



# Vocational Review Handbook

2nd Edition



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## Abbreviations

BQA	Education & Training Quality Authority
ILOs	Intended Learning Outcomes
LR	Lead Reviewer
LPD	Learners' Performance Data
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QAM	Quality Assurance Monitoring
SEF	Self-Evaluation Form
SEND	Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

## Glossary of Terms

<b>Access</b>	The process of accepting a learner's enrolment into a specific programme, having met all programme entry requirements while ensuring equality and objectivity.
<b>Assessment for Learning Strategies</b>	Approaches and techniques used to gather evidence of learners' knowledge, skills, and understanding throughout the learning process to promote learners' engagement and provide targeted support and feedback for their learning.
<b>Attainment</b>	The level of knowledge, skills and competences that a learner has acquired in a particular area of study. It is measured through assessments to determine the extent to which a learner has mastered the intended learning outcomes.
<b>Employability Skills</b>	A set of skills, understanding and personal attributes that makes learners more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen profession.
<b>Intended Learning Outcomes</b>	Statements that describe significant and essential learning that learners have achieved during a programme, which is defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. Learning outcomes identify what the learner will know, understand and/or be able to do by the end of a unit/module or programme.

<b>Learners' Performance Data (LPD)</b>	The document completed by Institutes, which provides details of learners' enrolment and performance.
<b>Learners with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities</b>	Special needs are where the capacity of a learner to participate in or benefit from learning is restricted or hindered due to having advantaged or disadvantaged physical, intellectual, social, emotional capabilities or learning difficulties. This also applies to any learner with injuries and temporary or chronic illness/health impairment.
<b>Lifelong Learning</b>	Learning that is undertaken throughout life and improves knowledge, skills and competences within a learner's personal, civic, social and/or employment-related contexts.
<b>Moderation of Assessment</b>	The process that is carried out to ensure fairness, consistency and objectivity in the assessment decisions across different learner groups; moderation may be internal (i.e., conducted by the Institutes themselves) or external (conducted by external moderators/verifiers/examiners).
<b>National Qualifications Framework</b>	An instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved. It integrates and coordinates national qualifications sub-systems and improves quality, transparency, access and progression.
<b>Qualification</b>	A package of units/modules judged to be worthy of formal recognition in a certificate issued by an Institute.
<b>Self-Evaluation Form</b>	The document completed by an Institute which details the evidence and their associated judgements related to the Review Framework Aspects and Criteria. It also contains factual information about the Institute.
<b>Stakeholders</b>	A person, group, or organisation that is directly or indirectly involved with, or affected by, the services provided by Institutes, which might refer to employers, representative organisations, national or international bodies, the local community and/or learners' parents.
<b>Summative Assessments</b>	Assessment tasks that are used to evaluate learning and achievement at the end of a specific instructional period (e.g., unit/module, mid-term, programme). Summative assessments are formally graded and typically major components of the grading process.
<b>Verification of Assessment</b>	The process by which assessment is deemed to be valid, reliable, fit for purpose and consistent with the set of learning outcomes or national/awarding body standards; verification may be internal (i.e., conducted by the Institutes themselves) or external (conducted by an awarding body for example).

# INTRODUCTION

The Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA) has developed the vocational education and training Review Framework in accordance with Royal Decrees Nos. (83) of (2012), and (74) of (2016). This Framework includes elements of a comprehensive evaluation process for the performance of each Institute and the quality of the provision against explicit criteria. Review procedures demonstrate a focus on the learner, along with a commitment to objectivity, and transparency. The information resulting from these reviews also provides insight into the key strengths of each Institute and the areas for improvement.

The Framework specifies the evaluation requirements to be used in the review of vocational education and training provision in the Kingdom of Bahrain. It lists the Aspects and Criteria that the review team will explore in reaching evidence-based judgements to arrive at the judgement of the Institute's overall effectiveness.

The Framework is organised into:

Aspects	Criteria	Indicators
Represent the key areas that lead to the judgement of the Institute's overall effectiveness.	Represent the areas of focus and upon which the Aspect is judged.	Explain the key elements that the Criteria focus on and upon which the Criteria are judged.



The Framework for the review explains the judgements reached during the process of reviewing the performance of vocational education and training providers (hereinafter called the 'Institutes') in accordance with the BQA's policies and procedures and based on the review criteria. Institutes are required to follow the same Framework and judgements in their self-evaluation.

## Overall Effectiveness Judgements

Judgements of the overall effectiveness of the Institute are given based on a four-point scale, as follows:

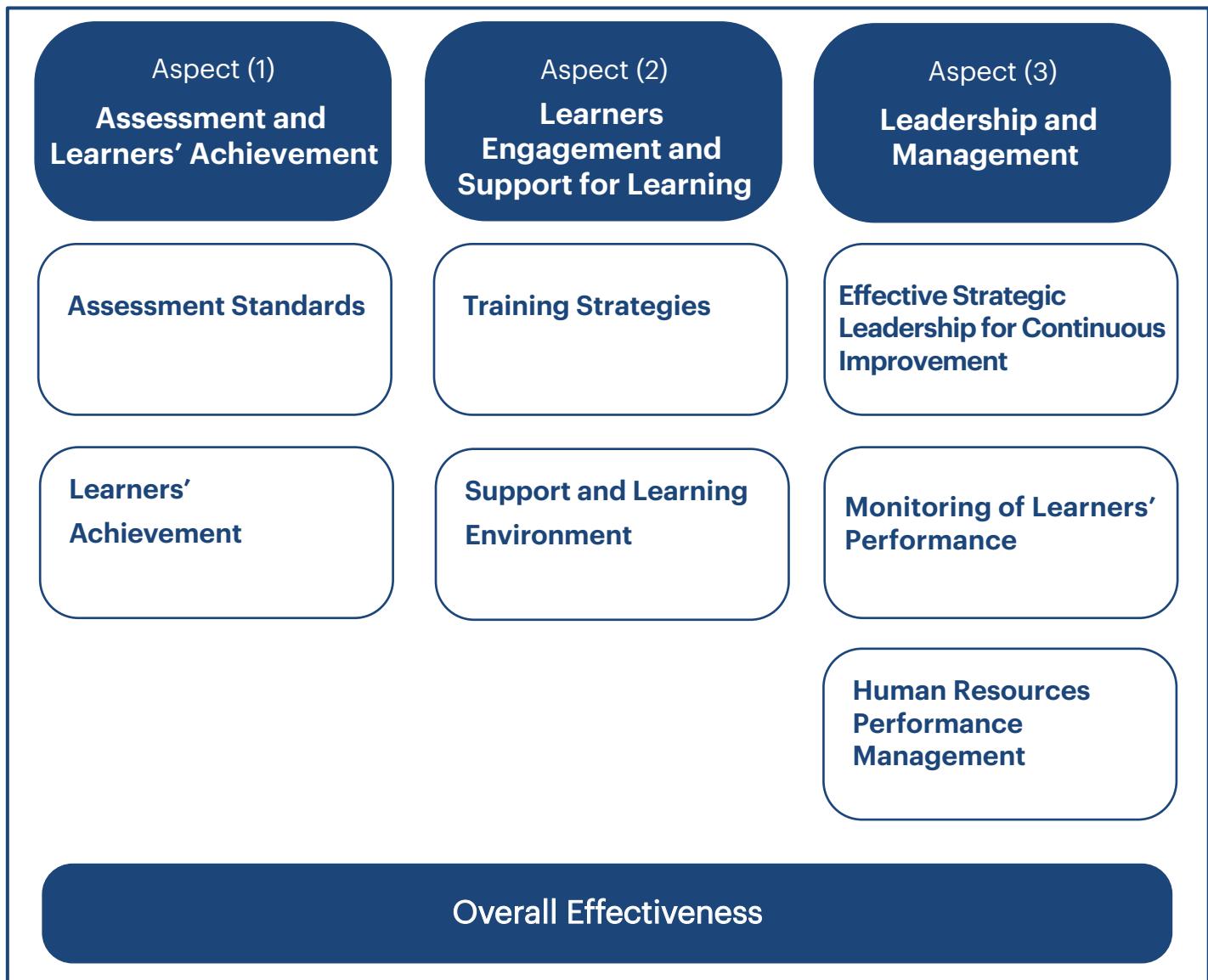
Judgement	Description
Outstanding	The performance of the Institute is 'Outstanding' in the majority of Aspects including 'Assessment and Learners' Achievement', and none of the Aspects is judged less than 'Good'.
Good	The performance of the Institute is at least 'Good' in the majority of Aspects including 'Assessment and Learners' Achievement', and none of the Aspects is judged less than 'Satisfactory'
Satisfactory	The performance of the Institute is at least 'Satisfactory' in the majority of Aspects, and none of the Aspects is judged 'Inadequate'.
Inadequate	The performance of the Institute has one or more Aspects judged as 'Inadequate' and there is a need for significant improvement.

