



Oman Academic  
Accreditation Authority

**Report of an Audit of  
Ibri College of Technology**

**May 2014**

Audit Report Number 39

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## OVERVIEW OF THE QUALITY AUDIT PROCESS

This Quality Audit Report (the 'Report') documents the findings of a Quality Audit by the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA – formerly the Oman Accreditation Council) of Ibri College of Technology (CoT). It comments on Ibri CoT's Mission and Vision, and the appropriateness and effectiveness of its systems for achieving that Mission and Vision. Quality Audit is the first stage in Oman's institutional accreditation process. It is designed to provide a level of assurance to the public about the quality of Ibri CoT's activities, and constructive feedback to Ibri CoT to assist with its ongoing improvement efforts.

The Quality Audit commenced with Ibri CoT undertaking a self study of its Mission, Vision and systems. The results were summarized in its *Quality Audit Portfolio* (the 'Portfolio'). This document was submitted to the OAAA by the due date of 9 March 2013.

The OAAA appointed an external Audit Panel (the 'Panel'), comprising suitably qualified and experienced local and international reviewers, to conduct the quality audit. For membership of the Panel see Appendix A. The Panel met (international members by telephone) on 15 April 2013 to consider Ibri CoT's Portfolio. Following this, the Audit Panel Chairperson's representative and the Executive Officer undertook a planning visit on behalf of the Panel to Ibri CoT on 4 May 2013 to clarify certain matters, request additional information and make arrangements for the Panel's audit visit.

Prior to the audit visit, the Panel invited submissions from the public about the quality of Ibri CoT's activities. No submission was received.

The audit visit took place over four days from 9 to 12 June 2013. During this time, the Panel spoke with 115 people, including representatives of the governing authorities, staff, students and external stakeholders. It also visited a selection of venues and reviewed a range of additional materials.

No information provided after 12 June 2013 (being the last day of the audit visit) was taken into consideration for the purposes of this audit, other than the additional material requested by the Audit Panel during the visit specifically requested by the Panel in advance.

The Report contains a summary of the Panel's findings, together with formal commendations where good practices have been confirmed, affirmations where Ibri CoT's ongoing quality improvement efforts merit support, and recommendations where there are significant opportunities for improvement not yet being adequately addressed. The Report provides a balanced set of observations, but does not comment on every system in place at Ibri CoT.

The Panel's audit activities and preparation of this Report were governed by regulations set by the OAAA Board. This Report was approved for release by the OAAA Board on 14 May 2014.

The OAAA was established by Royal Decree No. 54/2010 to replace the Oman Accreditation Council. Its responsibilities include conducting quality audits of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Sultanate of Oman. For further information, visit the OAAA website (<http://www.oaaa.gov.om>). Full details of the quality audit process are available in OAAA's *HEI Quality Audit Manual* (available from [http://www.oaaa.gov.om/Institution.aspx#Inst\\_Quality](http://www.oaaa.gov.om/Institution.aspx#Inst_Quality)).

## HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

Each OAAA Audit Report is written primarily for the institution being audited. The Report is specifically designed to provide feedback to help that institution better understand its own strengths and opportunities for improvement. The feedback is structured according to nine broad areas of activity and presented as formal Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations, or as informal suggestions, each accompanied with explanatory paragraphs. It is expected that the institution will act upon this feedback as part of its continuous efforts to provide the best possible education to students.

The Report is made public because it also may be of interest to students and potential students, their families, employers, Government, other higher education institutions in Oman and abroad, and other audiences. Students, in particular, may find this Report interesting because it provides some independent comment on the learning environment at this institution (particularly Chapters 2, 6 and 7). However, prospective students should still undertake their own investigations when deciding which higher education institution will best serve their particular learning needs.

Quality Audit is the first stage in Oman's two-stage process for institutional accreditation. Its focus is formative (developmental) rather than summative. In other words, although the audit addresses nine areas of activity which are common to all institutions, it does not measure the institution against externally set standards of performance in those nine areas. Instead, it considers how well the institution is attending to those areas in accordance with its own Mission and Vision and in the context of relevant legal regulations. Therefore, Quality Audit recognises that each institution has a unique purpose and profile; it does not directly compare one institution with all the other institutions in Oman.

For these reasons, a Quality Audit does not result in a pass or fail; nor does it provide any sort of grade or score. It should also be noted that the precise number of Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations that an institution receives in its Audit Report is not as important as the substance of those conclusions. For example, some Recommendations may focus on critical issues such as assessment of student learning, whereas others may focus on issues such as the maintenance of teaching equipment in classrooms which, while important, is clearly less critical. Therefore, it is neither significant nor appropriate to compare the Audit Reports of different HEIs solely on the numbers of Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations.

The second stage in the institutional accreditation process is Standards Assessment. This stage, which will take place about four years after the Quality Audit, does provide a summative assessment against external standards in the same nine areas of activity. It should be noted that Oman also operates a system of accreditation/recognition for academic programmes, separately from the institutional accreditation process. For more information on Oman's System of Quality Assurance in Higher Education please visit [www.oaaa.gov.om](http://www.oaaa.gov.om).

This Report contains a number of references to source evidence considered by the Audit Panel. These references are for the HEI's benefit in further addressing the issues raised. In most cases this evidence is not in the public domain.

## CONCLUSIONS

This section summarizes the main findings and lists the Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations. They are listed in the order in which they appear in the Report, and are not prioritized. It should be noted that other favorable comments and suggestions for improvement are mentioned throughout the text of the Report.

### *Executive Summary of Findings*

Ibri College of Technology (Ibri CoT) was established in 2007. The College is a public institution that offers Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas in Engineering, Information Technology and Business Studies. It is one of seven Colleges of Technology (CoTs) governed and financed centrally by the Ministry of Manpower (MoM). All seven CoTs in the Sultanate of Oman are operating under the MoM, organizationally overseen by the Undersecretary for Technological Education and Vocational Training and the Director General of Technical Education (DGTE). A Board of Trustees (BoT), chaired by the Minister of Manpower, guides and advises on the strategic direction of all seven CoTs. A Technical Committee (TC) is responsible for strategy implementation across all CoTs with the DGTE being executively responsible for implementation of BoT decisions in each College.

The Panel noted the significant contributions of the hard working and committed College Council (CC) and the satisfaction expressed by staff with the management of Ibri College, which was also found in College surveys. It also noted the work of the very active Quality Assurance Follow-up Committee (QAFC) in preparations for the audit including its contribution to the development of the Portfolio.

The Panel was pleased to see the extensive adoption of ADRI in the development of the Portfolio, but noted that the improvement sections were a little too generic or too broad. There are a number of areas where the need for improvement is identified, but little indication of what actions might be required. Indeed, many planned improvements involved the conduct of another survey rather than concrete actions directed to solving identified issues. As well as making meaningful improvements, the College will also need the means to monitor and measure whether these planned improvement actions have been effective.

Overall, the Panel felt that there was a greater need for embedding of strong systems to support the completion of the ADRI cycle in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. In order to complete the ADRI cycle, results need to be measured by relevant performance indicators, to allow areas for improvement to be clearly identified. The Panel found that many of the performance indicators used were not clearly directed to measuring outcomes, and being limited in focus on measures of satisfaction. In general the Panel found that while there was a range of suitable policies and procedures, there was evidence of a lack of complete understanding and consistent implementation of these in some areas including student grievances and plagiarism. It is important that there are appropriate and well documented systems in place to ensure implementation of and institutional compliance with policies.

In terms of student learning by coursework, the Panel was pleased to note the sound systems in place to support On-the-Job Training (OJT) and the high level of satisfaction recorded by students, alumni, staff and employers. It was noted that a set of graduate attributes have been developed but the Panel found that the awareness of these attributes needs to be raised within the College. The Panel was also interested in the sophisticated Pedagogical Framework presented by the College, but found that there was little awareness of the existence of this Framework and no evidence that it had been embedded into the teaching practices. In addition, while e-learning was featured in the Portfolio, the Panel concluded that the application of teaching technologies to pedagogy would be better supported by an e-learning strategy as a component of a comprehensive teaching and learning plan.

The Panel also noted that a more detailed analysis of the performance of students admitted with low entry scores would contribute to understanding the factors that lead to students being at risk. It also found that there needs to be a more systematic approach to curriculum review. Further, the College would benefit from benchmarking of assessment items and responses with similar Colleges. With regard to staff research and consultancy, the efforts of the College to support research amongst staff are noted while the Panel was of the view that this would be enhanced by the development of an overarching research and consultancy plan.

The Panel was pleased to note the upgrade of the physical facilities for the Engineering Program. In terms of other academic support services, the Panel noted that the Library was well resourced with staff, but there is more work required on developing other aspects of service. This includes the cataloguing system, book collection, access to journals and facilitating access to the MoM e-library. There is a need for a comprehensive plan to develop the academic support services. The Panel noted the progress towards addressing the identified need for medical services on campus and that the College is working to address the issues raised by students about the cafeteria. The Panel supports the College’s effort to inform students of the steps taken to address their concerns in order to close the feedback loop.

The Panel sees the need for a Human Resources (HR) plan incorporating recruitment, development, management, rewards and incentives, and Omanization. It noted the issue of high faculty turnover and suggests that Ibri CoT investigates the causes and work to address the issues that arise. The Panel also noted the variation in conditions of employment between MoM-employed academic staff and agency-employed academic staff. The Panel concluded that Ibri CoT, in conjunction with MoM, needs to develop a consistent promotion policy and a review of salary scales to ensure fairness.

With regard to general support services, the Panel noted the progress made on improving car parking facilities and achievements in relation to internet speed. In order to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan, the Panel suggests that a Facilities Development Plan be put in place to ensure an orderly development of future infrastructure that meets the needs of the growing College.

**Summary of Commendations**

A formal Commendation recognizes an instance of particularly good practice.

1. The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority commends Ibri College of Technology for its review and evaluation of progress against the Strategic Plan through the Strategic Plan Achievement Report which provides support for its successful implementation. ....12
2. The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority commends Ibri College of Technology for its achievements in relation to On The Job Training. ....22
3. The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority commends Ibri College of Technology for the development of its new Engineering teaching facilities to support the student learning experience in this area. ....35

**Summary of Affirmations**

A formal Affirmation recognizes an instance in which Ibri CoT has accurately identified a significant opportunity for improvement and has demonstrated appropriate commitment to addressing the matter.

1. The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees that Ibri College of Technology needs to extend e-management to other College activities to improve the efficiency of management and supports its efforts in this regard. ....12



2.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology's efforts in developing a risk management system and supports its continuing work in addressing identified risks.....	15
3.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees that Ibri College of Technology needs to strengthen its approach to monitoring plagiarism and supports its plans to implement anti-plagiarism software.....	21
4.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology's intention to conduct more student job fairs, seminars and industrial visits to support student employment outcomes. ....	24
5.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology that it needs to improve its engagement with alumni and supports its efforts in this area. ....	29
6.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology that it needs to improve its feedback and communication to students regarding actions taken in response to their concerns, and supports its efforts in this area. ....	37
7.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology that it needs to address the issues facing the provision of catering services, and supports its intention to improve the catering system to meet student expectations. ....	38
8.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology that it needs to provide an on-campus medical facility and supports its efforts to make improvements in medical provision with assistance from the Ministry of Manpower. ....	39
9.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority supports the efforts of Ibri College of Technology to improve selection of staff by involving the Dean and department heads with the recruitment of all staff whether through the Ministry of Manpower or external agencies in order to ensure that appropriate staff are recruited to meet the needs of the College. ....	41
10.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology for the need to improve its communication services and monitor satisfaction level of its stakeholders.....	46
11.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology that additional parking facility is needed for the students and supports the Colleges interim initiative of providing a temporary parking space. ....	46

### ***Summary of Recommendations***

A Recommendation draws attention to a significant opportunity for improvement that Ibri CoT has either not yet accurately identified or to which it is not yet adequately attending.

