file a complaint. Details are published in the Student Guide and available on the website. Students can submit a complaint to the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs if it relates to academic or non-academic matters. If an issue relates to the final exam mark, students can submit petitions to the examination committee. Petitions can include missed final exams, final grades, suspension of enrolment for one semester, exclusion from class for failure to attend. KILAW confirmed that complaints are dealt with on a case-by-case basis and periodic reports are produced. In discussion with students met during the review visit there was some variability in student understanding of the complaints procedures. The review team would advise KILAW to ensure that the current complaints policy and procedures are fully communicated to the student body to ensure student understanding.

3.26 Faculty members are responsible for eliminating cheating and plagiarism in adherence with the policy. Faculty members teach students the value of integrity and methods of correct citation and the acknowledgement of sources. Plagiarism software assists faculty members

in teaching skills for English work. The review team noted that there were fewer cases of cheating in the academic year 2020-2021 than 2021-2022. However, during the review visit, KILAW clarified that the statistics did not reflect the number of students but the number of courses to which the bylaws had been applied. The examination committee and School Council had taken action to confront student cheating in exams and had produced an 11-point action plan to tackle the problem. Students confirmed that they had been informed how to avoid plagiarism or had undertaken a training programme. Students did however note that there was a lack of plagiarism-detection software available at KILAW. Students reported that software such as Turnitin for 'Arabic' was not used by KILAW.

3.27 KILAW operates clear procedures for the secure operation of formal exams, including the use of invigilators. Any form of cheating is investigated by the examination committee as noted above. Penalties for violations are clearly documented. Details of relevant policies are explained in the orientation meeting that new students attend at the beginning of every year and are included in the Student Guide.

3.28 To support students, faculty members are required to undertake three office hours per week. During these sessions students can review their exam papers, receive feedback regarding mistakes and grades as well as explanations on course materials. In addition to open meetings with students to discuss their concerns, KILAW utilises online surveys and e-forms to collect and analyse feedback. Student feedback is central to faculty review. At the end of each course, two questionnaires are completed by students, one focusing on the course and the second on the members of staff who delivered the programme. Data is analysed using artificial intelligence that highlights insights, evaluates indicators and monitors KPIs in order to develop and enhance both academic and administrative services offered to students.

3.29 The review team noted evidence of a student-centred approach to providing legal education underpinned by an embedding of critical thinking. There was also evidence that KILAW has invested in creating a learning environment, underpinned by an effective student support system that enables students to actively participate in the learning experience at all stages of their programmes. Further work is required to improve institutional strategies in respect to learning, teaching and assessment, and the reporting and approval arrangements for external examiners. Notwithstanding the above recommendations, the review team was satisfied that the threshold for Standard 1.3: Student-centred learning and assessment is **met**.

## **Standard 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification**

**Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student 'life cycle', for example student admission, progression, recognition and certification.**

### **Findings**

4.1 The admissions process is clearly defined and easily accessible to students and applicants through the student handbooks. The handbooks are distributed both in a physical copy and are available on the School's website. Both handbooks go into great detail on the different routes that applicants can take to gain admission to KILAW. FAQs and video instruction are also available on the website to aid applicants in the admissions process.

4.2 The process for recognition of prior learning is clearly articulated in the handbooks and the Equation Policy. Transfers and recognition of prior learning are only accepted for LLB and diploma degrees, and require specific documents, clearly detailed in the handbook. Transfers are not permitted for the LLM programme.

4.3 The team concluded that the admissions system was transparent, robust and credible. As KILAW develops and increases the number of admissions, the School should continue to develop how it monitors the admissions process.

4.4 Students confirmed there was clear linkage in terms of progressions across different levels of study and students felt supported by faculty to achieve desired outcomes. The optional summer semester is available to students to improve GPA or raise it to the minimum threshold, as well as improve English language skills.

4.5 In order to manage KILAW's expansion, there had been a recent change in the way registration is handled when all students, both new and current start a new academic year. While the team concluded the changes implemented were needed, there were inconsistencies in how the changes were communicated to students.

4.6 At the start of their programme students attend workshops and inductions on the use of the library and other resources. The rules and regulations of the School are also covered. Students receive information around student support services via emails. Information on support services and reasons for students to approach support services are also detailed in the handbooks. However, during the review visit the team noted that there could be further improvements made to the way that KILAW communicates with students and shares information throughout the year, especially when responding to student feedback.

4.7 Students with additional support needs are supported from enrolment to graduation. During the admissions process, they have an interview to discuss specific support requirements, which is followed by final approval of the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. The Social Services office follows up with the student and supports them through their programme. The support for disabled students was generally praised by the external examiners in their latest report and was echoed by students. The team encourages the school to continue to improve the accessibility of all their resources and to engage with international development and research on support for students with additional support needs.

4.8 Most students' fees at the institution are covered by the Private Universities Council (PUC). The Board of Trustees and the School Administration have established an additional system of scholarships to recognise high achieving students.

4.9 Students can access a range of support to aid their progression. Teaching assistants in particular offer supplementary sessions to cover any topics that students identified as needing additional explanation. Students' progression is monitored by the Guidance and Orientation Office who, in cases of low GPA or warnings, conduct interviews with the student. Students are also referred to academic advisors.

4.10 The real-time data dashboard shows data for each course and can be used to monitor most aspects of the students' life cycle, including leaves of absence, grades and student feedback on courses. During the review visit the real-time dashboard was presented to the team. There was some evidence of senior management using the data obtained through the dashboard to inform decisions regarding interventions to improve student progression, but this could be further expanded and formalised, particularly in the course leader reports.