## Relative Words Used in Judgements

Judgment	Relative Words	Interpretation
Outstanding	All	Indicates completeness and comprehensiveness
	Almost all	About to reach completeness and comprehensiveness
	The vast majority/ Comprehensive/ Rigorous/ Robust/ Highly effective	Indicates an amount that exceeds the most
Good	Most/ Effective/ Purposeful/ Well/ Fit-for-purpose	Indicates an amount that exceeds the majority
Satisfactory	Majority/ Fit-for-purpose Appropriate/ Useful/ Suitable/ Adequate/ Sufficient	Indicates more than average
Inadequate	Significant Minority	Indicates less than average and more than the minority
	Minority	Indicates less than significant minority
	Limited/ Few/ A Few	Indicates less than minority
	Very limited	Indicates scarcity/ rarity
	None	Indicates unavailability/ nothing

## The Review Framework

The Framework consists of three Aspects: 'Assessment and Learners' Achievement', 'Learners Engagement and Support for Learning', and 'Leadership and Management' and seven Criteria - abbreviated by (C), as indicated in the below diagram.



Aspect (1)

# Assessment and Learners' Achievement



## Aspect (1): Assessment and Learners' Achievement

Judgements about assessment standards and the quality of learners' achievement relate to how well the assessment methods are aligned with Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and the extent to which these are effectively and consistently employed to assess the knowledge, skills, and competences that learners need to acquire in order to achieve the qualification they aim for.

Criteria	Indicator
C1.1 Assessment Standards	<p>1.1.1 Assessment methods are purposefully aligned with intended learning outcomes.</p> <p>1.1.2 Assessments are fair and consistent in measuring learners' achievement of intended learning outcomes.</p>
C1.2 Learners' Achievement	<p>1.2.1 Learners develop knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with the programme level.</p> <p>1.2.2 Learners proceed successfully towards achieving the qualifications they aim for in a timely manner.</p>

### How to obtain evidence and information?

- Evaluation of the implementation of relevant policies and procedures.
- Evaluation of the implemented process related to verifying programme assessments and plans in accordance with the specification.
- Scrutiny of samples of learners' assessed work including the rubrics used (passing criteria and grading system).
- Analysis of Learners' Performance Data (LPD) and verification of performance records kept by the Institute (internal and external assessment results).
- Comparison of external examination results with international/global pass rates, where available.
- Analysis of internal and/or external verification and moderation reports.
- Analysis of session observations conducted by the review team.
- Discussions with learners, trainers, relevant staff members and stakeholders
- Analysis of trainers, learners and stakeholders' surveys.

## Aspect's Criteria and Indicators

### 1 1.1 Assessment Standards

- 1.1.1 Assessment methods are purposefully aligned with intended learning outcomes.
- 1.1.2 Assessments are fair and consistent in measuring learners' achievement of intended learning outcomes.

#### It is expected that:

- a. The utilised assessment methods, programme plans, and training hours are aligned with the ILOs and adapted to suit the mode of delivery as stipulated in the programme specification.
- b. The Institute has a structured assessment process to accurately measure learners' mastering of skills and progressive acquisition of ILOs throughout the programme using assessment methods that are administered in a reasonable and balanced manner.
- c. Summative assessment tools, which may include tests, quizzes, examinations, and performance-based assessments, are verified ensuring that they are fit-for-purpose, adequately cover the ILOs and match their level of complexity in accordance with the guidelines stated in the Institute's assessment policy.
- d. A clear mechanism is implemented to control the administration of the assessment process and ensure assessment integrity. Where applicable, reasonable adjustments and special consideration are made to an assessment to enable learners with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and levels of attainment required by the specification of the programme without compromising the integrity of the assessment.
- e. Clear pre-defined grading criteria, rubrics and/or answer keys are used to ensure that learners' work is marked in a fair, consistent, and transparent manner.
- f. Trainers provide feedback that informs learners of how they are performing and what they need to improve further to meet the stated ILOs in a timely, constructive and appropriate manner that is adequate to the purpose and type of assessment.
- g. The Institute has effective processes implemented that actively review and update the assessment methods and make the necessary adjustments to ensure meeting emerging requirements including those of awarding bodies, when required.

**1 1.2 Learners' Achievement**

- 1.2.1 Learners develop knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with the programme level.
- 1.2.2 Learners proceed successfully towards achieving the qualifications they aim for in a timely manner.

**It is expected that:**

- a. Learners' level of attainment and understanding reflects the knowledge and skills relevant to the programme level as seen in sessions through their participation during in-class activities.
- b. Upon programme completion, learners are able to complete the assigned tasks competently and timeously in accordance with the programme level and demonstrate vocational and/or employability skills that support them in gaining employment in their chosen profession.
- c. Learners proceed successfully towards achieving the qualifications they aim for in a timely manner consistent with the awarding body's regulations, where applicable. The achievement rate is comparable with international/global pass rates, where available.
- d. Learners' achievement rates accurately reflect the standards of assessment as seen in the level of their produced work throughout the programme.
- e. Learners are satisfied with the acquired skills and the extent to which those are utilised in the workplace and/or life, and where applicable, have a positive impact on their employability/promotion.
- f. Learners are committed and have a positive attitude towards their learning, and this is reflected in their regular attendance and punctuality, participation in discussions and questioning their trainers.
- g. Effective learners think creatively and are eager to demonstrate their understanding, confidently present their work and arguments and challenge what they have been taught.