1.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology, in collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower, consider the ways in which the Board of Trustees might be enabled to more effectively fulfill its duties and provide appropriate support to the executive role of the Dean.....	11
2.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology review its Key Performance Indicators to be more focused on outcomes and ensure that these enable a suitable and accurate assessment of progress against goals and sub-goals.....	13
3.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology review its planning framework to include more detailed plans for core activities that are	

	conducted across organizational units in order to ensure the fulfillment of the College goals and sub- goals.....	14
4.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology, in coordination with the Ministry of Manpower, align its budget allocations with the Strategic Plan in order to appropriately support the achievement of its goals and sub-goals. ....	14
5.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that, in line with the Ministerial Decree 3/2013, Ibri College of Technology allocate a specific budget for student activities, staff development, research and consultancy. ....	15
6.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology review the development and oversight of quality assurance management systems, in particular the role of the Quality Assurance Follow-up Committee both in its liaison with departments and its effectiveness in supporting the college-wide implementation and monitoring of the Strategic Plan goals and sub-goals. ....	16
7.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology undertake a college-wide systematic program of raising awareness, understanding and application of graduate attributes and that the College evaluate the appropriateness of the graduate attributes. ....	18
8.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology implement a systematic approach to curricula review on a regular basis to ensure their currency and relevance.....	19
9.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology conduct a detailed analysis of the performance of students admitted on low entry scores to identify factors that lead to students being at risk of dismissal.....	19
10.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology develop a teaching and learning plan which includes an e-learning strategy as a component, in line with its commitment to implement e-learning as stated in Strategic Plan sub-goal 2.3.....	21
11.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology implement its Plagiarism Policy consistently and that plagiarism cases are monitored and documented. ....	21
12.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology review its approach to assessment and moderation in line with its Assessment Strategy and undertake benchmarking of its assessment with other Colleges of Technology. ....	23
13.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology develop and implement a College-wide research and consultancy plan in line with its Vision.....	26
14.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology develop relationships with appropriate professions in order to support student learning opportunities and relevance of its programs.....	28
15.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology develops and implements a plan to increase its activities and interaction with different bodies in the local community. ....	29
16.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology urgently review the operation of its library service with focus on identifying priorities for collection development, the implementation of the online catalogue and provision of services that effectively support the student learning experience. ....	32

17.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology devise a medium and long term learning technology replacement and update strategy to meet future students' learning needs. ....	32
18.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology review its academic advising system to ensure uniformity and consistency of policy implementation across departments to support and enhance the student experience.....	33
19.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology develop a college wide plan for student learning support with student input and ensure that its activities in this area support learners 'at risk'. ....	34
20.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology conduct an in-depth investigation of the wide discrepancy of satisfaction between the staff and students over the adequacy of learning resources. ....	35
21.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology enhance its provision of social and recreational services as well as facilities to meet student expectations.....	39
22.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology, in collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower, revise its Human Resources Management Policy and procedures and develop and implement a plan for this area incorporating recruitment, professional development, management, rewards and incentives for good practice as well as Omanization. ....	40
23.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology develop a robust staff appraisal system and link it to staff development as a component of an overarching strategy.....	42
24.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology, in collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower, develop a promotion system for academic ranking and implement this in a transparent and consistent manner.....	42
25.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College Technology, in collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower, explore the causes of high staff turnover; review salary scales; and ensure transparency and fairness regardless of channel of recruitment. ....	43
26.	The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology develop and implement a strategic and systematic approach to facilities management.....	45

## 1 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Ibri College of Technology (Ibri CoT) was established in 2007 and is the newest of seven Colleges of Technology (CoTs) that operate under the supervision of the Ministry of Manpower (MoM). It is subject to the same regulations and Bylaws as the other CoTs. The College is governed by a Board of Trustees (BoT) which is chaired by the Minister of Manpower and a Technical Committee (TC) that is chaired by the Director General of Technical Education (DGTE). Management of the College is lead by the Dean assisted by Assistant Deans for Academic Affairs (ADAA), Student Affairs (ADSA) and Administrative and Financial Affairs (ADAF). The highest management committee is the College Council (CC) that is chaired by the Dean. There are also several college wide and departmental committees which have specific responsibilities.

This Chapter reports on the Audit Panel's findings in relation to the following: Mission, Vision, and Values; governance; management; strategic plan; operational planning; financial management; risk management; entity and activity review systems; student grievance process; and health and safety.

### 1.1 *Mission, Vision and Values*

The Vision, Mission and Values (VMV) are collectively developed for all CoTs in Oman:

#### *Vision*

*Ibri CoT intends to become the "College of Choice" for students and industry, by providing a demonstrably high quality of teaching, learning and research that makes a significant contribution to the ongoing national economic development.*

#### *Mission*

*The Mission of Ibri CoT is to achieve and sustain a strong reputation for excellence in teaching and learning. The College is dedicated to the delivery of high quality technical education and aims to produce graduates who have the professional and personal skills to enter employment with confidence, contributing effectively to the Sultanate's ongoing economic development.*

#### *Values*

*Professionalism*

*Integrity*

*Accountability*

*Flexibility*

*Creativity*

*Tolerance & Teamwork*

*Communication (Portfolio, pp.1-2)*

The College plans to increase staff and student awareness and sense of ownership of the Vision, Mission and Values by conducting more workshops and presentations. The Panel endorses the efforts of Ibri CoT to ensure wide understanding of the VMV.

### 1.2 *Governance*

The terms of reference and membership of the BoT are included in the Bylaws as are the duties of the various managers. Ibri CoT is governed by the BoT chaired by the Minister of Manpower. The membership includes the Undersecretary for Technological Education and Vocational Training; the Director General of Technological Education (DGTE), two Deans from other CoTs

and members of various public and private institutions. As the Deputy Chairman of the Board, the Undersecretary supervises the progress of Ibri CoT. The DGTE is responsible for the smooth running of the College and supervises the implementation of the College Bylaws and the decisions of the BoT. The role of the Technical Committee (TC) is to ensure the implementation of strategy and directives from the BoT and is chaired by the DGTE with all Deans as members. It makes recommendations to the BoT and ensures the implementation of decisions made by the BoT.

The Bylaws stipulate that the BoT should meet four times per year and its duties include responsibility for setting up policies and strategies of the Colleges and following up on their implementation. In particular, the BoT has responsibilities for endorsing College internal policies on admissions, as well as those on technical, administrative and financial matters. In addition, the BoT receives periodic reports on College activities and makes decisions based on these. The BoT also has responsibility for endorsing the appointment policy for Deans, their assistants and members of academic and support staff. The Panel was informed that the BoT had only met once in the year leading up to the audit visit and many of its functions and responsibilities are managed on a day to day basis by the DGTE and the Undersecretary for Technological Education and Vocational Training in her role as the Deputy Chairman of BoT. The Panel urges the College, in conjunction with the Ministry of Manpower, to explore the reasons for the infrequent meetings and ensure the BoT meets frequently enough in order to meet its mandate.

### **Recommendation 1**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology, in collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower, consider the ways in which the Board of Trustees might be enabled to more effectively fulfill its duties and provide appropriate support to the executive role of the Dean.**

### **1.3 Management**

The College is managed by the Dean, CC, Assistant Deans, and Heads of Units in compliance with the Bylaws. The Dean has overall responsibility for managing academic, administrative and financial affairs of the College. The Educational Technology Centre (ETC) and English Language Centre (ELC) are directly supervised by the Dean. Other functional areas like academic affairs, student affairs, administration and financial affairs are managed by the respective Assistant Deans (Portfolio, p.5). The College Council (CC) is the highest decision making body within the College. It is chaired by the Dean. Decisions made by the CC are communicated to the TC via the Dean and forwarded to the BoT for appropriate consideration. Ibri CoT uses the number of meetings as a performance indicator for the CC, and has suggested a need to conduct more CC meetings to discuss and address various issues and improvement measures (Portfolio, p.5). Using the number of meetings held as a performance indicator may not be a helpful measure of the effectiveness of a committee. Hence the proposed improvement of holding more CC meetings (Portfolio, p.5) may be unnecessary, if the CC is able to discharge its duties against its Terms of Reference in nine meetings a year. The College is encouraged to consider alternative performance indicators to assess the effectiveness of its committees (see Recommendation 3).

Every unit, comprising several sections, has an Academic Departmental Council (ADC) that is chaired by the Head of Department or Center and includes Heads of Section (HoSs) as members (Article 23, Bylaws). ADCs meet regularly, once a month or when deemed necessary, in order to ensure the smooth running of the Centers and Departments (C&Ds). For matters that need action or decision by a higher authority, proposals are formulated and forwarded to the CC for discussion and action. The Dean evaluates the performance of each unit through its annual report, which summarizes its activities and achievements for the academic year (Strategic Plan, sub-goal 1.3).

The CC usually meets once a month to take decisions on issues brought forward by the Assistant Deans and other members of the Council and implements them. The CC decides on matters within its mandate. For some issues where the CC needs DGTE's approval, proposals are sent to him. The Dean is responsible for following up such proposals (Portfolio, p.5).

A Quality Assurance and Follow-up Committee (QAFC), along with several other committees such as Policy Management Committee and Health and Safety committee, function at the College level. These committees provide means for staff to become involved in the decision making process. According to the College, committees usually meet on a monthly basis, or whenever deemed necessary, to discuss and propose actions related to their terms of reference. The outcomes are then discussed and relevant decisions or approvals are made at the CC level. Views of staff provided in meetings with the Panel and consideration of evidence suggested that the CC is a hard-working and an effective College body.

In its annual report, the College has also identified a need to improve the quality of its management through the extensive implementation of e-management of major activities, including student registration, records management, e-learning portals, alumni tracking, and computer and multimedia services. The Panel found evidence that the College is beginning to implement elements of an e-management system.

#### **Affirmation 1**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees that Ibri College of Technology needs to extend e-management to other College activities to improve the efficiency of management and supports its efforts in this regard.**

#### **1.4 Institutional Affiliations for Programs and Quality Assurance**

Ibri CoT is part of the network of Colleges of Technology and has no other institutional affiliations for programs and quality assurance.

#### **1.5 Strategic Plan**

The College has taken the Strategic Plan (SP) (2009-2013) developed by the CoTs and developed it with its own sub-goals appropriately drawing upon the VMV which are common to all CoTs (see Section 1.1). The work that has gone into the development of the College SP is acknowledged by the Panel, as well as the regular reporting against the Key Performance Indicators. The Quality Assurance Department (QAD) of the MoM also provides useful feedback to the College on the structure and content of the sub-goals of the SP.

The College identifies areas of weakness in the annual College Strategic Plan Appraisal Report (SPAR) that monitors progress against the SP KPIs. These weaknesses will be addressed when developing the SP for the next planning cycle. The College QAFC is responsible for tracking and reporting the achievement of the SP sub-goals with inputs from the organizational units on the accomplishment of their Operational Plans. This information is gathered in the SPAR and forwarded to the QAD via the Dean. The Panel found that this was an inclusive, comprehensive and systematic approach to monitoring achievement against individual sub-goals and provided an opportunity to follow up the planning cycle.

#### **Commendation 1**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority commends Ibri College of Technology for its review and evaluation of progress against the Strategic Plan through the Strategic Plan Achievement Report which provides support for its successful implementation.**

While the Panel thought the use of the SPAR in evaluating the achievement of the SP was a very positive process, the Panel noted the varying success of the College in meeting its performance targets. Even though the SP is supported by Operational Plans, the Panel had some concerns about how widely it is understood or how effective the SP is in driving the future direction of the College.

The College has identified performance indicators and associated targets to measure achievement of goals and sub-goals in the SP. The Panel noted that the feedback from the QAD on the SP had not queried the suitability of some of the performance indicators being used, and believes that greater support needs to be given to the College in identifying appropriate performance measures that enable improved tracking of the achievement of the goals in the SP. However the Panel noted that many of these performance indicators relate to user satisfaction rather than achievement of particular outcomes. For example, measures of student satisfaction with assessment appear in some instances to be measuring something other than the capacity of assessment items to measure achievement of learning outcomes, or alternatively the quality of feedback on assessment items given by academic staff. More appropriate indicators for entry standards could be retention or pass rates rather than staff and student satisfaction (refer to Section 2.3). A further issue is the use of percentage measures which may not always be appropriate especially in the case of small denominator numbers.

## **Recommendation 2**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology review its Key Performance Indicators to be more focused on outcomes and ensure that these enable a suitable and accurate assessment of progress against goals and sub-goals.**

Regarding the wide use of stakeholder satisfaction as a measure of performance, the Panel noted low response rates in some surveys. The staff satisfaction survey had 33 respondents from a population of over 150 (Portfolio, p. ii). With a response rate lower than 25% the Panel questioned whether the results of the surveys were fully representative of the views of all staff. The Panel also noted the need for well-designed survey questions that measure relevant outcomes as well as ensuring representative samples that provide reliability and validity of results.

### **1.6 Operational Planning**

The organizational units of the College develop Operational Plans (OPs) aligned to the SP by adopting goals, sub-goals, strategies and KPIs that are relevant to their activities. Responsibility for preparing, implementing and monitoring of OPs lies with the Heads of the organisational units. Draft OPs are reviewed by the QAFC and, upon finalisation, approved by the College Council. The OPs are reviewed each semester and annually by the Heads of the C&Ds with the help of the Departmental QA team.

The OP reviews are an important way to reflect on achievements. For example, the Panel noted the responsiveness of the Educational Technology Centre (ETC) to student feedback on sub-goal 2.2.3 in relation to the improved provision of printers, photocopiers and multi-media equipment.

In examining the OP reviews the Panel understood that the C&Ds independently identify which goals and sub-goals relate to their activities and that these are not necessarily the same as those assigned to them through the SP. This creates the potential for individual units to engage in pursuing the same goals or sub-goals in an uncoordinated fashion potentially leading to duplication or to some goals not being pursued. For example against sub-goal 1.5, the ETC seems to be developing its own Policy Management System (PMS) and it was not clear how this PMS relates to the College PMS and the role of the College Policy Management Committee (PMC). A further example relates to sub-goal 3.2 where it appears, from its OP, that the Business

Department is planning to set up its own staff appraisal system, although the SP allocates this responsibility to the Assistant Dean for Administration & Financial Affairs (ADAFa) and the Human Resource (HR) section.