4.11 On completion of programmes, students are awarded a graduation certificate, as well as a full transcript from the Registration department that details the student journey at KILAW. Although the certificates are checked by the Graduation Officer, the team **recommends** that KILAW develop a formal process of issuing and verifying graduation documents, potentially through the pre-existing Publication Standards Committee.

4.12 The team concludes that processes for admission, progression, recognition, and certification align with the requirements and that Standard 1.4 is therefore **met**.

## Standard 1.5 Teaching staff

**Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.**

### Findings

5.1 KILAW adheres to the Private Universities Council standards and requirements. These requirements indicate that PhD holders should constitute not less than 70% of the faculty members, 20% should hold master's degrees, and 10% hold bachelor's degrees. In addition, 67% of faculty should be full time, 33% part time with a staff student ratio of 1:30. In terms of outcomes, KILAW exceeds the PUC standards in all cases: PhD holders represent 80%, 82% are on full-time contracts and KILAW maintains a staff student ratio of 1:22 for the 2022-23 academic year. Adjunct professors (part-time faculty members) should not exceed 20% of the total faculty members and must hold a PhD. They are drawn from roles such as judges, governmental legal advisors, and experienced members of the legal profession. Contracts are for one semester or one year.

5.2 KILAW has a low staff turnover, more than 79% of faculty members have been with the institution for at least four years. Staff benefits include health insurance, housing fee assistance, yearly reimbursement of flight tickets, and tuition support for dependant children.

5.3 International diversity of the faculty is notable. Each faculty member represents various law schools across the world - 18 countries are currently represented. Diversity of the staff body is important to KILAW to help expand students' academic understanding and conception, as well as expose students to different theories and perspectives. Diversity also reflects KILAW's international dimension as stated in its mission. The review team concurs that the diversity of faculty membership and their contribution to the curriculum enhances the student learning experience and is effective.

5.4 Research at KILAW is underpinned by the 'Kuwait International Legal Studies and Research Centre' (KILRC). KILAW supports faculty members to participate in research projects, for example KILAW annual international conference, workshops and seminars. Faculty members also contribute work for associations both local and regional and provide legal consultancies. Faculty staff are also encouraged to publish in the KILAW journal and submit work for publication. Research work undertaken by KILAW faculty members is externally reviewed for quality and is used to underpin the curriculum, for example the course entitled 'Comparative Political Systems' was based upon several faculty research papers. KILAW professors are encouraged and expected to embed research within teaching and learning activities. Funding is provided for both faculty members and teaching assistants. Staff are required to provide a summary report of the main outcomes from research participation. A clear process for the application of funding is described in the academic missions' procedure document. The review team considers that the institutional support for staff research, which includes staff contribution to the KILAW annual international conference and the KILAW research journal is an aspect of **good practice**.

5.5 KILAW encourages faculty members to innovate and develop student learning outcomes through model lectures in an innovative manner, for example through narration technology, competitions, use of student play and through invited specialist guests. Two model lectures are allocated each semester to be presented by faculty members. Faculty members are required to complete an annual report of activities, such as teaching, conference and seminar participation, committee work and research and publication. Reports are considered by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs who provides a summary to the Dean. Departmental meetings are held to provide a space to exchange

teaching experience, understand legal material and improve understanding, dialogue, interaction, and innovation. Staff are supported through the provision of KILAW workshops which ensure they are up to date such as in research skills, methods of academic publishing, a model lesson, innovative teaching methods, technology as a teaching tool and preparation of a leader.

5.6 A systematic peer observation of teaching regime is operated by KILAW, both as a management tool to assure standards are maintained and as a developmental tool so that good practice is disseminated to others. To support the process an international expert visits KILAW to undertake class observations and deliver lectures on specific topics. In addition, members of the Associated Universities and Academic Advisory Board visit classes during the evaluation process. Internally visits are conducted by the Deanship Committee, Heads of Departments, course leaders and other colleagues who teach on a specific course. Each peer observation visit report includes both 'good practice' and recommendations. KILAW operates an annual development programme based upon report recommendations and best practice. Performance management of staff who do not meet expectations is undertaken and regularly reviewed by the Head of Department.

5.7 The Academic Development Office (ADO) was set up and established to assess, support and improve support for faculty staff. Through the ADO a range of continuous professional development support for faculty staff is provided. However, the support available appeared to the review team to be siloed and fragmented, without a central focus. Evidence included funding for participation at national and international conferences to enhance performance and skills, model lectures which encourage innovation in teaching and learning, encouragement to attend the KILAW international conference and to publish research in KILAW's academic periodic journal. Staff met by the review team were able to give individual examples of CPD undertaken but did report that staff locate development opportunities for themselves as there was no central support available. Senior staff were unable to confirm that a forward-focused training scheme that facilitated the development of faculty staff in learning, teaching and assessment was available. Considering the evidence presented, the review team felt that this area could be enhanced further through strategic planning for CPD which considers the individual and collective training needs of faculty staff, specifically for pedagogical enhancement. Therefore, the review team **recommends** that KILAW consult with staff to develop an institutional strategy and operational forward plan for the 'continuous professional development' of staff which brings together all the current methods of support into one overarching strategy.

