



هيئة ضمان جودة التعليم و التدريب
Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training

Vocational Review Unit Review Report

**Al Moalem Institute
Jidhafs
Kingdom of Bahrain**

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The Vocational Review Unit

The Vocational Review Unit (VRU) is part of the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET), an independent body set up under Royal Decree No.32 of 2008 amended by Royal Decree No. 6 of 2009. Established to raise standards in vocational education and training, the VRU is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the quality of vocational provision, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, establishing success measures, spreading best practice and offering policy advice to key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education.

Reviews are based on the VRU's *Review Framework*, and carried out on providers' premises by teams of carefully selected and highly trained reviewers. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the planning of the review, and to represent them during review team meetings. Reviewers examine a range of evidence before arriving at a series of judgements and awarding grades for the quality of the provision.

Review grades are awarded on a four-point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
1: Outstanding	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all aspects and outstanding in the majority.
2: Good	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least satisfactory in all aspects and good in the majority. There may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
3: Satisfactory	This describes a basic level of adequacy. There are no major areas of weakness which substantially affect what learners, or significant groups of learners, achieve. There may be some features which are good.
4: Inadequate	This describes situations where major weaknesses in some areas affect the outcomes for learners and outweigh any strengths in the provision.

Introduction

Description of the provision

Al Moalem Institute (AMI) was established in 1992 and it is licensed by the Ministry of Labour (MoL). The institute has one branch located on Jidhafs. During 2011, AMI enrolled a total of 888 learners of which the vast majority of them were sponsored by their employers.

AMI provide programmes in various areas of learning such as business administration, leadership and management, information technology, English language and health & safety. The institute has a number of international awarding body affiliations; these are mainly: The National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) of UK, Association of Business Executives (ABE) of UK, Chartered Quality Institute (CQI) of UK, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI-EDI), OSH Academy of US and Medic First Aid of US. In 2011, around 36 per cent of AMI's learners were enrolled on externally accredited courses.

AMI are operated by a general manager who is the owner as well and seven full-time staff distributed among the sales and marketing, administration and finance, operations and business development and quality assurance functions. The institute utilised a large pool of part time trainers.

Scope of the review

The review was conducted over three days by a team of four reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed training sessions and other related activities, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and the materials provided by the institute and talked with staff, learners, employers and trainers.

In the previous review, the overall effectiveness of AMI was judged as satisfactory. Learners' achievement, the quality of programmes, support and guidance and the effectiveness of leadership and management were judged as satisfactory. The quality of trainers was judged as good.

This report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what AMI should do to improve further.

Table of review judgments awarded

Overall Effectiveness	
How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the full range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?	Grade: 2 Good
Learners' Achievement	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 2 Good
Quality of Provision	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	Grade: 2 Good
How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	Grade: 2 Good
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	Grade: 2 Good
Leadership and Management	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all students?	Grade: 2 Good

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?

Grade: 2 Good

The overall effectiveness of AMI's provision is good. All other aspects of the provision are also judged to be good. Learners develop good skills and knowledge and most of them achieve their qualifications and meet their course objectives. Moreover, they make good progress compared to their starting points. The trainers at AMI are highly qualified and use relevant vocational examples. Moreover, they succeed in engaging learners through different techniques although learners' varying needs are not always considered. A well-balanced range of externally accredited and internal courses are on offer. These closely match employers' and learners' needs and provide them with progression levels. Moreover, learners receive effective support and guidance during and after courses and have access to well-informed guidance about courses. AMI's management ensures the quality of the provision through a robust quality system and has a well-established relationship with stakeholders.

AMI have a good capacity to improve. During the last two years it has implemented a number of useful plans including new affiliations with external bodies such as Medic First Aid and also introduced the award certificate from NEBOSH. Moreover, it became the examination centre for ABE. AMI have worked on strengthening its relationship with employers through various means and have added five members to the staff team. Moreover, the institute achieved three bids from Labour Fund (Tamkeen) and BDO Jawad to conduct courses. AMI are planning to move to a new location in Seef District. Moreover, it is planning to offer the Industrial Executive Diploma from the Institute of Professional Development from the Open University of Malaysia.

AMI have a good system for quality assurance of processes including policies and procedures in compliance with ISO 9001:2008 and a useful data base system is in place. The enrolment increased from 594 in 2010 to 888 in 2011 and the institute has good repeat business. AMI have the physical and human resources to carry out its improvement plans.

Learners' achievement

How well do students achieve?

Grade: 2 Good

Learners at AMI are developing good skills and knowledge which are applied at their workplaces. There are examples of learners who gained skills and knowledge that enabled them to take higher roles and responsibilities at work. Employers also testify to good skills and knowledge development by learners. Most learners achieve their qualifications and meet their course objectives. The overall success rate is high on externally accredited courses reaching to 92 per cent in 2011. The success rate on the internal courses of AMI, although not subject to a formal moderation and verification process is also high at 93 per cent in 2011. The overall retention of both types of courses is high reaching 99 and 97 per cent respectively.

Learners make good progress compared to their starting points. Most learners are self-motivated, enjoy their learning experience and actively participate during lessons. In the observed lessons, learners were able to work both collaboratively in groups and independently. Learners shared their views and cases from their work experience confidently in the lessons observed and some could reflect critically on how well they are progressing and plan for themselves what they must do to improve. Learners at AMI attend regularly and the attendance rate is high at 92 per cent. The institute has an attendance policy which is communicated to learners and follow-up is done in case of absence or lateness; however, punctuality was an issue in the majority of the observed lessons and there were cases of lateness as high as forty five minutes.

The quality of provision

How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?