To further embed the SP in the culture and thinking of Ibri CoT and to facilitate its implementation, the College needs to include a layer of plans that span organizational units and functional areas. These include teaching and learning; research and consultancy; industry and community engagement; student services and support; capital works and facilities development and human resources within its Planning Framework. Such plans would enable bridging of the gap between high level strategy and the day to day operational plans of the organizational units by providing a college wide framework linking the levels and key activity areas.

### **Recommendation 3**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology review its planning framework to include more detailed plans for core activities that are conducted across organizational units in order to ensure the fulfillment of the College goals and sub- goals.**

The Panel believes that there is an important role for the QAFC in ensuring the co-ordination of the efforts of all units to implement the strategies contained in the SP. Currently, according to its meeting minutes, the QAFC role in this regard appears to be mainly noting that the OPs in the C&Ds have been completed. The College needs to review the effectiveness of QAFC in supporting college-wide review of the implementation of operational plans.

## **1.7 Financial Management**

The MoM allocates a budget to Ibri CoT classified into Developmental and Current budgets. The Developmental budget is intended for infrastructure projects, outsourcing employees and purchase of equipment. The Current budget is intended for student allowances, salaries and wages, purchase of materials and services, furniture and student learning resources. The budget is managed under the oversight of the ADAFA through the Finance Department. Distribution of budgets for the C&Ds is based on the identification of their requirements by the relevant Heads and submission to the ADAFA for processing (Portfolio, p.11).

Risks related to deficits in certain areas of expenditure are managed by the Dean, ADAFA and the Head of the Finance Department. The MoM conducts regular audits to ensure fairness and accuracy in the financial management processes and may inject new funds into areas in deficit as deemed necessary. The Panel considered that, with closer alignment of the budget to the SP, there would be less need for ad hoc injection of funds to cover unforeseen deficits. Such an alignment would also provide a degree of certainty about the capacity of the College to fulfill its goals and sub-goals.

### **Recommendation 4**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology, in coordination with the Ministry of Manpower, align its budget allocations with the Strategic Plan in order to appropriately support the achievement of its goals and sub-goals.**

A recent Ministerial Decree (3/2013) invests greater power in the authority of the Dean to make financial decisions related to the allocation of funds for student activities, staff research and staff development. The Panel regards this as an opportunity for the College to make a range of improvements to support the realization of the goals and sub-goals in the SP.



## **Recommendation 5**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that, in line with the Ministerial Decree 3/2013, Ibri College of Technology allocate a specific budget for student activities, staff development, research and consultancy.**

### **1.8 Risk Management**

The College has a Risk Management Policy (RMP) and has established a Risk Management Committee (RMC) chaired by the Dean and including the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs (ADAA), HoDs, HoCs and the College Risk Officer (CRO) as members. The CRO is responsible for managing the risks, reviewing the Risk Registers (RR) of all the units, preparing contingency plans for all identified risks as well as ensuring the backup of sensitive information and data. There are also departmental level risk management committees (Portfolio, p.14).

It is noted that Ibri CoT had not met its target of addressing 80% of identified risks. However it was observed that, in general, these risk management systems are appropriate and the Panel encourages Ibri CoT to continue to update and monitor risks as they emerge during the growth of the College, as well as ensuring that these risks are widely understood within the College.

### **Affirmation 2**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology's efforts in developing a risk management system and supports its continuing work in addressing identified risks.**

### **1.9 Policy Management**

According to the College, the Policy Management System (PMS) is supervised by the Policy Management Committee (PMC), which encourages input from relevant stakeholders (Portfolio, p.15). The PMC has responsibilities that include policy needs analysis, formulation, review, approval, publication, implementation, monitoring and feedback in coordination with Policy Management Sub-Committees (PMSC) and the QAFC. According to the College, the QAFC is responsible for publishing the approved policies, and creating awareness among the stakeholders through means such as College website and induction programmes. The Dean, with the help of Assistant Deans, Heads of C&Ds and Heads of Sections, is responsible for monitoring the implementation of all policies (Portfolio, p.15).

In general, Ibri CoT has a wide range of policies, but there is evidence of a lack of complete understanding and appropriate implementation of these policies and procedures in a number of areas including student grievances and plagiarism. It is important that there are appropriate and well documented systems in place to ensure consistent implementation and compliance with policies. The College suggests an improvement (Portfolio, p.16) of surveying awareness of, and satisfaction with, policies. While it will be useful to establish the degree of awareness of policies and to take action to improve awareness through training sessions for example, the effectiveness of policies would be better measured by compliance than by satisfaction. Compliance would not be easily established by a survey.

A lack of clarity in the responsibility for policy development and approvals between the PMC and the QAFC was noted. The Terms of Reference of the QAFC as outlined in the Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) do not accommodate a policy role, apparently being focused on preparation for the audit process (QAM, p.23). However, many people interviewed seemed to believe that it had a primary role in policy development. Ibri CoT would benefit from greater clarity about the relative roles and responsibilities of these two committees (refer to Section 1.10).

### **1.10 Entity and Activity Review System**

Activities of the College are monitored and appraised through meetings of CC and Academic Department Councils (ADCs). The ADCs meet regularly to review their activities and performance against their respective OPs and prepare departmental annual reports for consideration by the Dean. The risks inherent in these OP reviews occurring in isolation from each other have been commented upon in Section 1.6 above.

According to the Portfolio, review of College entities and activities is facilitated and supervised internally by QAFC guided by the QAD. Also the QAD conducts regular audits of various entities and activities of the College, sends audit reports suggesting improvement actions, and follows up on these actions during subsequent audit visits.

Referring to the Terms of Reference of the QAFC, oversight of self-study groups is included. It is not clear whether these self-study groups were established only in preparation for the OAAA audit or whether they are intended to be an ongoing arrangement. These groups would serve a useful ongoing purpose in self-evaluation and quality improvement.

The Panel found a lack of clarity about the role of the QAFC in relation to policy management and the need for stronger oversight of policy compliance as well as the need for improved monitoring of the OP reviews conducted by the C&Ds. The Terms of Reference of the QAFC should be reviewed to reflect its important role in ongoing oversight of quality assurance systems in support of the achievement of the SP goals and sub-goals.

#### **Recommendation 6**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology review the development and oversight of quality assurance management systems, in particular the role of the Quality Assurance Follow-up Committee both in its liaison with departments and its effectiveness in supporting the college-wide implementation and monitoring of the Strategic Plan goals and sub-goals.**

### **1.11 Student Grievance Process**

The College has a student grievance system as required by the Bylaws. The SP includes a sub-goal related to student (and staff) grievances and there is a Student Grievance Policy (SGP). Students have the right to appeal against examinations results. Grievances related to discipline and harassment are managed by the Investigation Committee (IC) chaired by the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs (ADSA) or Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs (ADAA). The Disciplinary Committee (DC) chaired by the Dean makes decisions based on the recommendations of the IC. Students have the right of appeal to the Undersecretary, whose decision is final (Portfolio, p.17).

The processes for appeals against examination results appeared to be fair and conscientiously applied by staff with good recording and reporting of outcomes. The strategy of quick resolution of grievances was also noted. However, student satisfaction with the transparency of the grievance processes is low according to the student surveys. Also, not all students seemed to be aware of the processes. The Panel endorses the intention of the Student Affairs Department to work to create better awareness of processes in the student population.

### **1.12 Health and Safety**

The Health and Safety Policy (HSP), for use by all CoTs, has been developed by the QAD, in consultation with the CoTs. Ibri CoT also has a Health and Safety Committee (HSC) chaired by the ADAFA to oversee implementation of the HSP. The College Quality Sub-Manuals (QSMs) are intended to ensure that health and safety procedures are followed by staff and students in

laboratories and workshops; ETC is responsible for the manuals used in the computer labs and by the Engineering Department for the manuals used in their workshops. Heads of Departments are responsible for ensuring implementation of health and safety measures and technicians are responsible for this in the laboratories and workshops (Portfolio, p.19).

Ibri CoT seems to have the appropriate systems in place and the Panel encourages the College to continue to ensure full implementation of the HSP and review its effectiveness, in order to provide the best protection to its staff and students.

**1.13 Oversight of Associated Entities (e.g. owned companies)**

This section is not applicable to Ibri CoT.

## 2 STUDENT LEARNING BY COURSEWORK PROGRAMS

Ibri CoT has four academic departments: the English Language Centre, Engineering, Information Technology and Business Studies. Information Technology and Business Studies offer programs at Diploma Year 1, Diploma Year 2 and Higher Diploma levels. Engineering at Ibri CoT had its first student intake in 2009, and for the first time students will be able to complete Diploma Year 2 at Ibri CoT in 2013 and the Higher Diploma in 2014. Students entering the College take a placement test and are placed in the Foundation Program to prepare them for their studies (Portfolio, p.23). The College's Strategic Plan (SP) outlines three goals (2, 4 and 6) which guide its teaching and learning practices:

*Offer all students high quality teaching, learning, and training opportunities in line with the requirements of the market needs; (p.3)*

*Keep up with modern developments in technology through analysis of market needs in curriculum review process; (p.7)*

*Provide society with graduates who are equipped with appropriate technological knowledge and personal/professional skills according to international standards (Strategic Plan, p.10)*

This Chapter reflects the Panel's findings in the areas of student learning by coursework programs such as graduate attributes; curriculum; student entry standards; teaching quality; plagiarism; student placement, assessment, retention and progression; academic security; graduate destinations and employability.

### 2.1 Graduate Attributes and Student Learning Objectives

The College states its Graduate Attributes (GAs) are derived from the Vision, Mission, and Values. The College states that the GAs are embedded in the curriculum and are evaluated through the assessment of the course outcomes, that the GAs are mapped against course learning outcomes and that GAs are included in all Course Delivery Plans (CDPs) which are disseminated to all students each semester (Portfolio, p.21). The Panel found that the CDPs as well as the material in the Course Files are inconsistent in the way in which GAs are mapped and presented to students. There seems to be a lack of awareness of GAs across the student cohorts and some staff and there is a need for a systematic awareness raising and embedding of GAs within the College's teaching and learning activities.

#### **Recommendation 7**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology undertake a college-wide systematic program of raising awareness, understanding and application of graduate attributes and that the College evaluate the appropriateness of the graduate attributes.**

It is suggested that a standard template for CDPs should be developed and that it be mandated that all staff develop their CDPs in accordance with this template. This would ensure all students receive the same information with respect to GAs and how they map to the course learning outcomes. The Panel found examples of good practice in the CDPs developed in the Business Studies Department and these may serve as a useful template for other departments. The CDPs for the Business Studies courses clearly state the GAs that each course covers. The Panel found that the level of awareness of GAs of both staff and students in Business Studies is consistently high reflecting the effectiveness of the Business Studies approach.

## 2.2 *Curriculum*

Ibri CoT offers three major specializations; Business Studies, Information Technology and Engineering. The Ministry of Manpower (MoM) is responsible for developing the curriculum for the Colleges of Technology (CoTs) while the Board of Trustees (BoT) is responsible for approving the curriculum (Bylaws Article 4.1.). The College indicates that it follows the regulations and Bylaws for study levels and the system of progress (Portfolio, p.23).

The MoM established a Specialization Committee (SC) for each program with responsibility for curriculum development and review. Colleges provide feedback to the respective SCs which send revisions to the MoM for approval. On approval, the changes in the curriculum are circulated to Colleges for implementation.

Ibri CoT states it reviews the curricula according to market needs (Portfolio, p.24) and goes on to state that the College found four areas requiring updating in Information Technology and Business Studies (Portfolio, p.25). However, the documentation on the four areas shows no systematic process for reviewing the courses. Review of the curricula appears to be carried out on an *ad hoc* basis, carried out from the ground up, rather than with a systematic set of criteria and timelines for this review. There is a need for a more systematic approach to curricula reviews.

### **Recommendation 8**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology implement a systematic approach to curricula review on a regular basis to ensure their currency and relevance.**

The Panel supports Ibri CoT's commitment to undertaking benchmarking of its curricula with other higher education institutions and collecting feedback from industry and alumni on the effectiveness of the present curricula (Portfolio, p.25). It is suggested that Ibri CoT develop an action plan for these activities with a specified time frame and designated responsibilities.

## 2.3 *Student Entry Standards*

Student entry standards are determined by the MoM and are in accordance with Articles 28 to 39 of the Bylaws (Portfolio, p.25). Admissions to the General Foundation Program (GFP) are managed by the Higher Education Admission Centre. The MoM determines the number of students to be admitted to the CoTs and the minimum marks for entry.

The Panel learned that there had been an increase in the number of students admitted to the College in 2011-2012 and that there had been an increased dropout rate. Ibri CoT expressed a concern with the low entry scores and the impact this was having on the high dismissal rate (see section 2.10).

An improvement which consists of a "survey of staff and students satisfaction with entry standards" (Portfolio, p.27) does not address the underlying issue of the high percentage of dismissals. Such performance data may not give insights to what may be the real issue of supporting students who might be at risk because they have been admitted with a low score. A better approach would be to conduct a detailed analysis of the existing data of students with low entry scores who are underperforming (including those students who have been dismissed) to identify the underlying factors that could be addressed by implementing an academic support program.