5.8 The recruitment process manual outlines the selection process that results in the appointment of faculty staff who meet the requirements of the position. The employee handbook includes information relating to employee benefits, institutional processes, terms and employee privileges and expectations. Vacancies are reviewed by the Head of Department, approved by the School Council, and Academic Committee of the Board of Trustees. Vacancies are advertised on the KILAW website and via social media channels. Interested candidates submit a CV and letter of interest, initial reviews are undertaken by the HR department. Shortlisted candidates are managed by the Employment Committee and supported by the HR department. Following the interview process, the Employment Committee recommends an appointment that in turn is approved by the President in consultation with the Deanship Committee. Confirmation of employment is made by the HR department. Faculty members are expected to have at least four years' teaching experience at an accredited university; the requirements are published in the faculty members' regulations. KILAW believes in equal opportunities for all, and faculty members represent a diverse range of nationalities, religious beliefs, and political views. Senior staff confirmed in meetings with the review team that only high-quality staff are appointed, candidates from lower ranked institutions are excluded. KILAW has spent time developing internal candidates, for example by sending staff out globally to undertake their PhDs. From the

evidence available the review team was satisfied that KILAW follows clear and fair processes for staff recruitment and conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching and learning.

5.9 At the beginning of the academic year a comprehensive induction is undertaken, which includes meetings with the senior management (President/Associate Dean/Head of Department) to discuss the vision and strategic direction of the institution. This is followed by HR and IT department induction which provides an orientation to the facilities and the electronic systems available to staff. During the pandemic induction events were held remotely and online. All KILAW staff receive a timely induction to understand important information. An orientation policy handbook is currently being updated by the Academic Development Office. The handbook provides guidelines and establishes a baseline of expectations.

5.10 KILAW has in place an annual appraisal process which considers the continuing professional development needs of faculty members and to ensure alignment with the vision and mission of KILAW. Faculty members are encouraged to participate in national and international community services, and to participate in international academic activity. To encourage faculty member performance, KILAW is developing a set of rules for academic awards to be granted to distinguished faculty members. KILAW has also launched a sponsorship scheme to provide a second source of funding for any activity. The only requirement is to present a report summary of the main outcomes highlighting areas of interest for KILAW.

5.11 At the end of each academic year, faculty members are required to submit a summary of completed activities, including teaching hours, number of subjects taught, research papers, articles, books published, conferences attended, papers presented at conference, newly designed and developed curricula and participation in extracurricular activities. Senior staff met by the review team confirmed that procedures are in place for internal staff promotion, criteria are clear and overseen by the promotion committee.

5.12 Faculty member workload requirements are published in the KILAW Faculty Members Regulations and KILAW bylaws. All faculty members, including visiting professors, are expected to deliver a minimum of 32 hours per week, distributed between teaching, office hours, research, and admin work. Academic member regulations specify the teaching load required for all professors for the following semester or academic year. The appraisal process and academic promotion policy include clear criteria for promotion. All activities are monitored through the faculty member annual report. In addition, a periodic review process is undertaken at the end of each semester. Students complete an online evaluation survey for each professor on all courses. Outcomes are verified by the Dean, Vice Dean and Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, the Head of Department and the HR Manager.

5.13 A full review and evaluation is conducted for each academic faculty member based upon performance outcomes, which either lead to the renewal of the staff contract based upon key strengths in performance or may lead to areas of weakness to be addressed. Further training or development may be recommended for faculty members, examples include attending development programmes, attending conferences, or peer review and teaching observation. KILAW has in place a Committee of Promotions which receives and reviews the applications for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor and Professor according to the Promotion Policies.

5.14 Teaching assistants are a pivotal and embedded part of KILAW's commitment to learning, teaching and assessment, and has been considered a feature of strength by PUC, AAB, QAA, CEA and the Associate Universities. External examiners met by the review team also endorsed the quality of support provided by teaching assistants. Teaching assistants

are assigned to each course and work with the course leader to ensure that all materials are delivered. They support students by clarifying issues from taught sessions and help students to keep up with classes and assessments and may undertake some teaching duties approved by the Academic Affairs Committee and by direct supervisor of a specific professor. A handbook for teaching assistants to clarify their role was under development at the time of the review. Support is provided to teaching assistants in the form of LLM and PhD scholarships, support to attend academic conferences and participate in workshops inside and outside Kuwait. They can also participate in KILAW's annual conference and are eligible to publish in KILAW's Law Journal subject to meeting the standards and requirements of publication. The review team concludes that teaching assistants are an effective part of the teaching and learning fabric at KILAW.

5.15 Through the review of evidence and meeting with KILAW staff it was confirmed that teaching staff were using learning and teaching technologies to support student learning. Training and support had been undertaken due to the pandemic. From the tour of facilities teaching spaces were very well equipped demonstrating that computer-based teaching equipment was in regular use to support student learning. The review team can confirm that KILAW encourages the effective use of new technologies in teaching.

5.16 The review team confirms that KILAW offers opportunities for and promotes the professional development of teaching staff and teaching assistants and encourages scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research. The review team concluded that KILAW processes for staff recruitment, professional development and support, and staff performance review align with the requirements outlined in the Standard. Therefore, Standard 1.5 Teaching staff is **met**.

## Standard 1.6 Learning resources and student support

**Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.**

### Findings

6.1 Information and contact details for all student support services and resources are available to students in the student handbooks and on the website.

6.2 The Social Services office is responsible for supporting students with non-academic issues, as well as continued support for disabled students. Students described an awareness of which academic and non-academic staff to speak to when facing challenges. Specific support is available for students with additional support needs. These are identified and discussed during the admission process.