Grade: 2 Good

AMI trainers are highly qualified, have many years of experience in their specialism and use relevant vocational examples very effectively, especially in the health and safety and soft skills courses. Lessons are generally well planned with objectives written on the board and shared with learners. Lessons start on time with good recapitulation that includes open discussions and question and answers. In the better lessons observed, trainers were able to further learners' understanding by challenging and further questioning. In most of the observed lessons, trainers succeeded in engaging learners through different techniques and by the use of various relevant activities. Learners' different needs were accommodated in the majority of lessons observed.

Trainers assess learners' work accurately and rigorously and provide helpful feedback. Reports of external verifiers stated that marking is accurate and fair in meeting the required standards. The pre- and post-course assessments for the internal courses fully cover the course objectives and the learning outcomes, although for the English language course the assessment does not fully cover the four main language skills.

AMI's trainers maintain and update useful progress reports for short courses. As for the one long course "Diploma in Kindergarten Administration", a well prepared progress report is in place which covers the assessments and activities together with a graphical presentation of the results. AMI trainers use learning resources effectively to promote learning including white board, flip chart, data show and dummies and fire extinguishers for demonstrations on health and safety courses.

How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?

Grade: 2 Good

AMI offer a well-balanced range of externally accredited courses and internal courses. The externally accredited courses are offered through affiliation with recognised international bodies in the areas of human resources, sales and marketing, English language, occupational health and safety, finance and accounting, information technology and quality assurance. In addition, it also offers a Diploma in Kindergarten Administration. The internal courses are in the areas of information technology, business administration, soft skills, English language and health and safety. AMI's courses match employers' and learners' needs very well and provide them with progression levels. Learners and employers stated that these are relevant and very helpful in the workplace. Courses are well structured, planned and resourced. Course materials suit learners' abilities at various levels. Moreover, AMI also customizes courses upon employers' requests.

Course material and presentations are updated by individual trainers' efforts and according to stakeholders' needs although this is not always systematic enough. AMI are in the process of developing and implementing a new procedure to assure consistency of all the learning material. AMI gauge the labour market needs through a combination of Tamkeen's skills gap study, learners' and employers' feedback as well as direct visits to organisations. AMI enhances the learning experience with an appropriate range of additional activities. For example, an educational trip was arranged for a group of learners on the Diploma in Kindergarten Administration to a model kindergarten in Saudi Arabia. In health and safety courses, a comprehensive health and safety booklet is given to all learners. Moreover, a safety news email was implemented to exchange the latest safety news and issues and a useful booklet on health and safety law in Bahrain was distributed to learners both in Arabic and English.

How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?

Grade: 2 Good

Learners receive effective support and guidance during and after courses. For example, learners attending long courses receive a very useful induction and are provided with extra additional hours for some modules when required. Learners on NEBOSH courses are provided with mock examinations and benefit from materials translated into Arabic. Learners are honoured for good attendance, being good achievers and for those who enrolled on several courses. AMI's trainers are available for support during and after courses as well as in cases where learners need to apply what has been learnt at the workplace. Moreover, learners are provided with a very well prepared "Learners' Guide" that has all the relevant required information. AMI have strong communication with employers including providing them with a well-designed report detailing the progress and performance of learners. In addition, learners are kept aware of their progress.

Course outlines and contents are available in advance to learners and employers. Learners have access to well-informed guidance about courses through a useful and updated website and well-designed brochures. The delivery of courses is appropriately flexible to suit the needs of learners and stakeholders. AMI have fit for purpose premises and facilities including sufficient computer laboratories. Most courses are conducted in hotels except for the information technology and English language courses.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

Grade: 2 Good

AMI have clear vision and mission statements which are focused on raising learners' achievement and a detailed business plan. The plan is cascaded into actions with clear responsibilities and target dates. Management recruits and deploys qualified staff and trainers and its organizational structure effectively meets the aims and objectives of the institute. A useful aggregation and analysis of data is available for management decision making. Through a robust quality system, AMI's management ensures the quality of the provision. Regular meetings are held and documented with clear responsibilities and deadlines. AMI regularly update employers on learners' performance and other related information on attendance and activities. The management has a strong relationship with stakeholders and its general manager personally follows up with them. In addition, learners'

and employers' feedback is systematically obtained and analysed and then discussed in the meetings and appropriate actions taken where required.

Essential health and safety measures are in place as well as a relevant health and safety policy. The majority of learners indicated that these were communicated to them at the start of the courses. AMI have a useful staff appraisal system in place together with a training needs analysis (TNA). Staff are provided with development opportunities through AMI courses and occasionally through attending conferences. Trainers are observed in lessons and a suitable form is used for the process, although this is not as systematic as it could be and feedback not always provided to trainers. Learners' prior knowledge is assessed on the English language courses. Moreover, for the accredited courses from ABE, numerical skills and language is checked and for the more advanced courses from NEBOSH, English language is also tested. However, this is not applied for all courses and it is not always clear how this information is utilised in lesson planning and for the accommodation of learners' varying needs. The self-evaluation form (SEF) is moderately critical and highlighted a few areas for improvement.

The provider's key strengths

- Learners make good progress from their starting points and develop relevant vocational skills and knowledge that they apply in the workplace
- Highly qualified trainers who have relevant experience and effectively use vocational examples and different activities which succeed in engaging learners
- A well-balanced range of externally accredited and internal courses with progression levels which closely match learners' and employers' needs
- Effective support and guidance to learners during and after courses
- Regular updates to employers on learners' performance and other related information using a well-designed report.

Recommendations

In order to improve, AMI should:

- ensure that learners' initial assessment is effectively utilised in lesson planning and in the accommodation of learners' varying needs
- ensure that lesson observations are done more systematically and feedback is always provided to trainers and this is then followed up for improvement.