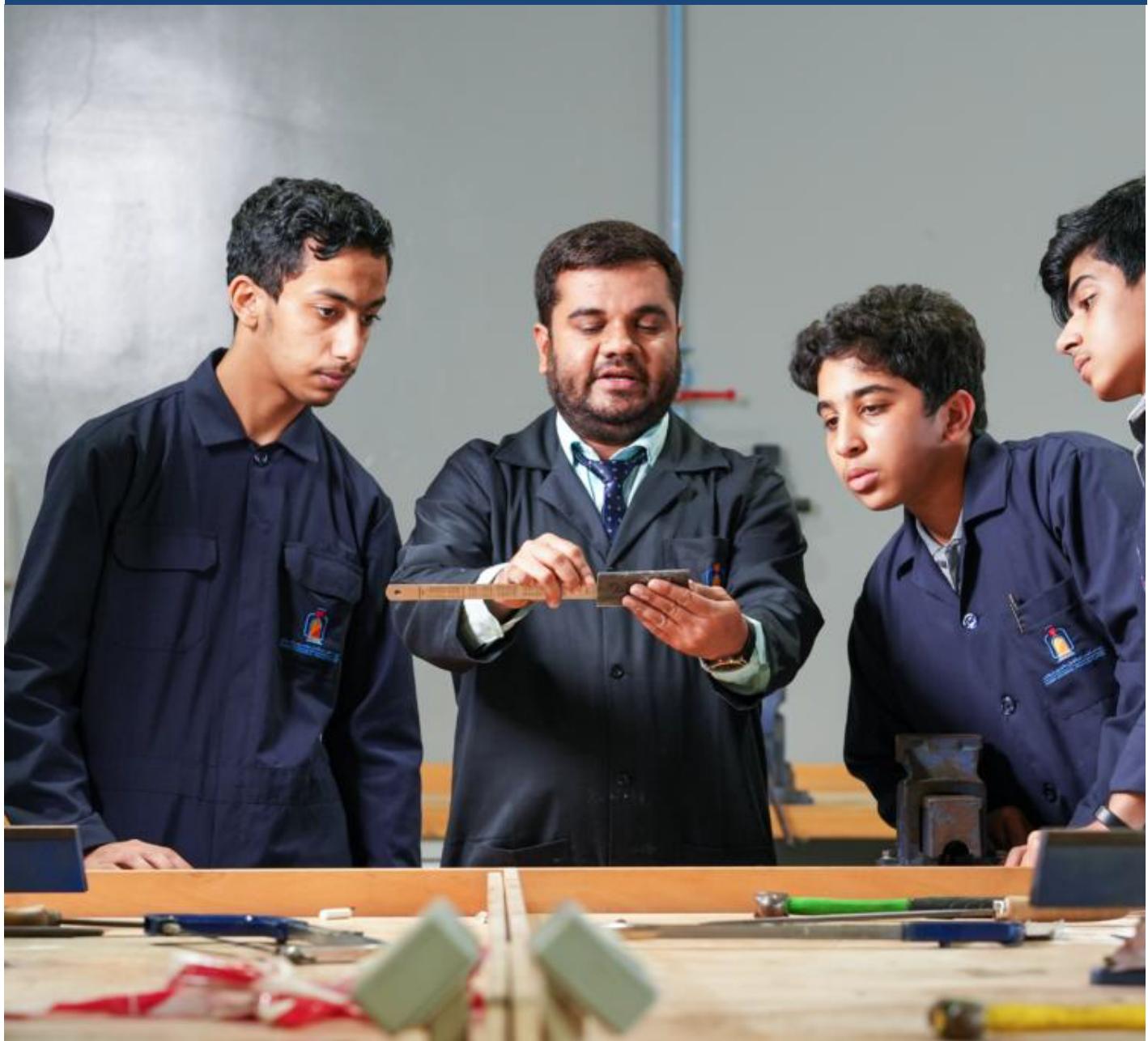
## Aspect (1): Assessment and Learners' Achievement Judgements

The Aspect is judged according to a four-point scale, as follows:

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	Assessments are rigorously implemented and supported with a robust and comprehensive grading system. The vast majority of learners demonstrate significant vocational and/or employability skills relevant to their learning experience and proceed successfully towards achieving the qualifications they aim for in a timely manner.
Good	Assessments are effectively implemented and mostly supported with clear pre-defined rubrics and grading criteria. Most learners demonstrate purposeful vocational and/or employability skills relevant to their learning experience and proceed successfully towards achieving the qualifications they aim for in a timely manner.
Satisfactory	Assessments are appropriately implemented and usually supported with fit-for-purpose pre-defined rubrics and grading criteria. The majority of learners develop suitable vocational and/or employability skills and proceed successfully towards achieving the qualifications they aim for in a timely manner.
Inadequate	Assessments are ineffectively implemented, and the level of learners produced work does not precisely reflect their attainment level. A significant minority of learners struggle to complete the assigned tasks in accordance with the programme level and do not proceed successfully towards achieving the qualifications they aim for in a timely manner.

Aspect (2):

## **Learners Engagement and Support for Learning**



## Aspect (2): Learners Engagement and Support for Learning

Judgement about this Aspect relates to how well the training is delivered in a safe, positive and supportive environment to promote learning and productively engage learners throughout the learning process. Judgement will also consider how well the needs of learners and programme requirements are met, and whether learners are developing skills and achieving the ILOs.

Criterion	Indicator
<b>C2.1 Training Strategies</b>	<p>2.1.1 Trainers effectively employ their theoretical and practical experiences and use training methodologies and learning resources to engage learners productively throughout the session.</p> <p>2.1.2 Trainers use relevant assessments for learning strategies to evaluate learners' knowledge and level of understanding in line with the intended learning outcomes.</p> <p>2.1.3 Training session delivery is appropriately structured and managed to address the specified intended learning outcomes.</p> <p>2.1.4 Training approaches and activities stimulate learners' self-learning, and critical and higher-order thinking skills.</p>
<b>C2.2 Support and Learning Environment</b>	<p>2.2.1 The learning environment - including learning resources and facilities - is conducive to promote and support effective learning.</p> <p>2.2.2 Effective admission arrangements are implemented and supported with purposeful and timely advice to assist learners in pursuing their chosen pathways.</p>

### How to obtain evidence and information?

- Evaluation of the implementation of relevant policies and procedures.
- Analysis of session observations conducted by the review team.
- Analysis of the Institute's records of monitoring trainers' performance.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of support arrangements provided to learners to overcome their learning problems.
- Evaluation of the learning environment in terms of safety and security and the effectiveness of its facilities, resources and where available, online resources.