6.3 The Guidance and Orientation office monitors student performance and provides guidance in the form of administrative academic advice. Administrative academic advisors offer students support with registration, choice of electives, as well as accessing additional support if they receive a warning relating to low GPA. Additionally, students have access to an academic advisor, who is also a member of faculty. Each student is allocated an academic advisor and can find the name of their advisor on the MyKILAW portal. There was an inconsistent awareness by the students of both the academic and administrative advisor systems. Therefore, the team **recommends** that KILAW strengthens and consistently embeds the role of academic and administrative advisors, as well as focusing on how the service is communicated to students.

6.4 Library resources are extensive and comprehensive. Students have access to both Arabic and English books and journals in the physical library, as well as several subscriptions to e-journals and resources. Students and staff can request relevant books and journals as needed. The borrowing system for the library is covered in the LLB Student Handbook, as well as during the induction period for students. Students have access to computers and study spaces on campus, as well as a fully equipped courtroom. IT support is provided by the IT team. The contact details and preferred method of communication is detailed in the Student Handbook.

6.5 The teaching spaces on campus are appropriate. In the future, KILAW may want to consider how teaching spaces can be used to enable different modes of teaching. The School should consider drawing on international research on teaching pedagogy and use of space to promote interactive learning.

6.6 Teaching assistants provide additional support to students through supplementary sessions and focused workshops. They also assist in delivering taught sessions and support students in developing English language skills. Students, alumni and external examiners were all complimentary of the role and knowledge level of teaching assistants.

6.7 Students have the opportunity and are encouraged to take part in competitions, nationally, regionally, and internationally. All students can put themselves forward to compete and are supported financially and through coaching. Student achievements are celebrated through plaques on campus and through social media. The team identified the work of the Students Development and Competitions Department as an area of **good practice**, due to the high level of staff commitment, high quality of planning and clear dedication to students' success. Students, alumni and parents spoke very highly about the

impact of the competitions on students' future careers and the quality of the support students had received when competing.

6.8 The team concludes that the learning resources and support available to students align with Standard 1.6 and therefore the Standard is **met**.

## Standard 1.7 Information management

**Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.**

### Findings

7.1 KILAW collects and analyses information from multiple sources via a wide range of tools. The stated purpose is to support monitoring practices, to deal with results and to take appropriate decisions at the administrative and academic levels, especially in relation to student performance and progression. Therefore, information is generated from surveys, analysis reports, meetings, observations and other types of direct or indirect interactions with stakeholders. The information is considered at periodic intervals and at various levels of decision-making. The Planning Office is charged with preparing annual reports which go to the President to be considered and presented for discussion at the Deanship Committee and School Council. However, the review team noted that there is a missed opportunity by KILAW to become more proactive and timelier in its decision-making by using ongoing data and analyses as generated by its data management system.

7.2 KILAW has developed a data management system tailored to its needs, which can provide statistics in 'almost' real-time, that is it refreshes within 24 hours. Staff responsible with the maintenance and development of the dashboard performed an impressive demonstration which showed the various interfaces and the usability of the functions available to different stakeholder profiles, such as students, teachers, administrative staff and management. The review team appreciated the versatility of the system and its increased user-friendliness. Thus, the dashboard has the capacity to analyse and display numerous statistics which the review team found could effectively inform decision-making at all levels of the institution, including programme delivery, oversight management and institutional governance. This includes tracking student attendance, submission of assignments and exams, following performance trends, displaying mentoring interactions and combining results from course evaluations. The review team particularly appreciated the 'sentiment' analysis generated from course and teacher evaluations, which is firstly consolidated by AI and subsequently confirmed by a human opinion.

7.3 The information management system is appropriately secured for data protection and properly backed up to safeguard against loss of personal and institutional data and ensure continuity of the educational and administrative processes. Permissions and security credentials are distributed by role and monitored extensively to avoid any breach of access and improper usage of information held by KILAW systems.

7.4 The review team explored in various meetings the degree to which the dashboard was being used and sought to understand examples of oversight and management actions informed or triggered by ongoing dashboard data. While the dashboard has the capacity to generate warning alerts to students, teachers and administrators, which could determine action directed towards particular individuals, the review team found that academic advising was variable. As such, monitoring and improvements could not be linked directly with the advising system. The review team recognised the value of the example provided in the SED and reiterated in meetings about the way the student-staff ratio is calibrated by using the dashboard with admission either being intensified or paused depending on the ratio displayed. However, beyond this example, discussions further revealed that the dashboard was, in fact, insufficiently and inconsistently used to monitoring group performance and provide overarching views in relation to collective trends. The review team found this to pose a risk to both operational and managerial processes and **recommends** that KILAW should make ongoing use of institutional data and dashboard to enhance the timeliness of strategic

and operational decision-making, including for data relating to monitoring and progression of students.

7.5 Information at KILAW is distributed across multiple sources, including institution-wide signage, printed materials and electronic means such as social media and the website. The review team investigated the sign-off procedures to ensure accuracy of information via version control and found that responsibility rests initially with the Deans or the President and subsequently with the Marketing Department.

7.6 Overall, the review team found the Standard 1.7 to be **met** with KILAW taking careful steps to ensure that it collects, analyses and protects relevant information; however, it was noted that more could be achieved in respect of effective oversight if the dashboard were to be used more consistently and with all its functionality.

## Standard 1.8 Public information

**Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.**

### Findings

8.1 A comprehensive range of information is available on KILAW's website, and includes direct links to current student handbooks, admission regulations and instructions, as well as detailed information on all departments of the School. Links to the library catalogues and the e-resources provided by KILAW are also available on the website. The alumni section on the website includes basic information on the Employment and Training office but does not include contact information.

