



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

Vocational Review Unit

Review Report

Al Hayat Institute for Human Resources Development
Manama
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 five-point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
1: Outstanding	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all or nearly all aspects and is/are exemplary or exceptional in many.
2: Good	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are better than the basic level. Practice will be at least sound and there may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
3: Satisfactory	This describes a basic level of adequacy. No major areas of weakness substantially affect what learners, or significant groups of learners, achieve. Some features may be good.
4: Below satisfactory	This describes situations where major weaknesses in some areas affect the outcomes for learners and outweigh any strengths in the provision.
5: Very weak	This describes situations where there are major weaknesses in all, or almost all, areas and where, as a result, learners are very poorly served.

Introduction

Description of the provision

Al Hayat Institute for Human Resources Development (Al Hayat) was established in December 1999. The institute is licensed by the Ministry of Education to offer English and Information Technology (IT) programmes, and tutorial courses in English and Maths. All the provision is non-accredited, and most courses are of short duration. A longer course in IT was offered in 2008, but discontinued in 2009. In 2009, one-third of students were enrolled in English and IT courses while the other two-thirds attended tutorials. Most English and maths students are aged below 19, whilst those on IT courses tend to be older.

Al Hayat operates from one centre in Manama. It enrolled 989 students in 2008 and 1,384 during 2009. The institute is run by a team comprising a managing director, an operational manager, three secretaries, eight part time teachers, a transport co-ordinator, eight drivers and one cleaner.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over three days by a team of three reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed teaching sessions, analysed data about the qualifications students achieve and the courses they complete, and talked with the managing director, teachers, administration and support staff, students and stakeholders.

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

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Grade 5: Very weak

Al Hayat's provision is very weak overall. Whilst the teaching is satisfactory, students' achievement and range of courses are below satisfactory. The support and guidance provided to students and the effectiveness of Al Hayat's leadership and management are very weak.

Students' achievement is satisfactory on short courses in English language and IT, reaching 74% in 2008 and 86% in 2009. Achievement is measured through an internal examination, which is sufficiently rigorous. These courses make up one third of the enrolments. No data were available for the longer IT course run in 2008. The achievement and progress of the majority of students, those in tutorial courses, are not measured. Al Hayat does not take adequate steps to ensure that they have gained the required skills and knowledge. Students show satisfactory motivation. Lessons provide insufficient opportunities for collaborative work.

Teachers are adequately qualified and experienced. In the tutorial classes they make satisfactory use of games, activities and incentives and use adequate learning aids. IT labs are not enough resourced. Teachers support less able students, but do not provide enough challenge those for with more ability. Most lessons are poorly planned. Lesson objectives are shared with students only in tutorial classes. There is no initial assessment for those on English and IT courses. In some cases, students are placed on the wrong level of course.

The materials for IT courses are adequate. Not enough course materials are provided for tutorials, however. The range of provision is narrow, and there are too few progression opportunities. The institute does not do enough to ensure that its courses meet local needs. The content of courses is not specified or made available in advance to students or their parents. Not enough enrichment activities are offered.

Al Hayat provides transport to and from its premises on payment of a fee. Although staff have a supportive attitude, teachers are not available to students outside classes. Al Hayat does not provide sufficient guidance on course selection; the leaflets available are out of date and there is no website. The institute has no health and safety policy, and there are several serious health and safety hazards on the premises. The learning environment is cramped and uncomfortable.

Al Hayat has neither a strategic nor an operational plan. The management does not monitor teachers' performance, offer guidance on how they might improve, or provide them with professional development opportunities. Achievement data are not collected for around two-thirds of the students; where data are collected, they are not analysed. The outcomes of staff meetings are not documented and it is not clear how actions are followed up. The institute has only recently begun to collect feedback from students, and does not analyse it. Parents are not invited to provide feedback, and they are not updated on their childrens' progress.

Capacity to improve

Grade 5: Very weak

Al Hayat has implemented very few improvements in recent years. Other than the basic upgrading of its IT provision, which was essential to enable it to continue running IT courses, the institute has failed to consider or introduce any initiatives to enhance the quality of its provision. It does not have a strategic plan, and its aspirations for the future include only the implementation of a registration system, and an intention, currently not clearly defined, to re-site the institute.

Al Hayat's physical resources are inadequate, and the staff lack the necessary experience to bring about improvements. The institute's top management have not provided the firm leadership required to evaluate and enhance the quality of provision. Measures to monitor and improve the performance of staff and students are inadequate. The institute lacks much of the information vital for the effective management of quality.