- Evaluation of the Institute's arrangements to deal with incidents of racism, bullying, and harassment (including cyber incidents), where applicable.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the implemented admission process including the admission assessment tools used.
- Evaluation of the activities and opportunities to promote lifelong learning and enhance learners' personal abilities and skills and where relevant, prospects for learning progression and career guidance.
- Analysis of the quality of programmes' information available to learners and the effectiveness of the induction arrangements.
- Evaluation of complaint and appeal procedures and where available the actions taken to resolve them.
- Discussions with learners, trainers, relevant staff members and stakeholders
- Analysis of trainers, learners and stakeholders' surveys.

## Aspect's Criteria and Indicators

### 2 2.1 Training Strategies

- 2.1.1 Trainers effectively employ their theoretical and practical experiences and use training methodologies and learning resources to engage learners productively throughout the session.
- 2.1.2 Trainers use relevant assessments for learning strategies to evaluate learners' knowledge and level of understanding in line with the intended learning outcomes.
- 2.1.3 Training session delivery is appropriately structured and managed to address the specified intended learning outcomes.
- 2.1.4 Training approaches and activities stimulate learners' self-learning and critical and higher-order thinking skills.

#### **It is expected that:**

- a. Trainers display an obvious depth of knowledge and understanding of their vocational or subject area by providing accurate explanations and knowledgeable responses to learners' questions. They draw on direct practical experience to illustrate concepts and cite a range of relevant examples and real-life cases to link theory with practice.

- b. Trainers present opportunities for purposeful learning by utilising a range of effective styles and methods and creating a positive classroom environment to ensure that learners are actively engaged in the learning process.
- c. Trainers utilise different learning resources and materials to extend learners' interest, support their needs and ensure their engagement throughout the learning process. Where applicable, trainers use simulation tools to provide a hands-on and interactive learning experience, particularly for the delivery of practical activities.
- d. Relevant assessments for learning strategies are used to evaluate learners' level of understanding and abilities. Instant feedback is provided to accelerate learners' performance and improve their learning.
- e. Where needed, training methods, session content and activities are adjusted, or even completely changed to accommodate learners' varying needs and abilities.
- f. Sessions are delivered in a progressive and systematic manner, where class and time are managed carefully to achieve the learning outcomes and create a positive learning experience.
- g. Training methods and activities involve challenging learners to stimulate and develop their critical and higher-order thinking skills such as problem-solving, synthesis and transfer of knowledge. This also includes encouraging learners to take responsibility for their learning and promoting their individual and group learning.

### 2 2.2 Support and Learning Environment

- 2.2.1 The learning environment - including learning resources and facilities is conducive to promote and support effective learning.
- 2.2.2 Effective admission arrangements are implemented and supported with purposeful and timely advice to assist learners in pursuing their chosen pathways.

#### It is expected that:

- a. The learning environment is supported with adequate, appropriate and easily accessed resources and facilities by learners – including learners with SEND – to

enhance the learning experience and support their engagement. The Institute is expected to regularly review the effectiveness of its premises, facilities and resources to ensure their continuing adequacy and effectiveness in relation to the programmes.

- b. The learning environment is risk-free and effective to ensure the safeguarding of learners including both physical aspects and cultural elements by adopting effective measures and precautions, promoting the wellbeing of learners, and training staff on handling emergency cases, where applicable.
- c. Learners are provided with purposeful guidance and advice throughout their learning journey. They have access to detailed and accurate information in advance about the programmes through proper channels.
- d. The admission arrangements are consistently and fairly implemented to ascertain learners' eligibility to access their intended programme.
- e. Fit-for-purpose admission assessment tools are implemented such as written tests, interviews and skills demonstrations where the outcomes are utilised to make informed decisions about learners' admission, placing them in the appropriate levels and groups, and where needed providing personalised advice to help learners select programmes that align with their abilities.
- f. Where needed, learners are supported to meet the programme's requirements, overcome their learning problems and improve their performance.
- g. Learners are provided with opportunities to promote lifelong learning and enhance their personal abilities and life skills and where applicable, offering advice and guidance about learning pathways, employment opportunities and career progression.

## Aspect (2): Learners Engagement and Support for Learning Judgements

The Aspect is judged according to a four-point scale, as follows:

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	Training is delivered in a conducive and supportive environment facilitating effective learning and productive engagement of the vast majority of learners throughout the learning process. Learning is supported by a variety of purposeful training and assessments for learning strategies complemented by highly effective guidance, and ample opportunities to support learners' needs and enhance their life and employability skills throughout their learning journey.
Good	Training is delivered in a positive and supportive environment facilitating effective learning and productive engagement of most learners throughout the learning process. Learning is supported by good training and assessments for learning strategies complemented by effective guidance and a variety of opportunities to support learners' needs and enhance their life and employability skills throughout their learning journey.
Satisfactory	Training is delivered in a fit-for-purpose environment facilitating suitable learning and engagement of the majority of learners throughout the learning process. Learning is supported by adequate training and assessments for learning strategies with sufficient guidance and useful opportunities to enhance learners' learning experience.
Inadequate	Training and assessment for learning strategies are ineffective in supporting the learning process and engaging the majority of learners. The learning environment is suitable, and learners are often provided with sufficient guidance on their learning but with limited or irrelevant opportunities to enhance their learning experience.

Aspect (3):

# Leadership and Management



## Aspect (3): Leadership and Management

Effective leadership and management play a key role in ensuring the quality of the provision which will impact the achievement and success of learners. Judgements about this Aspect relate to the extent to which the Institute's strategic planning is well implemented and based on a comprehensive self-assessment process and the effectiveness of learners and staff performance monitoring.

Criterion	Indicator
C3.1 Effective Strategic Leadership for Continuous Improvement	<p>3.1.1 The Institute has a clear strategic direction which is derived from a rigorous self-assessment process to enable the achievement of its vision and mission.</p> <p>3.1.2 Self-assessment outcomes are used to assure and improve the quality of the provision.</p>
C3.2 Monitoring of Learners' Performance	<p>3.2.1 The Institute has an effective system to maintain accurate and reliable data on learners' performance.</p> <p>3.2.2 Learners' performance data is analysed and the outcomes are utilised to inform strategic and action planning and self-assessment processes.</p>
C3.3 Human Resources Performance Management	<p>3.3.1 Sufficient qualified staff and trainers are recruited to meet the Institute's aims and objectives and support learning and training.</p> <p>3.3.2 Staff and trainers' performance is regularly monitored to ensure the quality of provision and trigger improvements.</p>

### How to obtain evidence and information?

- Evaluation of the implementation of relevant policies and procedures.
- Assessment of objectivity and accuracy of the self-assessment process, effectiveness of its tools and utilisation of the outcomes.
- Review of learners and stakeholders' feedback collected and analysis by the Institute and its utilisation.
- Evaluation of strategic and operational/ improvement plans' effectiveness and progress monitoring.