8.2 The handbooks contain all information on every aspect of the student lifecycle. Students described where to locate handbooks, programme guide and brochures, even if they were less familiar with the content. As the handbook format develops, KILAW may want to explore how it disseminates information among its students. After reviewing all documentation and the public-facing website, the team **recommends** that KILAW further develops and applies accessibility criteria to all internal and public information, particularly the format of the student handbooks and the website.

8.3 Students have access to the MyKILAW portal, both on computers, where it can be accessed via the website and as a mobile app. Students can view grades, absences, schedules and any warnings they may have on the portal.

8.4 Student achievements, particularly in competitions, are published on the website and also visible on campus, through plaques and boards.

8.5 The Public Relations and Marketing Department with support from other departments and staff are responsible for the provision of public information in line with KILAW's Public Information Policies. The Policy for Publishing and Advertising is set by the Publication Standards Committee. The department publishes and verifies all internal and external announcements and news, as well as publish the *Our KILAW* annual magazine. Academic information has final approval by the Dean of Faculty. While there is clear responsibility for the management of public information, the team **recommends** that KILAW develops a formal sign-off procedure to ensure the accuracy of public information and to enable it to maintain quality of public information, especially in tight turnaround.

8.6 The team concluded that the information available on the website, handbooks and portal is adequately clear, accurate, up-to date and easily accessible. The team therefore concludes that Standard 1.8 is **met**.

## Standard 1.9 Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes

**Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.**

### Findings

9.1 KILAW uses a system of periodic annual review, which is informed by course reports, survey outcomes, data generated via the dashboard, and discussions in the various committees. The Planning Office prepares these reports for the attention of the President who then presents them for discussion at the two decision-making bodies of KILAW: the Deanship Council and School Council. The report, referred to as an achievement report, is drafted against the four areas in the strategic plan, Progress and Development, Learning and Teaching, Student Engagement, and Academic Research and Studies. This report takes a quantitative/statistical approach, highlighting level of achievement in percentages, but does not include any follow-up actions or recommendations for future actions, and there is also no programme-level breakdown.

9.2 At the level of the programmes, KILAW indicates that periodic review responsibilities are primarily discharged through the Academic Advisory Board and the Associated Universities, with curricula being evaluated annually by the Academic Advisory Board, and assessed every two years by the Associate Universities. National and international experts in the field of law are also consulted independently for the purpose of proposing updates. Additionally, updates will occur as instigated via KILAW's academic departments and the curriculum committee as well as by the School's Council.

9.3 Students are asked to complete course evaluation surveys on a semester basis, and these are considered as part of the course evaluation report. Students whom the team met confirmed that beyond the tick-box questions, the surveys also include opportunity for open, qualitative statements to be recorded. The fact that surveys are anonymous is appreciated by students and they believe they are at full liberty to express their views. Teachers also confirmed that they thought the responses were genuine and relevant for future course planning. The dashboard offers the opportunity for survey data to be interrogated by teaching staff, administrative staff and senior management, alike.

9.4 The review team received a number of course reports and noted that they did not include full student data, including progression, attainment, and drop-out, although this information is readily available via the dashboard. Indeed, one recommendation in the course report proposes that student results are included to allow for an extensive evaluation of any support needs. The review team believes it is important to identify and support individual student needs and to monitor trends, identify any need for continuous professional development of staff and ensure a comprehensive perspective of course performance. Therefore, it is suggested that course reports should become more detailed and include full student data, including progression, attainment, and drop-out. The more generic recommendations formulated in the course reports would also benefit from an action-planning stage to ensure clear and targeted focus on the areas found to be in need of improvement.

9.5 Any changes proposed by teaching staff are required to be notified to the Curriculum Committee so that a record of programme changes can be kept. Minor changes to course

syllabi can be made by individual professors teaching those courses and KILAW encourages that teachers aim to bring their research into the classroom to familiarise students with trends in research and domain development.

9.6 Annual periodic review, although implemented consistently, lacks sufficient robustness, with KILAW seemingly relying more on external assessment processes (as outlined in 1.10) to generate development actions. The review team believes that more needs to be done to ensure integration between internal and external processes so that all these processes can be seen to serve strategic goals directly. In striving for quality assurance maturity, KILAW needs to secure its internal processes so these could eventually be stand-alone and fully functional in driving strategic directions. When this is achieved, external processes are likely to mirror or confirm internal findings, rather than present any unexpected findings for KILAW. This would then mean that internal systems have reached the capacity to be comprehensive and fully effective. Currently, the review team noted a level of reactivity, with what seemed to be a practice of KILAW waiting for recommendations to be articulated externally before action would be prepared, instead of a more proactive, future-thinking approach, which could challenge KILAW to anticipate and, accordingly, plan for the future.

9.7 For ongoing monitoring of programmes, the review team found that processes were largely conducted ad hoc with students, staff and employers providing feedback as and when they believed it could be relevant. KILAW presented no system to capture such feedback formally, outside of its committees, and to give it attention systemically and in a timely manner. The approach described was rather reactive, where such feedback could be considered, and action taken if it reached any of the formal periodic processes. KILAW indicated that there are regular meetings with students to understand concerns and escalate action, as necessary, to the relevant committees. However, the last such meeting is noted to have taken place on 3 November 2022, that is, four months prior to the review visit, and the example provided in the SED indicates that a meeting was called when students raised concerns in writing to the Dean, in respect of their programme.