### **Recommendation 9**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology conduct a detailed analysis of the performance of students**

**admitted on low entry scores to identify factors that lead to students being at risk of dismissal.**

#### **2.4 *Foundation Program***

The General Foundation Program (GFP) offered by the English Language Centre (ELC), consists of four levels: Pre-elementary, Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced. Students take an entry test and are placed in the appropriate level based on their scores. The GFP consists of English and General Study Skills, Computing and Mathematics and aligns with the Oman Academic Accreditation Standards for General Foundation Programs. The GFP study levels and system of progress are governed by the Amendments of Regulations of the Bylaws.

On admission to Ibri CoT, students are required to take a test to determine placement in the GFP. Once students are placed in one of these levels, they are required to sit an exam to progress to the next level (Portfolio, p.26). The exam at the final level, Advanced, is an external unified Level Exit Exam. Students who successfully pass the Exit Exam at level 4 progress to the academic departments for Diploma level study. The College Bylaws outline entry requirements, the registration process, progression from one level to the next, and admission requirements for various specializations.

Table 2.1 (Portfolio, p.26) shows that the students admitted to the GFP are evenly distributed across the four levels of the English program indicating that the students entering Ibri CoT have varying English language proficiency. The Panel was impressed that the ELC benchmarks its results against other English Language Centres of colleges under the MoM and that in the external Exit Exam Ibri CoT pass rate ranks second out of all CoTs for 2012. The Panel suggests that the Foundation Math and Information Technology courses also be benchmarked against other CoTs. This would assist the College in its efforts to meet the Oman Standards for General Foundation Programs.

#### **2.5 *Teaching Quality***

The College states that the Dean, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs (ADAA) and the College Council (CC) are responsible for ensuring teaching quality at the College level and the Heads of Centres and Departments (C&Ds); Heads of Sections (HoSs) are responsible for ensuring quality at C&Ds level (Portfolio, p.27). The College periodically conducts staff development programs and has a pedagogical framework. Academic staff are required to develop course materials, CDPs, GAs mapping and other information required for course delivery. Each faculty member is required to compile a course file. HoDs/HoC and HoSs monitor teaching quality through observing classes, giving feedback to the staff on teaching and reviewing course files (Portfolio, p.27).

The College states that it has a pedagogical framework which is disseminated to all teaching staff (Portfolio, p.27). It further states that the framework guides lecturers in their choice of teaching methods. The pedagogical framework appeared sophisticated with the potential to inform teaching strategies. However, most staff appeared to have no knowledge of this document and there was no evidence that teaching staff were actually aware of or using the different pedagogical strategies or teaching methods in their classes.

The College has placed a heavy emphasis on e-learning in its Portfolio as a means of supporting the students and updating their knowledge (Portfolio, p.22); for embedding graduate attributes (Portfolio, p.22); and for measuring teaching quality (Portfolio, p.29). While the Panel was impressed with the work that had been undertaken in developing the pedagogical framework document, it found that e-learning mainly consisted of teaching staff uploading their course notes to Moodle. There was very little evidence of Moodle being used to add value to teaching and learning. While the College encouraged the use of e-learning and it was a key performance target

in the Strategic Plan sub-goal 2.3, the College had not defined “e-learning” in the context of an overall teaching and learning plan (also see Chapter 6 section 6.4).

#### **Recommendation 10**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology develop a teaching and learning plan which includes an e-learning strategy as a component, in line with its commitment to implement e-learning as stated in Strategic Plan sub-goal 2.3**

Ibri CoT’s plan for improvement in teaching quality is to have 100% of staff facilitated e-learning in their teaching (Portfolio, p.29) and to conduct Student Council meetings to discuss student dissatisfaction with Moodle. The Panel suggests that Ibri CoT undertake staff training in the functionality of Moodle in value adding to teaching and learning. Also staff development is needed in order to align teaching practices to the pedagogical framework and this should be an item of staff appraisal (see Section 8.5).

### **2.6 Plagiarism**

Ibri CoT has implemented a Plagiarism Policy that was drafted by the Quality Assurance Department and used across all CoTs. It is also noted that the plagiarism policy was documented in the Quality Assurance Manual (QAM). Ibri CoT states that the Plagiarism Policy, procedure and the penalties that apply to plagiarism are published in the Students’ Handbook, College website and are displayed in the electronic media (Portfolio, p.29). Staff awareness in avoiding plagiarism is provided through induction and discussion in meetings. The Plagiarism Policy is distributed to all the staff. The HoDs are also responsible for creating awareness among the staff. Ibri CoT also states that the lecturers explain the plagiarism policy to students in class.

It was found that there was indeed an awareness of plagiarism across the campus and to some extent an understanding of what plagiarism meant. However, while the College states that “no plagiarism cases have been reported yet” (Portfolio, p.30), the Panel was informed that a number of cases have been detected and resulted in students marks being downgraded for the assignments. From the meetings with academic staff, it was noted that development of awareness is still needed in relation to mechanisms available to detect and deal with plagiarism after submission of written work.

#### **Recommendation 11**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology implement its Plagiarism Policy consistently and that plagiarism cases are monitored and documented.**

The College states that it is planning to implement anti-plagiarism software (Portfolio, p.30). The Panel heard that the software has been trialed and was soon to be implemented across the College.

#### **Affirmation 3**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees that Ibri College of Technology needs to strengthen its approach to monitoring plagiarism and supports its plans to implement anti-plagiarism software.**

However, the College is encouraged to consider other approaches as well as anti-plagiarism software in order to help to prevent plagiarism. It is suggested that the College undertake further staff development in areas of plagiarism prevention such as designing assessment tasks that make

plagiarism difficult. The College is urged to increase student awareness and understanding of plagiarism and to take an educative approach to plagiarism.

## 2.7 *Student Placements*

All students undertaking a Diploma or Higher Diploma are required to complete On-the-Job-Training (OJT). The College is guided by strategy 2.6.2 of the SP in providing OJT. Students have to complete at least 320 hours in eight weeks during OJT. The College assessors appointed by the HoDs /HoSs of Academic Departments are responsible for monitoring and supervising the OJT.

An Industrial Liaison and Parallel Programs Department established by MoM is responsible for the support, coordination and observation of OJT related activities in all CoTs. The Head of the OJT Department at Ibri CoT, under the supervision of the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (ADSA), is responsible for the planning and carrying out of OJT-related activities and at the academic department level, the OJT coordinator is responsible for organizing OJT activities for the College's students (Portfolio, p.30). The students enjoy the OJT and they feel they learn a lot, which was confirmed by the results of the OJT survey for students conducted in July 2012 in which the average weighted student satisfaction was 4.25 on a scale of 1-5. The Panel was pleased to note the effective processes in place to support OJT, such as OJT department-level support, supervisors, log books, liaison with industry; the high quality outcomes of this program as reflected in the feedback from industry supervisors; and the high degree of satisfaction recorded by students, alumni, staff and employers in interviews with the Panel.

### **Commendation 2**

#### **The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority commends Ibri College of Technology for its achievements in relation to On The Job Training.**

The Panel was pleased to see Ibri CoT plans to undertake formal surveys of the OJT trainees on the effectiveness of the OJT process.

## 2.8 *Assessment Methods, Standards and Moderation*

The College states that its assessment methods are designed to measure the stated outcomes of the courses (Portfolio, p.32) and are specified in course delivery plans. It further states that all academic departments ensure that assessments are conducted according to a set of standards stated in the QAM (Section 5) and that fairness and accuracy of assessment are ensured through the implementation of moderation procedures (QAM, Section 5). Assessment strategies are provided along with moderation procedures.

In October 2011, the Quality Assurance Department in (QAD) its Review Feedback Report suggested the following: "The College should develop a mechanism to ensure that all assessments are administered appropriately and to check whether examinations reflect the qualification awarded". In the documents provided on follow up actions by Ibri CoT, the Panel could find very little information on what actions had been taken in response to this suggestion. In addition, the Panel heard of some examinations being set from text book questions and that students were required to memorize the correct answers. This is not in line with the following standard from the QAM:

*5.2.4 Examinations remain essential in higher education. They test the student's ability to think carefully and express him/her self clearly under time pressure, a situation that is likely to be replicated later in the individual's working life. (QAM, p.47)*



The College should address the issues raised in the QAD reports, particularly the issues of “examinations reflecting the qualification awarded”. This could be partly achieved through benchmarking with other Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) indicated in the SP (Portfolio, p.26). Based on the Panel's findings, the approach to assessment needs to be reviewed in order to meet Ibri CoT's own Assessment Strategy (QAM, p.46). The College would benefit from benchmarking of assessment items and responses with other CoTs.

### **Recommendation 12**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology review its approach to assessment and moderation in line with its Assessment Strategy and undertake benchmarking of its assessment with other Colleges of Technology.**

#### **2.9 Academic Security and Invigilation**

The mechanisms for ensuring academic security and integrity in all examinations are covered by the Examination Policy detailed in Section 7 of Ibri CoT's QAM. The Dean and ADAA are responsible for the overall monitoring and administration of examinations and also the physical security of these examinations. There is a College Examination Committee (CEC) which is responsible for assigning invigilators and conducting examinations. The departmental representatives on the CEC are responsible for collecting examination papers and supporting documents from their departments. These examination papers are then kept securely by the ADAA until examination time.

The College states that examinations are conducted smoothly and malpractice records are reported by invigilators (Portfolio, p.34). The College also claims that the number of cheating cases has been kept at a minimum level as represented in Table 2.4 (Portfolio, p.34). The College is encouraged to conduct the planned awareness programs for students on examination rules in order to decrease the number of cheating cases even further (Portfolio, p.34). During the interviews, the Panel found no reason to be concerned in general about academic security or invigilating and concluded that the College manages its examination process in accordance with its Bylaws and Policy.

#### **2.10 Student Retention and Progression**

The College states that ‘retention’ means retaining the students until their graduation while ‘student progression’ means the movement of students to the higher level of studies (Portfolio, p.35). Student progression is guided by the Bylaws and is based on a Cumulative Grade Point Average. The College provided minimum details of student progression from one year to the next. The only data provided was Table 2.5 (Portfolio, p.36) which contains aggregated data of graduates, transfers, withdrawn and dismissals. The College states that although student retention depends on many factors, Ibri CoT believes that “taking care of students who are at risk of dismissal or probation, will help the College to have high student retention” (Portfolio, p.35). The College goes on to state that this approach helps Ibri CoT to achieve a high pass rate of students so that the majority of them progress to the next level within the minimum stipulated time (Portfolio, p.35). No evidence was provided to the Panel substantiating this claim and the Panel was concerned about the high dropout rate (withdrawn and dismissed) ranging from 33.51% in 2009-10 to 34.84% in 2011-12 (see Recommendation 9).

The College states that students at risk are referred to their academic advisor for extra support and to assist with their studies. The academic departments and the Student Affairs Department (SAD) provide advising and counseling to the students as necessary. The Panel heard that the level of assistance provided to students by their academic advisors varied considerably (also see section 6.5). The Panel was also told that the College had been implementing a more robust procedure for

supporting students who were at risk which included contacting their parents. It is suggested that these new procedures be documented and communicated to all staff.

The College needs to undertake detailed analysis of students at risk (see Section 2.3) and, under the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (ADSA), develop a mechanism to target student learning needs identified from the data analysis.

### **2.11 Graduate Destinations and Employability**

Ibri CoT states that it prepares its students for the job market by training them with appropriate technological knowledge and professional skills as required for employment (Sub-goal 6.1, SP). The Counseling and Graduates Follow-up Department (CGFD) under the ADSA is responsible for providing career counseling and guidance (Bylaws, Article 26 C). Ibri CoT's OJT, which the Panel found to be commendable, provides students with work experience and enhances the skills required by them during the period of their study at the College. Ibri CoT's course, "Job Search Techniques", also assists students with finding employment (Portfolio, p.37). Ibri CoT's employment statistics show 13.4% of its graduates are employed. This may appear low but, according to the College, 74.4% go on to further studies.

The College has been active in supporting students in their employment search by running a Job Fair and facilitating visits to career fairs. The CGFD carried out the first Job Fair early 2013. The Panel supports the College's efforts in this area.

#### **Affirmation 4**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology's intention to conduct more student job fairs, seminars and industrial visits to support student employment outcomes.**

The College is urged to implement its plan to develop a computerized system, as part of its plan to enhance e-management systems, to enable the College to generate comprehensive reports of graduate employment.

### **3 STUDENT LEARNING BY RESEARCH PROGRAMS**

At the time of the Quality Audit, Ibri CoT did not offer research programs, so this section is not addressed in this Report.

#### 4 STAFF RESEARCH AND CONSULTANCY

The College states that “*Research and consultancy plays a key role in building the brand image of an educational institution*” (Portfolio, p.39). Also its Vision states:

*Ibri CoT intends to become the “College of Choice” for students and industry, by providing a demonstrably high quality of teaching, learning and research that makes a significant contribution to the on- going national economic development.* (Portfolio p.39)

Academic staff of Ibri CoT are encouraged to carry out individual research so that they can keep themselves abreast of developments in research and professional practice in their respective fields of specialization. The College also believes that staff research, however limited given the constraints of resources, will contribute to high quality teaching and learning. The College encourages its academic staff to carry out research and share their research knowledge and experiences with other professionals in their discipline through the publication of articles, books and research reports, and participation in conferences, seminars and workshops (QAM, Section 10).