- Evaluation of the mechanism implemented to maintain and analyse learners' performance data and actions taken based on the outcomes.
- Analysis of internal and/or external verification and moderation reports.
- Evaluation of the organisational structure and staff roles and responsibilities including governing bodies, where applicable.
- Analysis of the effectiveness of recruitment, induction, professional development, and performance management for both staff and trainers.
- Analysis of the Institute's records of monitoring trainers' performance.
- Analysis of management and staff meeting minutes as well as other relevant meetings.
- Discussions with learners, trainers, relevant staff members and stakeholders.
- Analysis of trainers, learners and stakeholders' surveys.

## Aspect's Criteria and Indicators

### 3 3.1 Effective Strategic Leadership for Continuous Improvement

- 3.1.1 The Institute has a clear strategic direction which is derived from a rigorous self-assessment process to enable the achievement of its vision and mission.
- 3.1.2 Self-assessment outcomes are used to assure and improve the quality of the provision.

#### It is expected that:

- a. The management team has a clear and ambitious vision and mission that focus on raising learners' achievement and improving the quality of provision, which is cascaded to staff.
- b. The management team has initiatives and targets which are challenging, embedded in a theme of continuous improvement, and translated into clear strategic planning based on thorough self-assessment and understanding of their provision.
- c. The self-assessment process takes many forms, but the most effective self-assessment process should be rigorous, consultative, inclusive and regular and be integral to the Institute's overall approach to quality improvement.

- d. Self-assessment outcomes are used to assure quality and to take action when the quality is not up to the desired standards. Accordingly, the Institute's operational/ improvement/ action plans are regularly updated and linked to self-assessment outcomes and are responsive and show readiness for change.
- e. The Institute has a mechanism to ensure that the internal quality assurance policies and procedures are maintained and complied with and meet the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) standards. The effectiveness of policies and procedures are assessed, and the outcomes are utilised to revise them as needed.
- f. Where one exists, governance is effective in holding the leadership accountable for the Institute's performance and contributing to its strategic directions and sustainability.
- g. The judgements awarded, and the evidence provided in the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) submitted for the review, reflect a clear self-awareness of the Institute's status.

### 3 3.2 Monitoring of Learners' Performance

- 3.2.1 The Institute has an effective system to maintain accurate and reliable data on learners' performance.
- 3.2.2 Learners' performance data is analysed and the outcomes are utilised to inform strategic and action planning and self-assessment processes.

#### It is expected that:

- a. The Institute maintains accurate and reliable data on learners' performance for all conducted programmes. This includes learners' attendance and punctuality, attainment and achievement levels, retention, success and/or pass rates on programme and institutional levels.
- b. Assessment moderation is consistently implemented to ensure that the marking of learners' work is rigorous and fair.
- c. The Institute analyses the achievement data to identify trends over time and areas for development by assessing whether rates of achievement are

improving, declining or sustained and if there are variations among the programmes and cohorts.

- d. The outcomes of analysing learners' performance are discussed at relevant management and staff meetings to inform strategic and action planning and self-assessment processes.



### **3 3.3 Human Resources Performance Management**

- 3.3.1 Sufficient qualified staff and trainers are recruited to meet the Institute's aims and objectives and support learning and training.
- 3.3.2 Staff and trainers' performance is regularly monitored to ensure the quality of provision and trigger improvements.

**It is expected that:**

- a. The Institute has sufficient and appropriate human resources to fulfil the requirements of the provision and carry out improvement initiatives, considering the number of enrolments, size of the operations and type of programmes on offer.

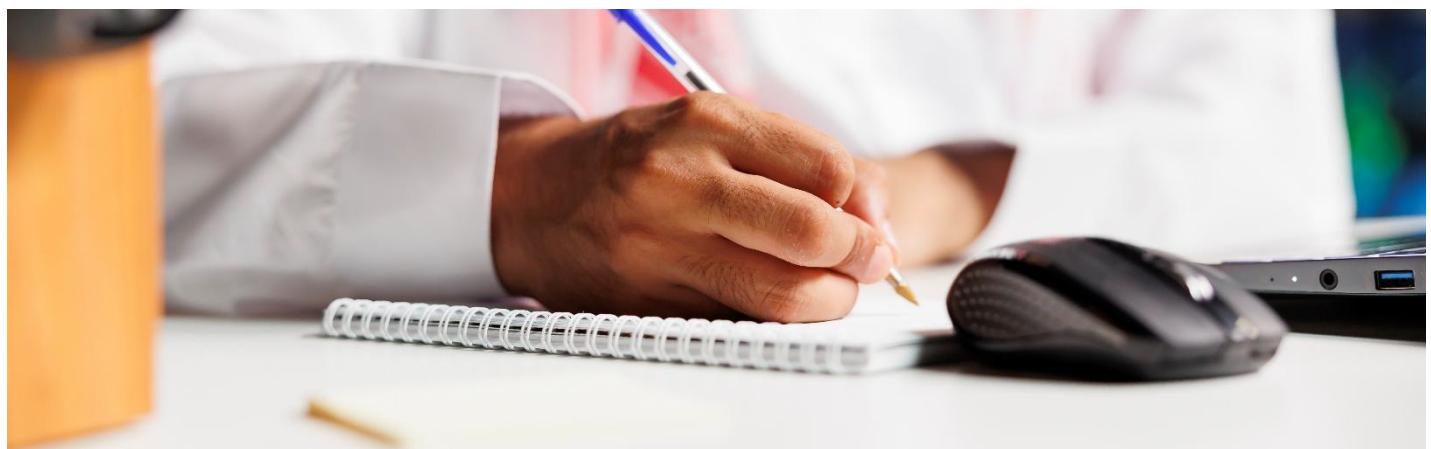
- b. The Institute actively plans and implements processes for recruiting, retaining and developing qualified and experienced staff and trainers to ensure the quality of its provision.
- c. The Institute ensures that there is a close match between trainers' qualifications and experience and the vocational areas or subjects they deliver, considering that learners' achievement is impacted by the quality of the training they receive.
- d. The Institute implements formal induction arrangements to ensure that newly recruited staff fully understand its vision, plans, programmes, and procedures, and to acquaint them with their roles in maintaining the quality of the provision. Staff and trainers are provided with the technical support required, where needed.
- e. Roles and responsibilities of staff are clearly defined and adjusted to meet the needs of the provision and where applicable, the Institute's governance structure is fit-for-purpose.
- f. There are formal, regular and relevant procedures and records in place for monitoring the quality of training, evaluating the performance of staff members and identifying areas for improvement. The outcomes of these evaluations are utilised to assess staff and trainers' professional development needs and provide guidance on how to enhance their performance and ultimately improve the overall quality of training and learning.