9.8 Examples of student dissatisfaction, raised outside the course surveys, found little resonance and even less timeliness for resolution. KILAW clearly articulated to the review team why some areas could not be given the approaches desired by students and the review team appreciated that in the context of sustained growth more prescriptive, rather than flexible, planning was required. However, it believes that, whereas KILAW may have decided strategically to retain specific decisions, students had not been given the necessary clarity in communication to allow them to appreciate the position KILAW was taking. When probed, KILAW indicated that email was used to close a feedback loop and make students aware of decisions taken, even when these might be unpopular for students. The review team identifies two risks with this approach: ongoing feedback may not be captured in formal processes where attention could be duly given, and less personalised communication measures can easily generate further complaints and foster a negative student experience. The review team recognises that change management comes with multiple challenges, including the need to strengthen communication approaches. It is suggested that KILAW should develop and formalise processes for ongoing monitoring activities to ensure feedback can be actioned in a timely, relevant and systematic manner. It is suggested that KILAW should issue clear guidelines for communication with stakeholders, especially in support of change management and sustained growth.

9.9 KILAW indicated a strong intention for growth. The review team considers that growth needs to be coupled with fully functional and proactive quality assurance procedures which would give KILAW internal capacity for risk identification, management and mitigation. Currently, with ongoing monitoring remaining at low levels of formalisation and periodic

procedures drawing heavily on external perspectives rather than internal strengths, KILAW will be less effective in reaching its mission targets.

9.10 Under the ESG, it is essential that stakeholders are invited to contribute to processes which can generate development at programme level. This is to maintain currency of the programme objectives and to ensure alignment with the needs of students and society. KILAW indicates that it collaborates with students, staff, alumni and employers, as well as regulators, to ensure its programmes remain current and in full alignment with the labour market.

9.11 Students are part of the main committees under the KILAW representation system. There is also a strong Student Union which gave examples of unified positions taken in response to management changes. However, as noted above, the cycle for engagement is not fully functional, with students left disappointed on proposals made because of insufficiently detailed communication and no clear feedback-loop closure.

9.12 KILAW describes its alumni engagement as being in incipient phases, with the alumni office making efforts to collect accurate contact data to ensure communication can reach alumni. The graduates whom the review team met confirmed a willingness to return to KILAW, if invited, to do lectures, workshops or give feedback on the programmes, but this had not happened yet. KILAW indicated that there is a graduate survey which is applied and gave an example of an answer in respect of English language courses. Graduate destinations were also presented in the SED; however, these seemed to have been collected via direct contact with alumni through phone calls, rather than the aforementioned survey.

9.13 For employers, KILAW reports having organised an engagement round in April 2022, when it sent a letter to various institutions, companies and employers asking them to suggest important subjects and courses to be included in KILAW's curricula. KILAW also intended to organise a panel to discuss the outcomes, as analysed by the Curriculum Committee. Whereas employers whom the review team met spoke positively of engagement with KILAW, it was apparent that engagement was limited to an individualised level and regular collective engagements could prove more beneficial to allow for institutionalisation of engagements. It is suggested that KILAW should clearly define, formalise and further develop the involvement of stakeholders in ongoing monitoring and programme review activities to ensure it can internally generate relevant amendments or updates.

9.14 The review team sets the **condition** that KILAW should give urgent attention to reducing its over-reliance on external review processes, to integrate outcomes from external and internal review processes, to strengthen the detail of its periodic review, to formalise ongoing monitoring procedures and to further develop the involvement with external stakeholders. As suggested above, KILAW should:

- ensure course reports become more detailed and include full student data, including progression, attainment, and drop-out
- develop and formalise processes for ongoing monitoring activities to ensure feedback can be actioned in a timely, relevant and systematic manner
- issue clear guidelines for communication with stakeholders, especially in support of change management and sustained growth
- clearly define, formalise and further develop the involvement of stakeholders in ongoing monitoring and programme review activities to ensure it can internally generate relevant amendments or updates.

9.15 KILAW should address the condition set and provide evidence of its implementation **within 12 months**. Overall, the review team found standard 1.9 to be **met subject to meeting the conditions**.

9.16 KILAW submitted further evidence in October 2023 which was scrutinised by the review team to determine whether the four elements of the condition had been met. The team's findings are as follows:

**1 The review team recommends that course reports should become more detailed and include full student data, including progression, attainment, and drop-out. The more generic recommendations formulated in the course reports would also benefit from an action-planning stage to ensure clear and targeted focus on the areas found to be in need of improvement. The further submission demonstrates that:**

- students' data, progression, performance metrics and associated action plans have been included in the programme and course leaders' reports.

**2 The review team recommends that KILAW should develop and formalise processes for ongoing monitoring activities to ensure feedback can be actioned in a timely, relevant and systematic manner. The further submission demonstrates that:**

- a new Governance and Compliance Committee has been established to oversee ongoing monitoring and review processes and the outcomes according to defined and formalised tasks and schedules. This committee meets every other week to review and report on the adherence to quality assurance standards. It submits a quarterly report unless otherwise required
- Quality Assurance Handbook and Quality Assurance Calendar have been reviewed and updated to formalise processes for ongoing monitoring activities to ensure timely responses are instigated
- feedback systems via surveys and reports from key entities and committees have been established which leads to action plans and action owners driving prompt improvement.

**3 The review team recommends that KILAW should issue clear guidelines for communication with stakeholders, especially in support of change management and sustained growth. The further submission demonstrates that:**

- Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Assurance Handbook have been reviewed and updated to include information of stakeholders' engagement
- Communication Guidance has been developed which introduces various channels for communicating with stakeholders
- when to communicate with various stakeholders for QA are included in the Quality Assurance Calendar.