The College has established a Research Committee and a self-study group for staff research and consultancy. The Committee also creates awareness regarding research and consultancy activities among staff to motivate them to contribute through individual efforts. Staff induction programs include an overview on the support and facilities available for research and consultancy work at Ibri CoT (Portfolio, p.39).

The College states that new policies in the area of a research funding scheme, consultancy activities, ethics, bio-safety and research commercialization have been developed and are awaiting approval by the College Council (CC) (Portfolio, p.39). In addition to the College Research Committee, there are departmental research and consultancy committees that raise awareness of research and support the development of a research culture. Details of individual contributions through research and consultancy work are reported in departmental annual reports. Ibri CoT conducted its first National Symposium on Emerging Trends in Advanced Computing (SETAC) which was organized by the IT Department.

Evidence was available detailing the policies on research and consultancy submitted to the CC, including proposals for a strategic plan, definition of terms of reference for both College and department research committees, and details of those staff members who had undertaken research and presented papers at conferences.

During the interviews with academic staff, it was obvious that encouragement and support for staff research was welcomed with a number of academic staff stating they had presented papers at conferences. The Panel noted that the College intends to increase staff activity in research and consultancy and deliver specific training in these areas (Portfolio, p.40). However, there was no research plan in place to support the realization of the College's Vision. The College is urged to develop a research and consultancy plan with appropriate performance indicators and targets to support its intentions in this area.

#### **Recommendation 13**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology develop and implement a College-wide research and consultancy plan in line with its Vision.**

## 5 INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Ibri CoT states that it believes in having good relationships with industry and community (Portfolio, p.41) and its Strategic Plan (SP) Goal 5 states, "*We will foster an open and fruitful relationship with public and private sector organizations and the community at large*". This Chapter reports on the relationships and engagement of Ibri CoT with industry and community. It includes industry and community engagement planning and management; relationships with industry and employers, professions, other education providers, alumni, and the community at large.

### 5.1 *Industry and Community Engagement Planning & Management*

The College has policies related to industry and community engagement (QAM: sections 3.8 and 3.11). In its SP Goal 5 and sub-goals 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, and 5.5, Ibri CoT indicates it will foster open and fruitful relationships with the public, private sectors, and community (Portfolio, p.41). The area of industry and community engagement is overseen by the Dean and Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (ADSA). The College Public Relations and Marketing Committee (PRMC) provides support in planning and maintaining the relationships with external stakeholders. A number of external stakeholders also serve on the College Council (CC).

From the outcomes of the survey conducted among the internal and external stakeholders, the College's relationship with industry and employers seems to be good (Portfolio p.44); this was confirmed by the Panel during interviews.

The Panel agrees with Ibri CoT's plan for conducting a survey among all stakeholders and to increase activities with the external community. It believes that a comprehensive plan for community engagement which is adequately resourced would usefully guide such initiatives and ensure a coherent approach. The Panel urges Ibri CoT to have a systematic overall plan for industry and community engagement (refer to Recommendation 3).

### 5.2 *Relationships with Industry and Employers*

Sub-goals 5.1 and 5.2 in the SP of the College focus on the plans and relationships with industry and employers, and sections 3.8 and 3.11 of the QAM present the procedures and relationships with private and public sectors. The CC, Dean, ADSA, Heads of academic units, and Head of On Job Training (OJT) Department together with the PRMC are responsible for fostering relationships with the community (Portfolio, p.43). Ibri CoT activities with the community include conducting open days, preparing posters and brochures, conducting training seminars, conducting English courses for staff from Royal Oman Police and Nawras, and monitoring the OJT (Portfolio, p.43).

As noted in Section 2.7 of this Report, OJT is an established practice at Ibri CoT. The academic departments nominate students to be trained and the OJT Department contacts organizations for students' training placement. Having a representative from the Chamber of Commerce on the CC provides support in arranging placements for students undertaking OJT. The students have opportunities to do OJT in Al Batinah, Al Dhahira and Muscat regions. Some of the industry representatives indicated that OJT helped them to recruit students who had been trained in their organizations.

Constructive relationships exist between the College, industry and employers. This should be subject to continuous improvement for enhanced student learning experiences. The Panel was pleased to note the effective systems in place to support OJT, the high quality outcomes of this program and the high degree of satisfaction recorded by students, alumni, staff and employers.

External stakeholders interviewed by the Panel stated that they would like to see a national strategy for coordination between CoTs and the private sector and conduct a needs assessment to identify industry manpower needs in areas of gas, oil and mining.

### 5.3 *Relationships with Professions*

Ibri CoT stated that it has relationships with the Oman Quality Network (OQN), ICDL, CISCO and IEEE for IT-related fields; Oman Chamber of Commerce for Business Studies and Oman Society of Engineers (OSE) (Portfolio, p.44). The College indicates that some staff participate in OQN activities and some students and staff had training in ICDL, IC3, and Cambridge Certificate and had obtained certificates (Portfolio, Table 5.2, p.46).

Ibri CoT does not have any formal agreements with professional bodies in areas of Business, Information Technology and Engineering. Nor was there evidence that the College incorporates or benchmarks the requirements of relevant professional bodies into its programs. The Panel believes that Ibri CoT should develop relationships with professions to widen students' learning opportunities and staff development.

#### **Recommendation 14**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology develop relationships with appropriate professions in order to support student learning opportunities and relevance of its programs.**

### 5.4 *Relationships with Other Education Providers*

Articles 4.8 and 9.2 of the Bylaws specify who is responsible for establishing academic cooperation between Ibri CoT and other education providers and implementation of these relations. The College has participated in activities held by some other Higher Education Institutions ( HEIs) in Oman and UAE; for example, the Panel found evidence of cooperation with Ibri College of Applied Sciences. The relationships with other education providers are limited to some visits and participation in competitions.

In the Portfolio, the College stated it has plans to benchmark teaching and learning activities and performance with other similar HEIs (Portfolio, p.46). The Panel agrees with Ibri CoT's plans to benchmark teaching and learning activities and other performance outcome measures with similar institutions and encourages the College to move forward in this area.

### 5.5 *Relationships with Alumni*

Based on the Article 26 in the Bylaws and Section 8.8 in the QAM, the Counseling and Follow-up Department (CGFD) is responsible for establishing relationships with alumni and following up graduates and keeping records of their developing careers.

In an attempt to do this, Ibri CoT has incorporated in the College website an Alumni Tracking and OJT Monitoring System which is an application developed in house by the Education Technology Center. The main objective of the system is to monitor and keep track of the graduate personal and professional information. The web services include online directories, member search, message boards, and resumes storage (Portfolio, p.46).

Graduate students interviewed said they had been contacted by CGFD and asked if they had a job, but were not recommended to any opportunity for employment. Ibri CoT reported that it has successfully organized one alumni gathering where 95 out of 129 invited alumni attended. Although the CGFG has initiated activities with alumni, the College is planning to enhance the activities by developing an Alumni Charter Ibri CoT has already purchased software for data

collection/storage of graduate information and employment. This year, the College organized a Job Fair which it plans to conduct annually in the future.

The Panel supports Ibri CoT in its work of initiating the development of an Alumni Charter, activating the web services for member search and resumé storage, and its plan to improve data collection of graduate information and employment.

#### **Affirmation 5**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology that it needs to improve its engagement with alumni and supports its efforts in this area.**

#### **5.6 Relationships with the Community at Large**

In the Portfolio, Ibri CoT reported that it conducts activities for the community organized through the PRMC (Portfolio, p.46). The activities include arranging school visits, offering computer laboratories for AUTOCAD and Photoshop workshops for the Municipality staff of Al Dhahira Governorate; allowing the community to use the College fields for sports-related events such as Sports Day. The College also participates in joint activities such as health programs and blood donation, drama, poetry, exhibitions and competitions within the Sultanate.

The community members interviewed by the Panel also indicated that there is a need for a large hall to allow the College to engage in different activities with the local community. The need for a large hall has been also identified by the CC. The parents and CC community representatives interviewed believe that Ibri CoT should promote the College through communication media to make the community aware of the College and also that there should be opportunities for part-time study.

Although the College has identified this as an area for improvement the Panel did not find sufficient evidence that Ibri CoT has acted on its intentions therefore the Panel recommends that the College develops a plan to increase its activities with the community at large.

#### **Recommendation 15**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology develops and implements a plan to increase its activities and interaction with different bodies in the local community.**

## 6 ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

Ibri CoT is guided by Strategic Goal 7 in delivering academic support services to enhance the student learning experiences (Portfolio, p.49). The academic support services that are covered in this chapter include registry; library; information and learning technology services; academic advising; student learning support services; and teaching resources.

### 6.1 *Academic Support Services Planning & Management*

The College Strategic Plan (SP) provides the overall direction for planning, managing and implementing requirements for academic support services to the students (SP, Goal 7). All Centres and Departments (C&Ds) are responsible for providing at least some aspects of the Academic Support Services described in detail in the Portfolio (p.49).

The Dean, with the support of Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs (ADAA) and Heads of Departments (HoDs), and Heads of Centres (HoCs) monitor the planning and implementation of academic support services. The ADAA is responsible for supervising and promoting academic support services and activities, and specifies the College requirement for teaching and teaching-related activities with the support of the Heads of C&Ds. The Educational Technology Center (ETC) comprises the Library Section Services, the Computer Services Section, and the Educational Services Section. The Centre provides information and learning technology services to staff and students.

At the beginning of each academic year, C&Ds develop their Operational Plans (OPs) based on the College SP. The OP requirements and activities are finalized by the respective departments through the Academic Department Council (ADC) and are submitted to the CC for approval. The academic support services are provided based on the requirements of the OPs. Results of the surveys conducted in the various areas showed that none of the services (teaching and learning services, registration and academic advising) reached the target student satisfaction of 3.5 (Portfolio, p.50), and the College plans improvement in all of these areas. The panel's findings in each of these areas will be discussed under the relevant headings.

Although there was evidence that all the plans and policy documents exist, the College should review the implementation of the SP in the area of academic support services to ensure that the plan is based on informative KPIs as already addressed in Recommendation 2.

### 6.2 *Registry (Enrolment and Student Records)*

Student admission and enrolment is guided by Articles 28-39 of the Bylaws. The Ministry of Manpower (MoM) decides the number of students admitted in the GFP with their respective specialization after the Foundation Program, and forwards the list to the Colleges. Induction programs are conducted during the first week of each semester jointly by English Language Centre (ELC) and SAD (Portfolio, p.51)

A Centralized Student Management System (CSMS) is used by all Colleges of Technology (CoTs) for student course registration. Students register for their courses under the supervision of their academic advisors. The effectiveness and access to the registry system is measured through student and staff satisfaction surveys and reports generated by the CSMS. A survey of CSMS to measure the satisfaction level of students showed that students in Business Department are more satisfied than students in Engineering and Information Technology Departments, even though the overall mean of 3.16 is below the College target of 3.5.



The Panel agrees with the College that more effort should be put into conducting additional training programs on CSMS for students and staff to facilitate registration, and encourage all students to register online. The Panel found that a number of students reported difficulties in using the online registration system and in light of the College plan to get more students to register online, the cause of these difficulties should be investigated.

### 6.3 *Library*

Activities and processes in the Library are governed by sub-goal 7.3 of the SP. The Head of ETC is responsible for supervising, monitoring and reviewing of library resources and services, while the Head of the Library Section is responsible for organizing, classifying and maintaining the library resources. Ibri CoT's Library is currently using a Library Information System (provided by MoM) which provides services for book borrowing, returning, renewal and reservation. The Book Selection Policy is mentioned in the Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) (Section 4.2.5). The HoDs are responsible for providing the Head of ETC with their learning resources requirements such as books, CDs and journals. The requirements are then forwarded to the Assistant Dean for Administration and Financial Affairs (ADAFA) for processing.

The College has four qualified Omani librarians with Bachelor's Degree in Library and Information Science and one technical support staff. Library services are available from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm from Sunday to Thursday. The Library has provided a separate study area for male and female students. Wi-Fi is available for students to access the Internet. The books are organized using the Dewey Decimal Classification System. To measure the satisfaction level of students with the Library, an annual survey is conducted (Portfolio, pp.53-54).

The ratio of the library resources to students as of academic year 2012-2013 is shown in Table 6.2 of the Portfolio and shows that every 613 students are served by one librarian, which is regarded by the College as too high a ratio. Figure 6.3 , shows an increasing trend in the number of books. The student satisfaction with access to learning resources survey shows a mean score of 2.97 which is less than the target of 3.5 for strategy 7.3.3 (SP, p.11) and benchmarking the library resources as stated in strategy 7.3.2 has not been done.

