Recognition of the Right to Trade Union Membership and Employee Representation

INDICATOR 8.2.2 | Legal and institutional supporting evidence | 12 November 2026

Executive Summary

The University of Bahrain recognises employees' right to join legally established trade unions in accordance with Workers Trade Union Law No. (33) of 2002, as amended. As the University operates within the Kingdom of Bahrain's civil service framework, the provisions applicable to employees governed by civil service regulations also apply to University employees. In particular, Article (10) of the Workers Trade Union Law, as amended by Legislative Decree No. (35) of 2011, expressly provides employees subject to civil service regulations with the right to join trade unions established under the Law.

Accordingly, eligible University employees, including women and international staff, may exercise their statutory right to trade union membership in accordance with applicable legal requirements. Under the civil service framework applicable to government entities, this right relates to joining legally established trade unions and does not extend to establishing an independent trade union within the University.

Key Evidence and Results

- **Civil service applicability:** The University operates within Bahrain's civil service framework; therefore, the statutory provisions applicable to civil-service employees are relevant to University employees.
- **Right to join:** Article 10, as amended by Legislative Decree No. 35 of 2011, expressly confirms the right of employees governed by civil-service regulations to join trade unions established under the Law.
- **Inclusive recognition:** The University recognises this statutory membership right for eligible employees, including women and international staff, subject to applicable legal requirements.
- **Institutional boundary:** The recognised right is a right to join legally established trade unions. It does not extend to establishing an independent trade union within the University under the civil service framework applicable to government entities.
- **Related protections:** Articles 2 and 3 of the Workers Trade Unions Law provide the wider statutory framework, including voluntary membership and protection from adverse employment treatment arising from trade-union activity.

• Public accessibility: Relevant University policies, regulations and governance instruments are made publicly accessible through the University's official website, supporting independent verification of the institutional and legal evidence referenced under Indicator 8.2.2.

Primary legal sources

Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Article 27
Workers Trade Unions Law, Legislative Decree No. 33 of 2002, Articles 2, 3 and 10
Legislative Decree No. 35 of 2011, Article 1 (amending Article 10)

1. Current National Legal Framework

The following provisions are drawn from the legislation published by Bahrain's Legislation and Legal Opinion Commission. The 2011 wording of Article 10 is used because it is the amended provision relevant to employees governed by civil-service regulations.

Primary legal provision	Direct relevance to University employees
Constitution, Article 27	Protects lawful freedom of association and the voluntary character of membership in associations and trade unions, subject to statutory conditions.
Workers Trade Unions Law, Article 2	Brings employees governed by civil-service systems within the statutory framework of the Law.
Workers Trade Unions Law, Article 3	Protects voluntary union membership and prohibits adverse employment treatment arising from trade-union activity.
Article 10, as amended by Legislative Decree No. 35 of 2011	Expressly provides that employees governed by civil-service regulations have the right to join trade unions established under the Law.

2. Scope of Recognition and Non-Discrimination

The University's recognition of the statutory trade-union membership right extends to eligible members of its academic and administrative workforce, including women and international staff, subject to the membership requirements established by applicable national law and the rules of the relevant legally established trade union.

Employees' choice to join or not to join a lawful trade union is respected. This recognition concerns statutory trade-union membership and is distinct from the University's internal academic, administrative and grievance structures.

3. Application of the Civil Service Framework to Trade Union Membership

The University of Bahrain operates within the Kingdom of Bahrain's civil service framework. Consequently, the legal position applicable to employees governed by civil-service regulations is directly relevant to University employees.

Article 10 of the Workers Trade Unions Law, as amended by Legislative Decree No. 35 of 2011, expressly recognises the right of employees governed by civil-service regulations to join trade unions established under the Law. Within the civil service framework applicable to government entities, this statutory right is therefore a right of membership in legally established trade unions and does not extend to establishing an independent trade union within the University.

For this reason, the absence of a University-specific registered trade union does not negate the statutory trade-union membership right recognised under Article 10. The University's evidence for Indicator 8.2.2 is based on recognition of that lawful right and does not claim the existence of an internal registered union or a University-specific collective-bargaining body.

4. Employee Participation and Grievance Safeguards

Separate from trade-union membership, national legislation and University governance instruments establish channels for academic participation and for reviewing employment decisions. These mechanisms have distinct institutional functions and are not presented as trade unions or as bodies independently exercising collective-bargaining powers.

Mechanism	Institutional function	Supporting instrument
Department Councils	Academic participation in departmental studies, research, examinations and related academic affairs.	University Establishment Law No. 12 of 1986, Articles 20–21, as amended.
College Councils	College-level academic participation and consideration of academic matters.	University Establishment Law No. 12 of 1986, Articles 17–18, as amended.
Administrative grievance channels	Review of administrative decisions affecting employees' employment rights under the Civil Service framework.	Civil Service Law No. 48 of 2010, Article 30; Decision No. 51 of 2012, Article 45, as amended; Civil Service Bureau President's Decision No. 4 of 2023.
Faculty grievance mechanism	Dedicated regulations governing faculty employment grievances.	University Council Decision No. 255 of 2025, dated 26 May 2025.

5. Public Accessibility and Transparency

The University of Bahrain maintains public access to its relevant institutional policies, regulations and governance instruments through its official website. The legal and regulatory documents supporting employees' rights, including those applicable to employment practices and the Civil Service framework, are therefore publicly accessible and independently verifiable.

The University's public governance and sustainability webpages provide access to the relevant policies, regulations and supporting evidence referenced under Indicator 8.2.2. This ensures that the University's recognition of employees' trade union membership rights is supported by publicly accessible evidence.

Public evidence	What the source establishes
Constitution, Article 27	Freedom of association and voluntary trade-union membership under statutory conditions.
Workers Trade Unions Law No. 33 of 2002, Articles 2–3	Civil-service coverage, voluntary membership and protection against adverse treatment arising from union activity.
Legislative Decree No. 35 of 2011, amended Article 10	Express right of employees governed by civil-service regulations to join trade unions established under the Law.
University Establishment Law, Articles 17–21	Department and college councils as academic participation bodies.
Civil Service Law, Article 30, and implementing regulations, Article 45	Legal framework for grievance review affecting employment rights.
Civil Service Bureau President's Decision No. 4 of 2023	Specialised grievance instructions for employees within its scope.
University Council Decision No. 255 of 2025	Faculty-specific grievance regulation approved in 2025.

6. Conclusion

The University of Bahrain recognises the statutory right of eligible employees, including women and international staff, to join legally established trade unions in accordance with Bahrain's Workers Trade Union Law. Because the University operates within the civil service framework applicable to government entities, this right is recognised as a right to join trade unions established under the Law and does not extend to establishing an independent trade union within the University. Relevant University policies, regulations and governance instruments are publicly accessible through the University's official website, enabling independent verification of the institutional evidence supporting this recognition. The University's internal academic participation and grievance mechanisms remain separate institutional safeguards and are not presented as trade unions.