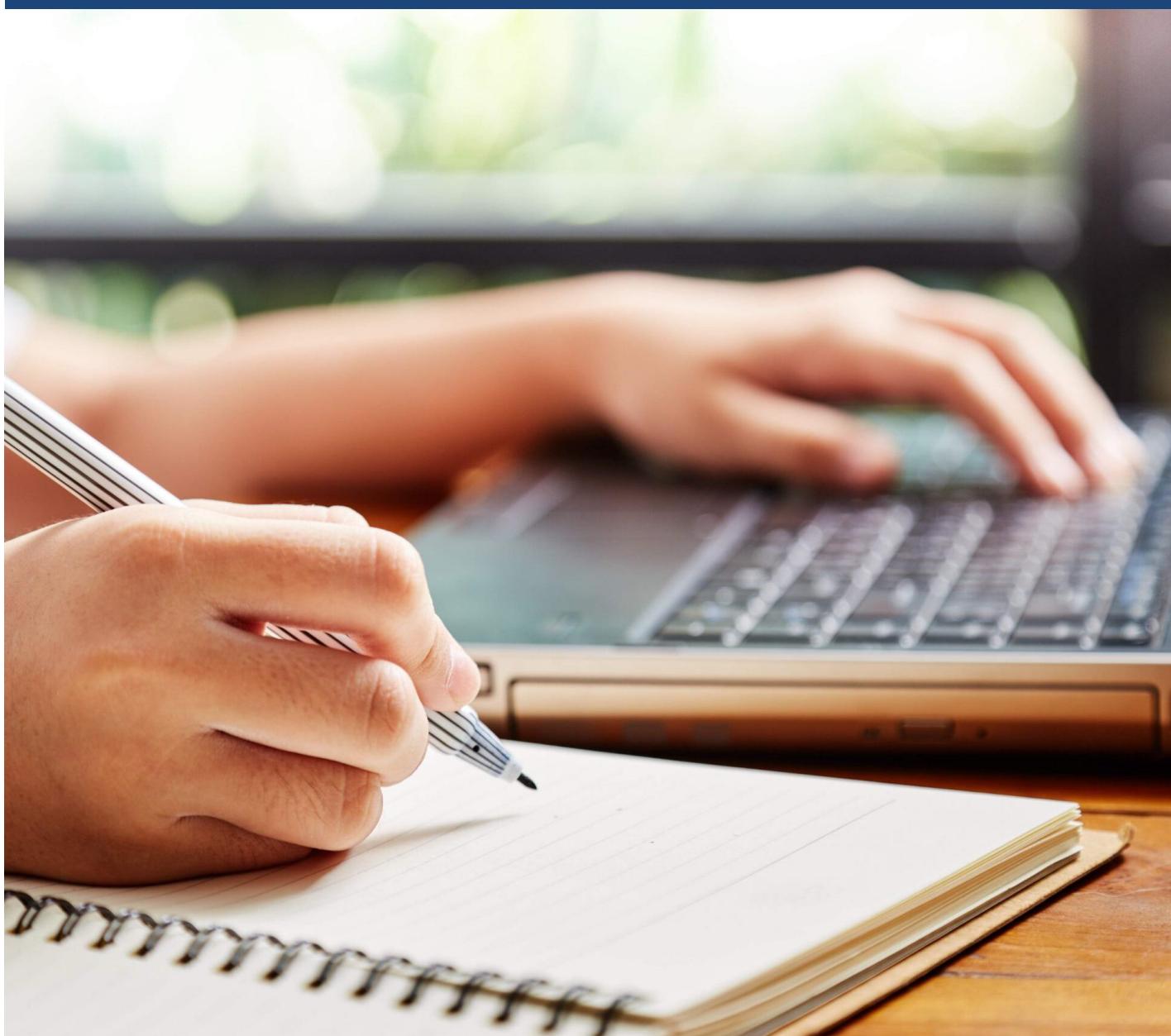
## Aspect (3): Leadership and Management Judgements

The Aspect is judged according to a four-point scale, as follows:

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	The management team has a clear strategic direction driven by a rigorous and regular self-assessment process, and guided by closely monitored performance, where the outcomes are purposefully utilised to ensure continuous improvement of the provision.
Good	The management team has well-developed strategic planning informed by a regular and objective self-assessment process and mostly guided by effectively monitored performance, where the essential outcomes are utilised to drive continuous improvement of the provision, while there is still potential to enhance the utilisation of these outcomes in informing strategic and action planning.
Satisfactory	The management team conducts an appropriate self-assessment process and properly monitors performance where the outcomes are suitably utilised to inform improvement planning. There is still an opportunity to better utilise these outcomes to enhance learners' achievement and inform strategic and action planning.
Inadequate	The management team conducts limited self-assessment practices with inconsistent - and in cases ineffective - performance monitoring, where the outcomes are either inaccurate and/or insufficiently utilised to support improvement and elevate the overall performance.



# The Review Guidance



## The Review Guidance

The review process takes place to assess the Institute's performance against the three Aspects. Using the Criteria under each Aspect, the review team makes professional and evidence-based judgements. The review process includes a number of activities that occur within a predefined timeline.

### Review Types

#### Review: Reviewing Institutes' Performance

A review is a comprehensive assessment of an Institute's performance against established criteria, identifying strengths, areas for improvement, and overall effectiveness. This rigorous process involves professional dialogue between reviewers and the Institute, culminating in a review report that provides judgements and recommendations for continuous improvement. The review is conducted by a team of reviewers and typically requires three days to complete.

#### Monitoring Visit: Assessing 'Inadequate' Institutes Progress

All Institutes that receive a review judgement of 'Inadequate' for overall effectiveness will be subject to a one-day monitoring visit, in accordance with BQA's policies and procedures. The purpose of this visit is to evaluate the progress the Institute is making in addressing the recommendations of the review report.

The monitoring visit judgement is reached by assessing the Institute's progress on each recommendation. The overall judgement is then based on the collective progress of all recommendations, as explained below.

Judgement	Description
Sufficient Progress	The Institute has taken effective measures to bring about sufficient improvement in all of the recommendations.
In Progress	The Institute has taken several measures to bring about at least partial improvement in all of the recommendations. There are no recommendations with insufficient improvement
Insufficient Progress	The Institute has not brought about sufficient improvement in a single recommendation or more.

## Thematic Review: National Priorities

The thematic review is a national-level targeted review of a particular aspect of vocational education and training provision. This type of review is typically conducted for sample Institutes.

## Review Processes and Activities

### Annual Expectations

The SEF and LPD documents are crucial to the review as they are key sources of evidence about the Institute's effectiveness and identify areas for exploration during the review. In October of every year, the BQA will notify all Institutes that in (8) weeks they are required to fill out and upload the SEF and LPD on the BQA system, along with other relevant supporting evidence. They should also provide the confirmed schedule of current and upcoming programmes and keep the BQA informed about any updates in the schedule as required. In the submitted SEF the Institute should include the service charge payment information, to enable the BQA to bill the Institute at the time of the review and assign a nominee to be the contact point for communication with the BQA. This is to ensure that Institutes are well prepared for their review whenever it takes place.