The College states in the Portfolio that *"Ibri CoT has a library that serves as an oasis for the academic activities and nurturing of young minds"* (Portfolio, p iii); yet there were numerous complaints from students about the number of relevant books available, and accessibility, apparently leading to poor usage, although no usage surveys have been carried out. There is no catalogue of library holdings, so the students have to constantly seek advice from the librarians as to the location of books. Although there is a large number of e-books available (75,000), there was no evidence of hard-copy journals in the Library. There were also comments from staff that the students were not using the library resources to support their learning in an appropriate manner. This may indicate that better and more systematic introduction to learning methods and resources should be included in the induction program.

The Panel considered that the Library is not satisfying the learning needs of the College even though it is noted that Ibri CoT plans to benchmark its learning resources and upgrade them appropriately, and also intends to increase the number of Library staff to meet the increasing number of students. The developments in the Library should be concentrated on acquiring appropriate stocks of books, better organization and usage of the resources available (online catalogue for books and other resources), training of Library staff, and educating students in developing better self-study skills, rather than simply gaining more library staff. The Library should be the heart of a revamped e-learning strategy as detailed elsewhere (see Section 2.5).

### **Recommendation 16**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology urgently review the operation of its library service with focus on identifying priorities for collection development, the implementation of the online catalogue and provision of services that effectively support the student learning experience.**

#### **6.4 Information and Learning Technology Services**

Ibri CoT seeks to provide Information and Learning Technology Services (ILTS) and IT resources and state of the art technology to support e-learning and program requirements generally. The QAM Sec.3.3 and 4.4 provide guidance on the intention to upgrade the level of high-tech equipment to meet learning requirements, while the QAM clearly defines the ETC Policy and Procedure on IT services. ILTS is managed and supervised by the Head of ETC with the assistance of the three section heads. Supervision of computer lab technicians is done by Head of ETC, while provision of resources is the responsibility of ADAFA. The College's Risk Management Policy guides it in addressing risks related to the resources (QAM, Appendix 5). The Head of ETC is responsible for auditing the ILTS resources (Portfolio, p.55).

The information and learning technology facilities described in the asset statistics for the past six years are specified in the Figure 6.4 (A & B) of the Portfolio. This shows an increasing trend of numbers of computers in computer labs and workshops. The learning resource utilization reports, which include IT resources, show that 100% of available resources are in line with teaching and learning requirements which is more than the target 90% 7.3.1 of the SP. The Panel was informed that owing to constraints on resources, the academic staff are taught Moodle, and these staff in turn teach their students. Since this could lead to a variable student experience, the Panel concluded that all students should receive an introduction to Moodle taught by competent practitioners. The Panel found evidence that the learning resources are being continually updated, an example being the installation of smart boards, in all classrooms and laboratories.

Due to increasing internet use, the College has recently upgraded the internet bandwidth from 4 MBPS to 16 MBPS. With the increasing number of students, the classrooms, computer labs, and free access labs are not adequate for the course program needs. Surveys for staff and students satisfaction with e-learning practices have an overall mean of 3.44 which is slightly less than the target of 3.5 (SP, strategy 2.3.4) which indicates that there is still some room for improvement. The staff and student survey on resource allocation shows a mean score of 3.59 which is slightly above the target for strategy 8.1.3. Ibri CoT plans to continue upgrading of its information and learning technology in the classrooms, Library and computer labs to meet the increasing demand. It also plans to enhance the e-learning practices. However, there was no evidence of a replacement strategy for information and learning technology requirements for the future. It is recommended that such a strategy be put in place due to the rapidly evolving learning technology environment, so that student learning is not hampered.

### **Recommendation 17**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology devise a medium and long term learning technology replacement and update strategy to meet future students' learning needs.**

#### **6.5 Academic Advising**

According to the College, students should have ready access to supportive academic advice at all times (QAM, Section 8.3.1). The College provides academic advisors to guide and counsel students on all the academic matters as per its Academic Advising Policy. The Heads of academic departments and lecturers are given the responsibility of offering academic consultation and

career advice to students. In addition, the ADAA has the responsibility for supervising the College's academic activities. The Head of CGFD, in coordination with academic departments, is responsible for supervising and training academic advisors (Portfolio, p.57).

The HoDs appoint academic advisors and assign number of advisees to them. Academic advising starts immediately after the students enroll in the respective academic departments and during departmental orientation, students meet their respective advisors to discuss the advising and registration process. Each advisor is allotted a minimum of 2 office hours/week, throughout the semester to meet his/her advisees and discuss academic matters. The advisor maintains a separate file for recording the progress of each of his/her advisees and is also in contact with the advisee's course lecturers to monitor performance and class attendance, especially for those on probation. The advisor is responsible for providing the advisees with their transcripts (Portfolio, p.58).

The effectiveness of advising is measured through the staff and student feedback. The student satisfaction survey result shows that the overall student satisfaction on academic advising is 3.02, against the target of 3.5. Some academic departments identified the high ratio of advisees to advisers, as impacting critically academic advising and it was noted that no common procedures for academic advising are followed across departments.

The Panel found that although the College plans to implement its Academic Advising Policy uniformly across all the departments, no actual progress was evident. From meetings with students and staff, it was apparent that the academic advising offered to students was variable, as also reported in section 2.10, and consistent implementation of a uniform policy is needed across departments.

#### **Recommendation 18**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology review its academic advising system to ensure uniformity and consistency of policy implementation across departments to support and enhance the student experience.**

### **6.6 Student Learning Support**

Student learning support of Ibri CoT is guided by SP strategies 7.2.1 and 7.2.3; the process is detailed in the Portfolio. The ADAA and ADSA supervise, review and promote student learning activities. Ad hoc committees are set up to supervise student clubs.

Since the inception of Ibri CoT, several co-curricular activities have been conducted by different C&Ds that promote better learning experience and student involvement. Each academic C&D creates a student club that helps them reach out to all the students. Club members are guided by an ad hoc committee composed of the lecturers who are assigned to supervise student clubs. Through the club members, all other students are encouraged to take part in different co-curricular activities such as seminars, workshops, competitions and exhibits. Correspondingly, the ADAA and ADSA ensure that sets of equipment, halls, and other needed facilities are made available for the events (Portfolio, p.58).

The College took the initiative to conduct a student satisfaction survey to gauge the suitability of the club activities to their needs. It was reported that 8 out of the 12, or 66%, of expected events for the period were conducted. This is less than the projected 80% achievement of planned activities (SP, Strategy 7.2.1), and implies that the College needs improved measures and commitment from the different academic C&Ds to realize all planned activities. Student satisfaction surveys on student activities showed a mean score of 3.32 (see also Section 7.10) which is below the target of 3.5. The College believes that the activities conducted are suitable but can be further improved to keep up with the growing demands of student learning (Portfolio,

p.59). However, no specific area of the survey was dedicated to identify and measure the specific needs of the students for learning support (SP, Strategy 7.2.3).

The Panel found through interviews with the students that only a minority is involved with the clubs, and sometimes there are timetable clashes with events. It was noted that since the activities are organized by ad hoc committees, there is no overarching plan for these activities, and no student needs analysis has been carried out. The Panel recommends that a College-wide plan should be developed, with student input as to the types of co-curricular events they wish to participate in, with a formal committee structure development to support implementation of the plan. The College is urged to review its approach in this area to ensure that student learning support activities address the needs of students at risk in the light of the issues related to student retention and progression (see Section 2.10).

### **Recommendation 19**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology develop a college wide plan for student learning support with student input and ensure that its activities in this area support learners 'at risk'.**

## **6.7 Teaching Resources**

The strategies that guide the College in preparing, allocating and updating teaching resource requirements are all detailed in the Portfolio (p.60). In addition, strategies 8.2.1, 8.3.1 and 8.3.3 guide the College in identifying resources to be upgraded and benchmarking. The ADAA is responsible for specifying supplies required for academic activities. The ADAFA is responsible for purchasing required resources in coordination with the different academic C&Ds. QAM Sections 3.3 and 3.4 guides the maintenance and repair of equipment and facilities.

Based on a needs analysis survey for teaching resources done by ADSA, after prioritization, the requirements are forwarded to Purchase Department. The ETC-HoC ensures that the latest state-of-the-art teaching aids, facilities and technologies are available each semester. He also ensures that learning and technological resources in labs, workshops and Library are meeting teaching and learning requirements by mapping them to the academic needs. The ADAFA develops and implements a system for effective and safe use of resources. The effectiveness of teaching resources is measured through staff and student satisfaction surveys (Portfolio, p.60).

The results reports show that the 80% of teaching resources "are latest" which the College states meet the target of 2.2.3 (Portfolio, p.60). The staff survey shows a satisfaction level of 3.97 on a 5 point scale where the target is 3.5 while student satisfaction level was 1.5 on a 5 point scale which is much less than the target (KPI 2.2.3). The ETC reports show that the available teaching resources are 100% in line with teaching and learning requirements which are equal to the target (KPI 7.3.1). Student survey results show that the satisfaction level with access to learning resources is 3.11 which is less than the expected target of 3.5 (KPI 7.3.3), and imply that there is scope for improvement in this area.

As in the case of information technology provision detailed in Section 6.4, there is no forward plan for teaching resources, nor any clear connection to plans for a re-vamped e-learning strategy (see Recommendation 11). In addition, the disjoint between a staff satisfaction index of 3.97 and a student index of 1.5 was questioned in interviews with staff and students, but no clear indications of the cause of the disparity was found. This is a very wide discrepancy in satisfaction, and it is recommended that the College conducts an in-depth analysis of this result, to resolve this problem.

**Recommendation 20**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology conduct an in-depth investigation of the wide discrepancy of satisfaction between the staff and students over the adequacy of learning resources.**

In line with its Strategic Goal to offer high quality learning opportunities, the College has built a new Engineering block. Members of the Panel visited the new facility, and met with groups of both academic and technical staff. The new engineering building contains a full range of laboratories to support both Mechanical and Electrical Engineering with state of the art equipment. It is well-staffed with good management, and staff morale is very high. The physical facilities and ambience are extremely good, and the facilities should materially assist the College in delivering high quality Engineering Education. The supply of equipment for year 1 of the Diploma program is complete, and the roll-out for year 2 of the Diploma program is on target.

**Commendation 3**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority commends Ibri College of Technology for the development of its new Engineering teaching facilities to support the student learning experience in this area.**

## **7 STUDENTS AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

The Student Affairs Department (SAD) at Ibri CoT is guided by Strategic Plan Goal 7 which states "*We will provide excellent student services that support learning in technological education*". This Chapter reports on Panel findings in relation to students and support services at Ibri CoT which includes: students and support services planning and management; student profile; student satisfaction; student behavior; career and employment services; student finances; accommodation; catering; transportation; medical and counseling facilities; and social and recreational services.

### **7.1 *Students and Student Support Services Planning & Management***

The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (ADSA) is responsible for the planning and management of student services and operational plan of the Student Affairs Department (SAD). The Career Guidance and Graduate Follow-up Department (CGFD), Housing, Student Activities and Graduation Department (HSAGD), Admission and Registration Department and On-the-Job-Training (OJT) Department along with the Assistant Dean for Administrative and Finance Affairs (ADAFSA), are all responsible for assisting the ADSA in the planning and managing student support services. The ADSA is also responsible for reviewing student support services and providing medical facilities, establishing career guidance office and implementing the student grievance system. The College has established a Student Council and they are involved in getting feedback from students to review the students' support services (Portfolio, p.62).

The College conducted a student satisfaction survey during the academic year 2011-12 about student services. All areas had a response rate well below 3.5 (on a scale of 5) the target set by the College (Portfolio, p.63). The Panel noted, and agreed with the College, regarding the need for improving the planning and management of its student services. There is a need to carefully analyze the responses and take effective measures for improvement. Students should be informed about the actions taken in response to their feedback. Responsiveness to student feedback will support the college's effort to achieve its Strategic Goal of "providing excellent student services" (see Section 1.6).

### **7.2 *Student Profile***

The Ministry of Manpower (MoM) determines the College's annual intake quota. According to the statistics provided by Ibri CoT, 2,067 students were enrolled in the academic year 2011-2012. 885 students were registered in the General Foundation Program (GFP) and the remaining in the academic programs. The majority (approximately 63%) of Ibri CoT's students are male. All Ibri CoT students are Omani nationals mainly from the Al-Dhahira, Al-Dhakiliyah and Al-Buraimi regions (Portfolio, p.64). At the time of the audit visit, in June 2013, the student population had increased to approximately 2,457. The College is encouraged to align its resource planning to the increase in its student population.

### **7.3 *Student Satisfaction and Climate***

Ibri CoT believes that providing a positive and constructive climate on campus enhances student learning (Portfolio, p.65). It claims that it is committed to increase student satisfaction by seeking student feedback and addressing issues that concern them. According to the College, the Grievance Policy helps both staff and students to seek solutions to their problems and handle any grievances (SP Strategy 1.8.1, and QAM, Section 9.10 & 8.6). During the induction, students are made aware of this Policy as well as the College values (QAM, Section 1.4). The ADSA is responsible for supervising, following-up and reviewing student satisfaction and climate.