**4 The review team recommends that KILAW should clearly define, formalise, and further develop the involvement of stakeholders in ongoing monitoring and programme review activities to ensure it can internally generate relevant amendments or updates. The further submission demonstrates that:**

- different stakeholders, including students, staff, alumni, parents, employers, community leaders, will be engaged in the QA procedures as shown in the QA Calendar
- various activities, including attending entities and committees, group work, surveys, have been planned to improve the involvement of stakeholders in ongoing monitoring and programme review activities.

9.17 The review team considered the further submission and can confirm that KILAW has developed clear policies and procedures to develop more detailed course reports, develop and formalise processes for acting upon feedback in a timely, relevant and systematic manner, issue clear guidelines for communication with stakeholders, and define, formalise, and further develop the stakeholder involvement in ongoing monitoring and programme review activities.

9.18 Considering more time will be needed before the effectiveness of implementing the updated ongoing monitoring and programme review procedures can be fully evaluated, the review team has concluded the condition has been addressed and that Standard 1.9 is **met**. The review team **recommends** that there will be further work necessary to ensure the updated ongoing monitoring and programme review procedures are fully and effectively implemented, meaning that further work should be done to:

- ensure feedback from various stakeholders can be considered and acted upon in a timely, relevant and systematic manner
- ensure internal and external stakeholders are clearly communicated and actively engaged in ongoing monitoring and programme review activities which leads to relevant amendments or updates for continuous improvement.

## Standard 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

**Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.**

### Findings

10.1 According to internal legislation, KILAW undergoes compulsory external scrutiny by the Private Universities Council (PUC). As such, it responds to quality criteria set nationally. The next accreditation process is scheduled for May 2023, with KILAW having been awarded a four-year academic and institutional accreditation in 2019. KILAW presented a report which details the School's response and developments in respect of the PUC recommendations. The review team found that this was not presented as a forward-looking action plan which proposed actions for the future on a given timescale. It was rather composed as a retrospective report of what had been achieved in response to the recommendations PUC had made.

10.2 As part of PUC requirements, KILAW is expected to have a system of Associate Universities (AU) with which an MoU needs to be in place. Representatives of AU conduct institutional-level assessments on a two-yearly basis and submit a report to the KILAW senior team.

10.3 Under the same obligations, KILAW has established an Academic Advisory Board (AAB) which also undertakes review activity, especially at curricular and strategic levels.

10.4 The AU and AAB provide an external view on the policies and procedures applied by KILAW and have made recommendations which have reportedly helped KILAW progress its development agenda. The most recent visit of AU representatives and the AAB was conducted simultaneously, as they carried out a joint review of KILAW in November 2021. KILAW responded to the report with an action plan. The last update on September 2022 shows the majority of actions completed.

10.5 KILAW instituted in 2012 a system of external examiners with regular reporting to KILAW administration. Some of the main areas which have been in focus for the external examiners are examination security and examination organisation and logistics, which are reported to have made substantial progress. The areas of priority for the future relate to assessment-setting and marking, with recommendation from EEs to move away from simple-type, memorisation questions (like multiple choice or true-and-false) towards more complex problem-solving and critical-thinking-based requirements. A shift in this direction is slowly visible with some modules more eager than others to adopt such approaches to assessments. As was recognised by the EEs, this is a crucial move towards ensuring that students achieve at the right level of education, according to descriptors present in national qualifications' frameworks internationally, but also the European qualifications' framework which the FHEQ aligns. The reports presented by the EEs are detailed and touch on a variety of important areas. It is noted that the EE committee has repeatedly asked for a formal response to recommendations made, and one which can generate the necessary impetus at institutional level to drive resolution. The review team agrees that concrete action lines which can be institutionally monitored would stand a stronger chance of consistent implementation.

10.6 KILAW also engages on a voluntary basis with the Quality Assurance Agency for higher Education in the United Kingdom (QAA) for review against the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). QAA's International Quality Review method, which this report is an outcome of, carefully analyses all 10 standards applied for the European Higher Education Area and aims to understand applicability for a variety of international contexts, beyond

Europe. To prepare for IQR, KILAW compiled a self-evaluation document which presents KILAW's approach to the 10 standards in the ESG. This is meant as an evaluative exercise, employing institutional self-criticism for the purposes of demonstrating a robust quality assurance system.

10.7 Under its commitment to IQR, KILAW is now undergoing a second round of external review by QAA with a first review having been commissioned in 2017. In-between initial accreditation and reaccreditation, QAA undertook a mid-cycle review which focused on progress made against the recommendations set. KILAW successfully completed the mid-cycle review in 2021.

10.8 The action plan published in response to the QAA report uses the QAA recommended template, hence focuses both on the maintenance of good practice and the development of areas in need of attention. It is important to note that under international guidelines and in the spirit of the ESGs, quality assurance and quality enhancement procedures need to equally focus on what is recorded as positive and what is recorded as needing improvements; both are recognised to require future investment to be maintained and/or developed. The review team notes that the only KILAW action plan which incorporates good practice is the QAA action plan and that good practice dissemination and monitoring is not a constant feature of KILAW action-planning.

10.9 KILAW also commissioned tailor-made accreditation processes for programme-level review by QAA. As such, four programmes were granted accreditation until 2023.

10.10 For its pre-LLB English-language provision, KILAW has obtained a four-year accreditation by Commission on English Language Programme Accreditation (CEA) following a one-year probationary period in which conditions had been set for the granting of full accreditation. KILAW was successful in meeting the conditions and holds accreditation status until 2024.