### Vocational Scope

Based on input from regulatory and funding bodies, as well as submissions from the Institutes' SEF and LPD, the BQA review scope will be applied regularly. This ensures that active institutes with no serious violations from regulatory or funding bodies, and which offer programmes leading to qualifications, are included.

## Service Charge

The BQA charges service fees for vocational reviews and monitoring visits provided to vocational education and training institutes. The fees are determined based on the institute's enrollment size during the period covered by the review, according to the approved payment mechanism. The BQA will invoice the institute at the time of the review notification, and the invoice must be settled on the stated date. In the event that the invoice is not settled before the review date, and no official written letter is received in this regard, the BQA will formally notify the institute that the lack of response constitutes a refusal to undergo the review. The regulatory and funding bodies will also be informed accordingly.

## Stage 1    Pre-Review

### Institute's Notification

The Institutes will be notified (2) weeks before the review takes place to inform them that they have been scheduled for a review in accordance with BQA's policies and procedures. In the notification, the Institute will be requested to confirm the service charges invoice's information to enable BQA of billing the Institute.

### Planning Meeting

Once an Institute is notified about the review date, the Lead Reviewer (LR) assigned to the review will communicate with the Institute to arrange for the planning meeting that will take place at a time convenient to the Institute's nominee and the LR. This will give the Institute's nominee a chance to:

- make sure the LR understands the key characteristics of the provision and the status of the Institute since the last review/ Institute's inception
- clarify any queries or concerns
- discuss the submitted SEF, LPD and the Institute records on learners' performance
- discuss the evidence/documents required prior to the review based on further exploration of the existing information and scrutiny of the submitted evidence
- plan with the LR the review activities.

## Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation plays a central part in the review process. The Institutes should evaluate their performance against the (3) Aspects and (7) Criteria stated in the Vocational Review Framework and record their findings in the SEF. The review team uses the SEF, LPD and submitted evidence to frame preliminary hypotheses about the Institute's performance in relation to the Aspects in advance of the review. These hypotheses are discussed with the Institute, along with the review plan. The review team will triangulate the SEF judgements by directly observing training sessions during the review, scrutinising learners' work, analysing data, reviewing documentation, and meetings with staff, learners, and relevant stakeholders.

## Learners' Performance Data

Institutes are expected to record and regularly maintain data on learners' performance. This data is one of the key supporting evidence required for the review to arrive at a judgement on learners' achievement, level of attainment and the overall effectiveness of the Institute. Institutes are also required to submit a record of learners' enrolment and achievement in the LPD template provided by the BQA to document all relevant data; however, the Institute may develop its record that contains all the necessary data and information.

## Programmes Information

One of the main requirements for the planning meeting is to submit information about the programmes that will be delivered during the review and are included as part of the submitted LPD. The programme information may include items such as session plans, trainer names, and the total number of learners. This information will assist the lead in arranging training session observations by the review team members. If the Institute does not have ongoing programmes during the review, or if programmes are cancelled for any reason, the review will be carried out considering the unavailability of training sessions for observation. The regulatory and funding bodies will be notified accordingly.

## Questionnaires

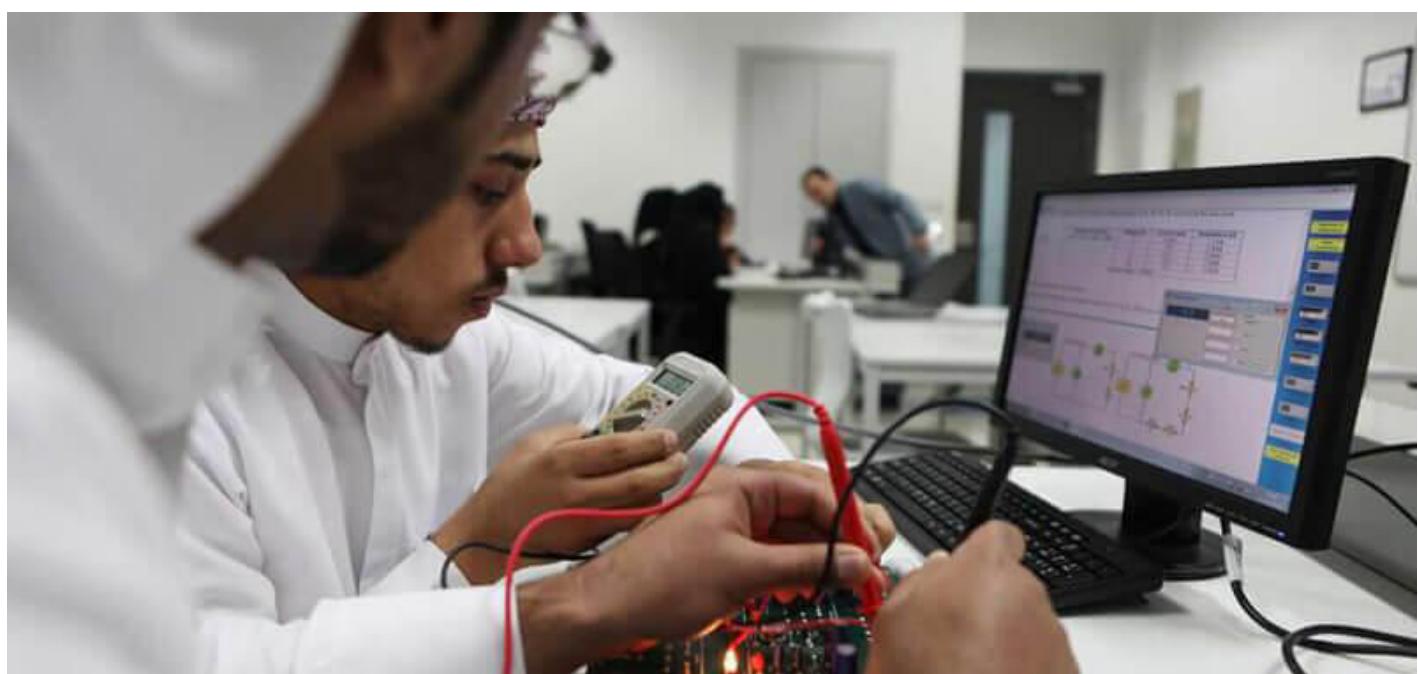
Electronic questionnaires will be sent to the Institute after conducting the planning meeting, to circulate among its learners, trainers, and stakeholders to seek their views and suggestions about the performance of the Institute.

## Deployment of Reviewers

The review team size will vary depending on the size of the Institute and the range of programmes offered. The review team will include a lead reviewer and individual team members will take responsibility for the Aspects of the Review Framework and/or particular vocational areas. However, all judgements about the Institute's performance will be made collaboratively. All reviewers are qualified and trained in relevant quality assurance procedures, including the use and interpretation of the Review Framework.

## Review Plan

The LR will prepare the review plan to include review activities such as meetings with staff, learners and other different stakeholders, this plan is to be shared and agreed upon with the nominee prior to the review commencement. Any future changes in dates and timings should be agreed upon by both parties.