Student Council representatives informed the Panel that the Student Council meets with students and collects feedback and discusses it with the senior management to resolve the students' issues. A student satisfaction survey is conducted every year. The results of the 2011-12 survey show a low level of satisfaction among the students with the majority of student support services. The Panel conducted several interviews with students of various levels in different departments. Although the College has attempted to give feedback to students through joint meetings with the administration, the Panel received mixed responses from the students and it could not find evidence that their concerns were being addressed in a systematic way. The College needs to continue its efforts to respond effectively to student feedback and ensure that any actions taken in response to their feedback are communicated to them. The Panel supports Ibri CoT's intentions and initial steps taken to improve feedback and communication with students.

#### **Affirmation 6**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology that it needs to improve its feedback and communication to students regarding actions taken in response to their concerns, and supports its efforts in this area.**

#### **7.4 *Student Behaviour***

SAD conducts an induction week, at the beginning of every semester, for all newly enrolled students at Ibri CoT and distributes a Student Handbook which covers College rules and regulations, student services, student rights and responsibilities (Portfolio, p.66). The Panel interviews with the students suggested that the induction activities assist students in understanding what is expected from them while at the College.

The Investigation Committee and a Disciplinary Committee are responsible for dealing with student grievances, disciplinary violations and cheating cases according to the rules and regulations of the College. The effectiveness of these Committees is measured based on the number of cases reported and resolved. According to the data provided by the College, there has been an increase in the number of cases reported in recent years and Ibri CoT is encouraged to investigate the reasons of this.

#### **7.5 *Career and Employment Services***

The College provides career and employment-related services to the students to assist them in career planning and job placement through the efforts of ADSA, CGFD and HoDs. Recently, a Career Guidance Office (CGO) has been established to assist the students in finding employment (Portfolio p.68). The CGFD prepares the students for job placement by training them in career planning, interview skills and resume preparation. A course called 'job search' is offered at Diploma year 1 level to assist the students gain the skills necessary to obtain or improve employment. The CGFD sends the graduate CVs to companies in the region. The student satisfaction level on career guidance is well below the target (2.89 against the target of 3.5 - Student Satisfaction Survey 2011-12).

The CGFD has procured software for graduate data collection. The Department regularly contacts the graduates and updates their data. The Panel confirmed this from the interview with the graduates. The College organized an alumni meeting and the Panel was told that more than 70% of the alumni attended. The College identified the scope for improvement in student employment services by conducting more job fairs, seminars, and industry visits and the Panel agrees with this approach (See Affirmation 4).

## 7.6 *Student Finances*

Ibri CoT is a government-funded College and a monthly allowance is provided by the Ministry of Manpower to help students meet their transportation and accommodation expenses. Students who live less than 50 Km from the College receive RO 45 with RO 90 allocated to those who live at a distance of 50 Km or more from the College. Students informed the Panel that the monthly allowance is not sufficient to meet their needs. There were occasional delays in receiving these allowances and students have raised their concerns through the Student Council to the management.

## 7.7 *Accommodation, Catering and Transport*

The Housing, Student Activities & Graduation Department (HSAG) helps the students in searching for accommodation in Ibri as the College is no longer responsible for providing accommodation (Portfolio, p.70). The catering services are outsourced and the ADAFA monitors the quality of this provision. A new building is planned for the future which should accommodate a new cafeteria. Ibri CoT does not provide any transportation services to the students for travel between the College and their accommodation. The College uses a bus and two cars for transportation during industry visits, intercollegiate competitions, academic events, attending classes at Vocational Training Centre (VTC Ibri), participation in extracurricular activities and for hospital visits (Portfolio, p.70).

The student satisfaction survey results (academic year 2011-12) show very poor ratings for services. The College administration acknowledges that the current cafeteria space is not sufficient but expects that the problem will be solved once a planned new building is ready. The College has taken action to regularly check the quality and hygiene of the cafeteria by concerned department staff. While the Panel supports the College's intention to improve the catering service through consultation with students and the plan to build new facilities, it needs to address the current issues with the catering provision.

### **Affirmation 7**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology that it needs to address the issues facing the provision of catering services, and supports its intention to improve the catering system to meet student expectations.**

## 7.8 *Medical and Counseling Facilities*

Ibri CoT states that it is committed to providing good health care and counseling services (SP, Strategy 8.3.2). ADSA is responsible for supervising and reviewing student's healthcare, and the Head of CGFD is responsible for supervising the student counseling

The CGFD provides counseling services for students who have social or emotional problems. There are four counselors working in the Department to support the students. Currently, the College has no on-campus medical facility but it has signed an agreement with Ibri Hospital for ambulance service to be used in case of an emergency. The Panel formed the view, after interviews with students and staff, that the lack of basic medical service is a matter of concern. The effectiveness of medical and counseling services are measured regularly through surveys and the 2011-12 survey results were well below the target set by the College. The College identified these concerns and took actions to address them. During the audit visit, the College administration informed the Panel that the proposal for the appointment of two nurses has already been approved by MoM.



**Affirmation 8**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology that it needs to provide an on-campus medical facility and supports its efforts to make improvements in medical provision with assistance from the Ministry of Manpower.**

**7.9 *International Student Services***

This Section is not applicable to Ibri College of Technology as there are no international students.

**7.10 *Social and Recreational Services and Facilities***

The ADSA, ADAFA, the Head of HSAGD and Head of Administrative Department are responsible for social and recreational activities in the College. The HSAGD works to create awareness of these activities and actively get students involved. The College indicates that the students are given freedom to express their talents, channel their energy to constructive extra-curricular activities like sports, clubs, artistic activities, exhibitions and cultural exchanges (Portfolio, p.72).

The effectiveness of the system for social and recreational services and facilities is measured through the number of activities conducted and the satisfaction of students on services provided. The student satisfaction survey (academic year 2011-12) for recreational facilities was low. The Panel learned that only very limited facilities are in place for the students. The data given in Table 7.4 of the Portfolio confirms this. Even though Ibri CoT recognizes the dissatisfaction of students in this area, no clear action has been taken to address it. The Panel considers that the College needs to enhance its provision of social and recreational services and facilities.

**Recommendation 21**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology enhance its provision of social and recreational services as well as facilities to meet student expectations.**

## 8 STAFF AND STAFF SUPPORT SERVICES

Strategic Goal 3 states that Ibri CoT:

*...will develop staff, offering opportunities for professional and personal growth and development, rewarding hard work and fostering leadership skills and innovative thinking. (Strategic Plan, p.6)*

This Chapter reports on the staff and staff support services. It includes Human Resources (HR) planning and management; staff profile; recruitment and selection; induction; professional development; performance planning and review; promotion and other incentives; severance; staff organizational climate and retention and Omanization.

### 8.1 *Human Resources Planning & Management*

The Head of HR Department (HRD) has the overall responsibility for HR planning and management under the supervision of Assistant Dean for Administration and Financial Affairs (ADAFA). The Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs (ADAA), ADAFA, Heads of Centers and Departments (C&Ds), and Head of HRD all support the Dean in HR planning and management; they identify staff requirements and prepare a projection plan. Section 9 in the Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) has policies, procedures and guidelines related to HR. Strategic Plan (SP) strategies 1.8.1, 1.8.2, 2.12, 2.13, 2.2.1, and 2.2.2 provide guidelines for Ibri CoT staff and services. The Human Resource Development Committee (HRDC) plans and manages staff development (Portfolio, p.73).

There are Ministry of Manpower (MoM) policies that place constraints on the College's capacity regarding staff recruitment. Academic staff members are recruited either directly by the MoM or by approved agencies. However, the College has authority with respect to staff development and appraisal. There is a need for the College to develop and implement an HR plan incorporating recruitment, development, management, rewards and incentives for good practices and to support the implementation of its Omanization Policy.

#### **Recommendation 22**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology, in collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower, revise its Human Resources Management Policy and procedures and develop and implement a plan for this area incorporating recruitment, professional development, management, rewards and incentives for good practice as well as Omanization.**

### 8.2 *Staff Profile*

Based on the Bylaws (Article 13), the ADAFA is responsible for maintaining and providing all information and statistics related to all staff. Ibri CoT manually maintains and retrieves staff records, and recently started using the MoM central registration system for maintaining staff data (Portfolio, p.75).

Table 8.1 (Portfolio, p.76) shows a total of 247 staff members working at the College (as of Feb. 2013). About 10% of the total staff are PhD holders, and about 55.5% hold Master degrees. Table 8.4 (Portfolio, p. 83) shows that there were a total of 239 staff (administrative and academic) employed as of Feb. 2012 of which the administrative staff were 100% Omanized and the academic staff were 38% Omanized.

### 8.3 *Recruitment and Selection*

The criteria for the recruitment of staff are specified in the College's QAM. The Dean is expected to report staff shortages to the MoM and is supposed to participate in the selection and screening process, which does not always happen. Strategies 3.1.1 and 2.1.1 set the Recruitment Policy and targets. It was noted that there are occasional delays in appointment of staff.

The appointment of the Dean is made by the Minister of Manpower. The Bylaws state that the Board of Trustees (BoT) is responsible for endorsing the Appointment Policy of College Deans, their assistants, members of the academic and support staff. Recruitment of academic and support staff is either through the MoM or by agencies and those recruited by agencies have contracts with the respective agency. This permits the Dean and senior staff little involvement in managing the performance of these staff (see Section 8.6). The Panel is of the view that appropriate performance management of staff is critical to assuring the quality of educational delivery.

Table 8.2 (Portfolio, p.77) shows that most of the academic staff were employed by agencies. There is variation in the terms and conditions of employment between MoM and agency-employed faculty. The Panel agrees with Ibri CoT that the Dean and HoDs need to be involved in interviews and staff selection in order to ensure that appropriate staff are recruited for the College context; and supports its efforts to improve coordination with MoM and the agencies to ensure well-timed recruitment of staff.

#### **Affirmation 9**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority supports the efforts of Ibri College of Technology to improve selection of staff by involving the Dean and department heads with the recruitment of all staff whether through the Ministry of Manpower or external agencies in order to ensure that appropriate staff are recruited to meet the needs of the College.**

### 8.4 *Induction*

Induction policies and procedures are specified in QAM. Induction is intended to be given to new staff based on the Strategic Plan (Strategies 2.1.2 and 3.2.2). A staff handbook is given to new staff during induction by the HRD. Induction programs are done at the College and department levels.

Supporting material provided to the Panel showed that newly recruited staff had induction on their responsibilities, organizational requirements and facilities and were introduced to the Dean, Assistant Deans, and HoDs/HoCs. Survey results show that the mean for staff satisfaction on induction was 4.33 in the academic year 2011-2012, which is higher than the target set in the SP. The Panel encourages the College to maintain its good practice in the area of staff induction.

### 8.5 *Professional Development*

The College has policies for conducting professional development programs for its staff (Article 27C, Bylaws, Section 9.6 & Appendix 5, QAM and Strategy 2.2.2, 3.2.3 & 3.2.5, SP). The HRDC supports all professional development activities at the College level while Staff Development Committee (SDC) supports these at the department level. The main activities of the SDC includes identifying and analyzing staff training needs; identifying staff performance strengths and weaknesses; and planning and conducting training programs. The MoM has a system in place for providing professional development opportunities to Omani staff. Supporting material provided by Ibri CoT lists the committees and their tasks and includes a list of staff development internal and external training activities and workshops, including workshops on SP, QA and Approach, Deployment, Results and Improvements (ADRI) model. Ibri CoT has

supported eight of its Omani staff to enroll in Bachelor programs, one in post-graduate and three in PhD programs (Portfolio, p.79).

The Panel found that there was an inconsistent approach to providing professional development opportunities and no alignment with performance appraisal outcomes. (see also Recommendation 22).

### 8.6 *Performance Planning and Review*

The Dean, Assistant Deans, HoCs, HoDs and HRD are responsible for staff appraisal. Section 9.7 of the QAM presents the College Staff Appraisal Policy which Ibri CoT applies (SP, Strategy 2.2.1, 3.2.1, and 2.2.2). The HoCs and HoDs conduct the staff appraisal for their academic staff based on student feedback, Head of Section (HoS) and HoC/HoD evaluation.

The Civil Service Evaluation Form is used to evaluate Ministry-hired staff. The Dean appraises Assistant Deans. The HoDs and HoSs conduct class observations and give feedback reports to the academic staff. Student course evaluation is done once a semester; and HoD gives feedback to the academic staff. High performing staff are given awards and financial incentives for example, departments have employee-of-the-month awards. The Panel found some dissatisfaction with the appraisal system in Ibri CoT. The College is encouraged to monitor staff satisfaction with regard to the appraisal system.

The College needs to address the staff performance planning and review system to make it effective, constructive and fair and applicable to all staff, whether employed by the MoM or by external agencies. The staff appraisal system should be linked with staff development.

#### **Recommendation 23**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology develop a robust staff appraisal system and link it to staff development as a component of an overarching strategy.**

### 8.7 *Promotion and Other Incentives*

Promotion criteria are based on the Civil Services rules and regulations for the staff hired by the MoM, and the promotion criteria are decided by the Dean for staff hired by the agencies (Portfolio, p.80). Ibri CoT addresses rewards and incentives in Strategy 3.2.4 SP for staff based on their activities and appraisal results. The College has a policy and process for various awards such as Best Teacher; Best Staff of the Month and Best Staff of the Year to motivate its staff. The outstanding performers are nominated by the HoCs/HoDs who recommend them for an award to the HRD; and the Dean makes the final decision.