10.11 While the degree of externality was deemed to be sufficient, the review team sought to understand where the oversight lies in respect of the consolidation of action plans, and who would integrate action lines and determine their validity across institutional areas to ensure that a recommendation generated under one external process had the potential to impact the institution more broadly and across all areas in need of improvement. The review team was presented with action plans from each individual engagement, but no integration was visible.

10.12 The Planning Office has indicated that it uses the reports received from various external exercises and integrates elements from these in the Annual Report. However the review team considers this to be a reactive approach to externality and one which loses the potential for forward-planning and integration of actions for increased efficiency. Responding to individual recommendations and generating action plans in isolation only goes some way towards development in the institution and it lessens the possibility of viewing various actions with a potentially strategic lens allowing them to become direct contributors to developments which are strategically driven and align with the mission and vision of the institution. The review team **recommends** that KILAW strengthens its action-planning approaches to include forward-thinking projections, build in the maintenance of good practice, integrate action plans generated from various review activities and correlate these with strategic plans and internal quality assurance procedures.

10.13 There is sufficient external scrutiny to allow KILAW to progress by benefiting from different international perspectives. It was also noted that KILAW demonstrates a cyclical approach by aiming to renew its accreditation status with the various agencies it has commissioned voluntarily, not least the national system promotes a cyclical approach and requires KILAW to strictly subject itself to national requirements. The review team believes

there is more that can be done in respect of action-planning and strategic integration of actions derived from external recommendations. Overall, the review team found the Standard 1.10 to be **met**.

## Glossary

### Action plan

A plan developed by the institution after the QAA review report has been published, which is signed off by the head of the institution. It responds to the recommendations in the report and gives any plans to capitalise on the identified good practice.

### Annual monitoring

Checking a process or activity every year to see whether it meets expectations for standards and quality. Annual reports normally include information about student achievements and may comment on the evaluation of courses and modules.

### Collaborative arrangement

A formal arrangement between a degree-awarding body and another higher education provider. These may be degree-awarding bodies with which the institution collaborates to deliver higher education qualifications on behalf of the degree-awarding bodies. Alternatively, they may be other delivery organisations who deliver part or all of a proportion of the institution's higher education programmes.

### Condition

Conditions set out action that is required. Conditions are only used with unsatisfactory judgements where the quality cannot be approved. Conditions may be used where quality or standards are at risk/continuing risk if action is not taken or if a required standard is not met and action is needed for it to be met.

### Degree-awarding body

Institutions that have authority, for example from a national agency, to issue their own awards. Institutions applying to IQR may be degree-awarding bodies themselves, or may collaborate to deliver higher education qualifications on behalf of degree-awarding bodies.

### Desk-based analysis

An analysis by the review team of evidence, submitted by the institution, that enables the review team to identify its initial findings and subsequently supports the review team as it develops its review findings.

### Enhancement

See **quality enhancement**.

### European Standards and Guidelines

For details, including the full text on each standard, see [www.engq.eu/index.php/home/esg](http://www.engq.eu/index.php/home/esg).

### Examples of practice

A list of policies and practices that a review team may use when considering the extent to which an institution meets the standards for review. The examples should be considered as a guide only, in acknowledgment that not all of them will be appropriate for all institutions.

### Externality

The use of experts from outside a higher education provider, such as external examiners or external advisers, to assist in quality assurance procedures.

### Facilitator

The member of staff identified by the institution to act as the principal point of contact for the QAA officer and who will be available during the review visit, to assist with any questions or requests for additional documentation.

**Good practice**

A feature of good practice is a process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to the institution's higher education provision.

**Lead student representative**

An optional voluntary role that is designed to allow students at the institution applying for IQR to play a central part in the organisation of the review.

**Oversight**

Objective scrutiny, monitoring and quality assurance of educational provision.

**Peer reviewers**

Members of the review team who make the decisions in relation to the review of the institution. Peer reviewers have experience of managing quality and academic standards in higher education or have recent experience of being a student in higher education.

**Periodic review**

An internal review of one or more programmes of study, undertaken by institutions periodically (typically once every five years), using nationally agreed reference points, to confirm that the programmes are of an appropriate academic standard and quality. The process typically involves experts from other higher education providers. It covers areas such as the continuing relevance of the programme, the currency of the curriculum and reference materials, the employability of graduates and the overall performance of students. Periodic review is one of the main processes whereby institutions can continue to assure themselves about the academic quality and standards of their awards.

**Programme of study**

An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification. UK higher education programmes must be approved and validated by UK degree-awarding bodies.

**Quality enhancement**

The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported.

**QAA officer**

The person appointed by QAA to manage the review programme and to act as the liaison between the review team and the institution.

**Quality assurance**

The systematic monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching, and the processes that support them, to make sure that the standards of academic awards meet the necessary standards, and that the quality of the student learning experience is being safeguarded and improved.

**Recognition of prior learning**

Assessing previous learning that has occurred in any of a range of contexts including school, college and university, and/or through life and work experiences.

**Recommendation**

Review teams make recommendations where they agree that an institution should consider developing or changing a process or a procedure in order to improve the institution's higher education provision.

**Reference points**

Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

**Self-evaluation document**

A self-evaluation report by an institution. The submission should include information about the institution as well as an assessment of the effectiveness of its quality systems.

**Student submission**

A document representing student views that describes what it is like to be a student at the institution, and how students' views are considered in the institution's decision-making and quality assurance processes.

**Validation**

The process by which an institution ensures that its academic programmes meet expected academic standards and that students will be provided with appropriate learning opportunities. It may also be applied to circumstances where a degree-awarding institution gives approval for its awards to be offered by a partner institution or organisation.

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