Al Hayat's self-evaluation form (SEF) provides little evidence to support the statements made. It fails to acknowledge the areas for improvement identified by the review team, and significantly over-estimates all the grades. The SEF's inaccuracy casts doubt on the ability of managers to diagnose and address key weaknesses.

Summary of grades awarded

Overall judgement	Grade
Effectiveness of provision	Grade 5: Very weak
Capacity to improve	Grade 5: Very weak
Review findings	
How well do students achieve?	Grade 4: Below satisfactory
How effective is teaching?	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How well do courses meet the needs of students and stakeholders?	Grade 4: Below satisfactory
How well are students guided and supported?	Grade 5: Very weak
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all students?	Grade 5: Very weak

Main judgements and recommendations

Strengths

- None.

Areas for improvement

- **Measurement of students' achievement and progress.** Al Hayat fails to measure the achievement or systematically evaluate the progress of the students attending tutorial classes – a group representing two-thirds of the institute's total enrolment. Students' starting points are not assessed, and the institute does not use exams or any other appropriate methods to establish whether individual students have developed the skills and knowledge they need, or to measure achievement within groups or classes. Teachers and managers do not know, or seek to find out, how well tutorial students perform.
- **Lesson planning.** Teachers at Al Hayat do not prepare lesson plans to ensure that all necessary work is covered, and individuals' needs met. The majority of lessons are poorly organised, with inadequate time management. Lesson objectives are shared with students only in tutorial courses. Although less able students are adequately supported in classes, the more able are not sufficiently challenged or given the extra attention they need.
- **Range of courses and progression routes.** The range of provision is too narrow; it provides students with few opportunities for progression in tutorial courses. The IT courses offered are basic and include Microsoft Office, Windows, Hardware and Frontpage. The tutorial courses are very general in nature, and are offered in two subjects only: Maths and English. None of the courses benefits from external accreditation. The institute does not survey the local market to help determine what courses it should offer.
- **Health and safety.** The institute's approach to health and safety is poor, and leaves students at serious risk. A series of hazards were identified on the premises, including fire extinguishers which had not been maintained, toxic and easily accessible detergents in the rest rooms, and an unguarded power socket cover. The wall on the roof of the building is too low to provide adequate protection for children, and the roof is too easy for children to access, since there is no door separating it from the rest of the building. The sewage outlet is not properly blocked off. Potentially dangerous old equipment is stored in two rooms in the main

compound area. Al Hayat does not have a health and safety policy, and no efforts are made to inform staff, students or parents about health and safety issues.

- **Strategic and operational planning.** The institute does not have strategic or operational plan, or other improvement plans. The only document in place is very basic, simply listing working hours, vacation arrangements and the processes for the registration and withdrawal of students. Al Hayat's intentions for the future lack detail, clarity and appropriate focus.
- **The collection and use of students' and stakeholders' views.** Managers have recently started to collect feedback from students. The outcomes are not analysed, however, and there is no evidence that any actions are taken in response to the feedback. Parents' views on the quality and range of the provision are not collected.
- **The monitoring of staff performance.** Al Hayat's managers do not monitor teachers' performance or guide them on how to improve. No lesson observations take place at all. There is no appraisal system to support staff, reward good performance, and highlight development needs.
- **The aggregation and analysis of students' achievement data.** Al Hayat does not measure or monitor students' achievement on most of its courses, and does not aggregate or analyse the minimal data which it does collect. Managers have no idea how students are performing across the whole of the provision, or which courses or cohorts are doing well or badly. They lack information critical to the effective running and future improvement of the provision.
- **Self-evaluation.** The institute's SEF is not sufficiently based on evidence. It lacks objectivity and fails to identify key areas for improvement. It is also inaccurate, significantly over-estimating the quality of the provision and proposing grades which are too high in every case.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Al Hayat should:

- record and monitor students' achievement and progress on all courses
- plan all lessons effectively and appropriately
- extend the range of courses and progression routes

- improve the learning environment, and ensure that the premises meet health and safety requirements
- devise and implement strategic and operational plans
- seek students' and stakeholders' views effectively and use them to improve the provision
- implement a systematic lesson observation process and a staff performance management system
- aggregate and analyze students' achievement data
- ensure that self-evaluation is regular and self-critical.