There was no evidence of a policy for promoting academic staff from one level to another for example Assistant Professor to Associate Professor and/or Associate Professor to Professor. Ibri CoT plans to address low staff satisfaction with the transparency of rewards and incentives (Portfolio, p.81) but does not state how. Ibri CoT, in conjunction with MoM, needs to implement a consistent and transparent promotion system.

#### **Recommendation 24**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology, in collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower, develop a promotion system for academic ranking and implement this in a transparent and consistent manner.**

## 8.8 *Severance*

According to Articles 9.12, 11.11 & 22.10 of the Bylaws, the Dean and HoDs are responsible for managing staff grievances. Ibri CoT has a Staff Grievance Policy and Staff Appeals Committee to deal with problems faced by the staff (Section 8.6, QAM). The grievances of MoM employees are handled by the respective Assistant Deans and those of agency employees are handled by the agency (Portfolio, p.81).

The services of MoM-employed staff are terminated in accordance with Civil Service rules and the services of other staff are terminated by their employing agency as laid down in their contracts. The Panel agrees with Ibri CoT's aim to revise its severance system (Portfolio, p.81) and to ensure that the process and procedure for managing severance are effective, constructive and consistently implemented.

## 8.9 *Staff Organizational Climate and Retention*

The College Council (CC) has the overall responsibility of maintaining suitable organizational climate; the Dean and the ADAFA are responsible for providing facilities for the staff. The College strives to provide a satisfactory environment for staff in order to retain them (SP, Strategy 3.12). Ibri CoT has organized some activities such as "open days, cultural weeks and declamation contests" to provide staff recreational activities (Portfolio, p.82).

The survey on staff satisfaction with work environment shows a score of 3.42 slightly below the target of 3.5 (Portfolio, p.82). However, data presented by the College shows continuous increase in the number of resignations from Ibri CoT from 2007-2008 to 2011-2012 from about 8 to 30 (Portfolio, p.82). The Panel heard that there were a number of obstacles to staff retention such as: location of the College particularly its distance from Muscat, limited recreational and entertainment facilities; and inconsistent application of promotion and appraisal systems. Staff felt that individuals with similar qualifications and experience to those working at Ibri CoT obtain higher salaries in other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and that the differences in salaries paid by different agencies is one of the main reasons behind the high rate of staff turnover in Ibri CoT.

There is variation in terms and conditions of employment between MoM and agency-employed faculty. It is suggested that Ibri CoT conduct an investigation of the causes of the variation and work to address the issues. Furthermore Ibri CoT, in conjunction with MoM, needs to introduce a consistent promotion policy and equitable salary scales to ensure fairness to staff members which may help to decrease staff turnover.

### **Recommendation 25**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College Technology, in collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower, explore the causes of high staff turnover; review salary scales; and ensure transparency and fairness regardless of channel of recruitment.**

## 8.10 *Omanization*

Ibri CoT follows the Policy of Omanization laid by the MoM (Portfolio, p.83), and the HRD of the College is responsible for the policy for recruitment, promotion, incentives, and approval for postgraduate studies. Table 8.4 shows an increasing trend in the total number of Omani staff overall during the years 2010-11 to 2011-12 (Portfolio, p.83). As per the Table, all staff in the administration section are Omani. The other centers and departments have the following Omanization levels: Educational Technology Center (ETC) 67%; English Language (ELC) Center 28%; Engineering 20%; Business Studies Department 10% and the Information Technology Department 5%. The MoM has signed bilateral agreements with HEIs to provide

training and higher education to Omani staff in order to improve the Omanization drive for the CoTs. The Panel supports Ibri CoT's plans to recommend qualified employees for higher studies and prepare them for technical and academic positions in the College.

## 9 GENERAL SUPPORT SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Provision of general support services at Ibri CoT is guided by its Strategic Goal 8 which states, "We will ensure that College facilities are well managed, effectively used, and developed innovatively". This Chapter reports the Panel's findings in relation to four areas: general support services and facilities planning and management; public relations and marketing; communication services; and facilities management.

### 9.1 *General Support Services and Facilities Planning & Management*

The Assistant Dean for Administration & Financial Affairs (ADAF) is responsible for planning and maintaining general facilities such as building, car parking and so on. The Management of general support services and facilities planning and management is the responsibility of Head of Administrative Affairs.

The ADAFA, in consultation with the other Unit Heads, prepares an overall plan based on the previous year's experience and in the light of the needs for the forthcoming year (Portfolio, p.84). The effectiveness of some of the general facilities is measured through the student satisfaction survey and the majority of the areas scored below the target level. Maintenance seems to be carried out on an *ad hoc*, reactive basis and that there is no equipment replacement/maintenance plan. There is no evidence of a systematic approach to monitoring the effectiveness of facilities management.

#### **Recommendation 26**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority recommends that Ibri College of Technology develop and implement a strategic and systematic approach to facilities management.**

The College reported that campus expansion is based on the increasing size of student intake year by year. The College has built a new Engineering building with state-of-the art Electrical and Mechanical Engineering laboratories.

### 9.2 *Public Relations and Marketing*

As per the Strategic Plan (SP) Goal 5, Ibri CoT states that it works toward an open and fruitful relationship with public and private sector organizations and community at large. Public relations (community engagement, media relations, inter-institutional relations and relationship with private and governmental organizations) are governed by the policies in Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) (3.8-3.11). The responsibility for pursuing these activities rests with the Public Relations and Marketing Committee (PRMC). Activities of PRMC and working groups such as Reception and Hospitality Team; Media and Marketing Team; Industry and Community Relation Team are planned and managed by the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (ADSA).

Ibri CoT indicated that the College reached 100% target in most of the activities planned and intends to plan more activities for the next academic year (Portfolio, p.88). The College also intends to give more attention to a number of areas to improve its relationship with the community. No evidence of progress in these matters was noted during interviews conducted during the audit visit nor through the review of supplementary materials. External stakeholders have raised the need for a large auditorium for activities with local community with the College Council (CC) and they also stressed the importance of enhancing marketing activities to promote College programs to create awareness among the local community (see Section 5.6). There is currently no mechanism to collect community feedback about the effectiveness of public relations

and it is suggested that the College address this gap so that the feedback can inform the planning process.

### 9.3 *Communication Services*

Ibri CoT uses various communication channels including LCD TV displays, notice boards, circulars, meetings, College intranet, and a website for communications among the College community. All staff members have College e-mail addresses where most inter- and intra-departmental exchange of information takes place. The Learning Management System (Moodle) is used for disseminating course information (Refer to Section 2.5). In order to share documents among the staff, 'shared folders' have been created. The College uses both English and Arabic languages for communication.

The College has identified that there is dissatisfaction amongst both staff and students with internet speed and approached the Ministry of Manpower (MoM) to take steps to increase the speed. Communication services received a low rating in the student satisfaction survey (academic year 2011-12) but the scores may improve once internet speed has been increased (see Section 6.4). The College also plans to improve the communication services like e-mail service and website (Portfolio p.89). The Panel supports this.

#### **Affirmation 10**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology for the need to improve its communication services and monitor satisfaction level of its stakeholders.**

### 9.4 *Facilities Management*

The Head of Administration Department at Ibri CoT supervises the College stores, maintenance and annual inventory, College properties such as equipment and furniture, with the help of the storekeeper and the internal auditor conducts regular audits of the College's properties. An audit team from the MoM conducts an annual audit of procedures and the maintenance of inventory. Housekeeping and general maintenance is done by an outside company on a contract basis. The student satisfaction survey is conducted yearly to measure their satisfaction about the College facilities (Portfolio, p.89). The College notes that the satisfaction on the facilities is below target and steps have been taken to address them (see Affirmation 8).

There is inadequacy of some facilities such as car parking and the cafeteria. In view of the students' request for additional parking spaces, the College has proposed a plan to MoM, where areas are earmarked for parking facilities, greenery, and so on and as an interim solution, provided temporary parking space for the students. This initiative is a positive step towards solving the issue.

#### **Affirmation 11**

**The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority agrees with Ibri College of Technology that additional parking facility is needed for the students and supports the Colleges interim initiative of providing a temporary parking space.**



**APPENDIX A. AUDIT PANEL**

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## APPENDIX B. ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS AND TERMS

The following abbreviations, acronyms and terms are used in this Report. As necessary, they are explained in context. In some cases, URLs are provided to facilitate further enquiries about these acronyms and terms.

ADAA .....	Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs
ADAFAs.....	Assistant Dean for Administration and Financial Affairs
ADC.....	Academic Department Council
ADRI .....	A four step, cyclical model for analysing a topic, comprising: Approach → Deployment → Results → Improvement.
ADSA .....	Assistant Dean for Student Affairs
Approach .....	The first dimension of the ADRI cycle, which focuses on evaluating what a HEI aims to achieve for a given topic and how it proposes to achieve it.
ARD.....	Admission and Registration Department
AY.....	Academic Year
BoT.....	Board of Trustees
C & Ds.....	Centers and Departments
CC.....	College Council
CDPs.....	Course Delivery Plans
CEC .....	Central Examination Committee
CGFD .....	Counseling and Graduates Follow-up Department
CISCO .....	Computer Information Systems Company
CoTs.....	Colleges of Technology
CRO.....	College Risk Officer
CSMS .....	Centralised Student Management System
CV .....	Curriculum Vitae
Deployment .....	The second dimension of the ADRI cycle, which focuses on whether a HEI's plans for a given topic are being followed in practice, and if not, why not.
DGTE .....	Director General for Technical Education in the Ministry of Manpower
ETC .....	Educational Technology Center
Executive Officer.....	An OAAA staff member assigned to an Audit Panel to provide professional guidance and support.
External Reviewer .....	A Member of the OAAA Register of External Reviewers; a person approved by the OAAA Board to participate as a member of the OAAA's various external review panels.
GAs.....	Graduate Attributes
GFP.....	General Foundation Program
HEI .....	Higher Education Institution (also known as HEP – Higher Education Provider)
HoC .....	Head of Center
HoD .....	Head of Department

HoS.....	Head of Section
HR .....	Human Resources
HRD .....	Human Resources Department
HRDC.....	Human Resources Development Committee
HSAGD .....	Housing, Student Activities and Graduation Department
HSC .....	Health and Safety Committee
HSP.....	Health and Safety Policy
Ibri CoT .....	Ibri College of Technology
IC.....	Investigation Committee
IC3.....	Internet and Computing Core Certification
ICDL.....	International Computer Driving License
IEEE .....	Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
ILTS.....	Information and Learning Technology Services
Improvement .....	The fourth dimension of the ADRI cycle, which focuses on how effectively an organisation is improving its <i>approach</i> and <i>deployment</i> for any given topic in order to achieve better <i>results</i> .
IT .....	Information Technology
KPI .....	Key Performance Indicator
MCRS.....	Ministry of Manpower Central Registration System
MoM.....	Ministry of Manpower ( <a href="http://www.manpower.gov.om">www.manpower.gov.om</a> )
OAAA .....	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority ( <a href="http://www.oaaa.gov.om">www.oaaa.gov.om</a> )
OAAA Board.....	The governing body of the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority
OAC .....	Oman Accreditation Council (became OAAA in 2010)
OJT .....	On-the-Job-Training
OP.....	Operational Plan
OQN .....	Oman Quality Network
Panel Chairperson .....	The Chairperson of the Audit Panel.
Panel Member .....	An OAAA External Reviewer who is a member of an Audit Panel.
PMC .....	Policy Management Committee
PMS.....	Policy Management System
Portfolio.....	see <i>Quality Audit Portfolio</i> .
PRMC.....	Public Relations and Marketing Committee
QA .....	Quality Assurance . The combination of policies and processes for ensuring that stated intentions are met.
QAD .....	Quality Assurance Department
QAFC .....	Quality Assurance and Follow Up Committee
QAM.....	Quality Assurance Manual
Quality Audit.....	An independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the system and processes by which a HEI sets, pursues and achieves its mission and vision.
Quality Audit Portfolio.....	The report produced as the result of a self study. Also forms the main submission made to the OAAA by the HEI being audited.

Quality Audit Report .....	A public report published by the OAAA which presents the findings and conclusions of the Audit Panel's External Review of a HEI.
Quality Enhancement .....	The combination of policies and processes for improving upon existing <i>approach, deployment</i> and <i>results</i> .
Random Interview .....	An interview conducted <i>in situ</i> by individual Panel Members during the Audit but separately from the main interview sessions.
Results .....	The third dimension of the ADRI cycle, which focuses on the evidence of the outputs and outcomes of a topic's <i>approach</i> and <i>deployment</i> .
RMC .....	Risk Management Committee
RR.....	Risk Register
SA.....	Student Affairs Department
SC .....	Specialization Committee
SDC .....	Staff Development Committee
SGP.....	Student Grievance Policy
SP.....	Strategic Plan
SPAR .....	Strategic Plan Appraisal Report
System .....	In this Report, <i>system</i> refers to plans, policies, processes and results that are integrated towards the fulfilment of a common purpose.
TC.....	Technical Committee
VMV.....	Vision, Mission and Values