## Stage 2 During Review

### The Review

The review usually takes place across (3) days, the review team will undertake a range of evidence-gathering activities including:

- analysing and evaluating the submitted evidence
- examining and evaluating learners' work
- analysing data about learners' performance
- observing training sessions
- conducting meetings with staff, learners and relevant stakeholders
- evaluating the progress made by the Institute in addressing the previous review recommendations, where applicable
- feedback and discussion meetings with the nominee.

### Observation of Training Sessions

The training session observations are a key source of evidence in making judgements about an Institute's effectiveness. Observations are conducted during the review, the LR will decide on the sessions to be observed as per the programmes' information provided. Reviewers will not always stay for the entire session, but they will observe for a sufficient time to evaluate the session.

A judgement will be awarded for the session, using the same 4-point scale as for the overall effectiveness judgement. When judging training sessions, reviewers focus particularly on learners' performance during the observed sessions. It is not the trainer's delivery that is judged but rather the impact of their knowledge and expertise, their planning of the session, and the quality of training and assessment for learning strategies used to deliver the session that is crucial.

## Scrutiny of Learners' Work

Reviewers will evaluate learners' written and practical work as they carry out observations, and the Institute is required to provide a representative sample of learners' work for the review team to evaluate. This enables the review team to evaluate the standards being achieved by learners and the quality of assessments, including marking and usefulness of the feedback given to learners.

## Meeting

Review team meetings with staff, learners and relevant stakeholders are key sources of evidence in making judgements about an Institute's effectiveness. It is the nominee's responsibility to arrange these meetings with staff and with a representative sample of learners and stakeholders, as required.

## Feedback

Throughout the review days and as per the BQA's protocols, and the review plan, reviewers will brief the nominee on their findings. This may also include any potential gaps in evidence and issues that need further exploration. On the last day of the review, the LR will verbally share the final feedback of the main findings and the provisional judgements with the nominee. These judgements are arrived at collectively by the review team and are no longer open for discussion at this stage. Some of the findings may subsequently change as a result of the BQA's internal quality assurance processes, and the phrasing of the verbal feedback will not necessarily be the same as the phrases of the reports. If for any reason review judgements do change, the Institute will be informed of such changes as quickly as possible.



## Stage 3 Post-Review

### The Review Reports

BQA will issue a technical report in the language of the review and a bilingual summary reports. The review reports consist of the review judgements, details of the Institute's performance in each of the review Aspects and an overview of the effectiveness of the Institute, including its strengths and recommendations on what the Institute should do to improve further. The reports will be subjected to a number of internal quality assurance activities and will be sent to the Institute for factual accuracy before it is submitted to the BQA's Board for approval and the Cabinet for endorsement. The reports are then published on the BQA's website.

### Appeals

The BQA strives for a smooth and efficient review process, but in rare instances, an Institute may not be satisfied with the review process or review team code of conduct. In such cases, the Institute should immediately raise its concerns to the LR and the QAM Director. If the issue remains unresolved, the Institute may submit a formal letter accompanied by the official BQA appeal form to the Director of the concerned Directorate. Appeals cannot be raised about review judgements, only regarding processes and conduct. This should be carried out in accordance with the BQA policies, procedures and timeframe.

### Action Plan

All Institutes, regardless of the review judgements, must develop a post-review action plan, focused on the review recommendations. The plan should be uploaded on the BQA system within (30) days from the receipt of the draft review report sent for its factual accuracy check. Relevant stakeholders will receive the action plan to proceed with follow-up.

## The Vocational Review Process Timeline

The vocational review process includes several key steps scheduled over a specific timeline. The table below summarises the review major procedures timeline.

Procedure	Timeline
1	BQA circulates a request to all Institutes to update and submit the Annual SEF, LPD and other relevant evidence, including the invoicing information, on the Review Management System (RMS).
2	The Institute receives the Review Notification along with a request for billing information confirmation.
3	BQA arranges a pre-review Planning Meeting between the Lead Reviewer and the Institute's nominee.
4	BQA shares Learner, Trainer, and, where applicable, Employer and Parent surveys with the Institute for circulation.
5	Conduct the Institute Review
6	BQA shares the review process survey with the Institute.
7	The Institute submits its comments on the facts mentioned in the Draft Reports through the shared survey.
8	The Institute submits an action plan addressing the Review recommendations.
9	The Institute receives a link to the Review Reports.
10	Appeal submission deadline (First Stage).
11	Appeal submission deadline (Second Stage).

## Issues that affect the review Judgement

### Non-compliance with the review process

Institutes may be deemed inadequate because of their failure to comply with the review requirements. This process will be in accordance with BQA's policies and procedures.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### The Nominee

The review approach is collaborative. The Institute under review will nominate a senior member of a full-time staff to act as its main link with the review team, before, during and after the review. The nominee must have a detailed understanding of the Institute's programmes and operations, be sufficiently senior to ensure the cooperation of staff at all levels and have the authority to carry out the role in an autonomous manner. The nominee shall:

- provide the necessary information to the LR to assist with the planning of the review
- provide the LR with the requested evidence/clarifications before and during the review
- ensure logistics requirements of the review are fulfilled
- ensure that staff, learners and relevant stakeholders attend the meetings, as prescribed in the review plan
- attend feedback meetings, as prescribed in the review plan
- brief the Institute's staff about the review arrangements, findings and outcomes.

### The Lead Reviewer

The LR leads the review team and manages the review process. This includes managing all the review activities, communicating with the Institute, planning, directing the review team's activities and reporting on the review.

## The Reviewer

The Reviewer works as part of the team assigned to review an Institute. This includes assuming responsibility for the review Aspects, carrying out assigned review activities and reporting on them.

## Quality Assurance Monitoring Director

As Part of the BQA's policies, procedures and code of conduct. As part of the BQA's internal quality assurance process, a senior staff member who has not been involved in the review will be assigned to quality assure the review process and the performance of the review team in accordance with the BQA policies, procedures and code of conduct.

## Review Team Code of Conduct (ASPIRE)

The review team members have a code of conduct which reflects the BQA's values and will be observed at all times. The code of conduct represents the highest professional standards among the review team members to ensure they conduct reviews with integrity, impartiality, and respect for all Institutes. Key values are:

- **Accountability:** Take full responsibility for actions and decisions, ensuring transparency and adherence to ethical standards.
- **Sensitivity:** Demonstrate empathy, understanding, and cultural sensitivity in all interactions with all stakeholders.
- **Professionalism:** Conduct oneself with the utmost professionalism, maintaining a courteous and respectful manner.
- **Integrity:** Uphold the highest ethical standards, acting with honesty, transparency, and fairness in all work aspects.
- **Respect:** Treat all individuals with dignity and respect, valuing their perspectives and contributions to the institutions.
- **Excellence:** Strive for excellence in all work aspects, providing comprehensive, insightful, and actionable feedback to institutions.



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