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للمؤهلات وضمان جودة التعليم والتدريب
National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**Bahrain Training Institute
Isa Town
Kingdom of Bahrain**

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The Directorate of Vocational Reviews

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. Established to raise standards in vocational education and training, the DVR 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 DVR'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

Bahrain Training Institute (BTI) was established in 1981 by the High Council for Vocational Training as a vocational training centre. In 1992, the Ministry of Labour (then, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) restructured the centre to be an institute and provide vocational qualifications and training courses that meet the needs of the labour market. In 2011, a Royal Decree restructured the BTI and placed it under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education.

BTI offers vocational qualifications and training programmes in the areas of the manufacturing industries, construction, information technology (IT), art and design, travel and tourism, services industries and commercial industries. Programmes offered include provider-accredited, National Diploma, Extended Diploma and Higher National Diploma, which are externally-accredited by the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) of the United Kingdom. BTI also offers a range of corporate training courses customised for corporates and programmes leading to professional qualifications such as Cisco (Computer Information System Company), CIPD (Charter Institute of Personnel Development) and NEBOSH (National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health) qualifications. In addition to craft certificates and Diploma courses which are offered to school leavers.

BTI is led by a director general, who is supported by three directors for the three main directorates which are the engineering and science, the business and arts, and the trainees' affairs directorates. The institute also employs two heads for quality assurance and information system who report directly to the director general. Financial affairs, administration and human resources are facilitated by the Ministry of Education. BTI has around 500 full-time staff members; part-time trainers are used when needed.

The number of enrolment reached 7,608 learners in the academic year 2010-2011, 6,121 learners in 2011-2012, 7,483 learners in 2012-2013, and 4,602 in the academic year 2013-2014.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over five days, by a team of 13 reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed training sessions and other related activities, analysed data about the courses and the qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, studied documents and materials provided by the institute and interviewed staff, learners and trainers.

In the previous review, the institute's overall effectiveness, learners' achievement, support and guidance, and leadership and management were all judged to be satisfactory. Programmes were judged good; however, the quality of teaching and training and the capacity to improve were judged below satisfactory.

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

Table of review judgements awarded

Overall Effectiveness	
How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the full range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Learners' Achievement	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Quality of Provision	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	Grade: 4 Inadequate
How well do courses meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

BTI's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Learners' achievement, programmes offered, support and guidance, and leadership and management are all satisfactory; however, the quality of teaching and training is inadequate.

Pass rates vary noticeably across programmes and levels where only approximately half the learners achieve BTEC modules requirements, but not necessarily the BTI modules requirements. However, learners who complete their programmes develop appropriate vocational skills as reflected by their on-job-training reports and their projects. Most learners interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the vocational skills they develop during their study in BTI. Additionally, the majority of learners make suitable progress considering their starting point and the limited communication and language skills they attain.

The majority of BTI trainers are qualified and have theoretical and practical command of their specialisms however, training methods used in a significant minority of the observed sessions fail to engage and motivate learners. Assessment tools used are generally accurate but the rigor applied to assessment decisions varies, do not always reflect the actual quality of learners' work and is not effectively used by trainers to help the learners improve further as limited written feedback is provided.

BTI offers a wide range of externally-accredited programmes covering different specialisations, in addition to the range of professional and short courses which are tailored to specific needs of corporates. Programmes are planned and structured well to meet the needs of learners, and are supported with a wide range of additional activities that enrich the learning experience. Nevertheless, the range and quality of the available resources vary across divisions, and do not reflect the commercial and industrial standards for a number of these specialisations. Moreover, currently links with stakeholders are not maintained well, nor used sufficiently when shaping the programmes on offer.

An appropriate range of support and guidance is provided to BTI learners however, this is not effective always in helping learners to reach their full potential. The majority of classrooms are fit for purpose however, the learning environment is not inspiring enough, and most of the facilities provided to learners are inadequate. Learners are kept aware of

their results and recently, they can access trainers' feedback indicating how well they are progressing through the newly introduced online system. Employers are suitably updated on learners' progress.

BTI's vision and mission statements are detailed, have suitable focus on learners' achievement and are shared with staff members. Learners' achievement is sufficiently monitored; records of achievement are maintained, aggregated and analysed however, the outcomes are not utilised sufficiently to inform further improvement. Although the institute has a systematic internal verification process in place, its effectiveness varies across divisions. Appropriate teaching staff members are recruited and suitably inducted. Their performance is monitored through class observations conducted by the Heads of Department (HoDs) and the quality assurance department. Class observations although identify relevant areas for development, are occasionally conducted. Appropriate health and safety measures are in place to ensure the health and wellbeing of learners and staff members.

BTI's capacity to improve is satisfactory. During the past two years, BTI's management introduced some improvement initiatives to the provision. This includes introducing some new courses such as BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Mechatronics and other courses for corporate training such as Advance Machining and Accounting fundamentals, infrastructure development such as the construction of two buildings for Engineering and Business and IT. Improvements also include the purchase of some new equipment needed for different divisions such as Motor vehicles, chemicals, electrical and electronics equipment. In addition to tendering for improving the institute fire alarm system, the automation of the operational reporting system, purchasing a new Cisco laboratory. Based on the previous QQA review report, BTI has instituted four committees in key areas. These are the pass rate committee, the strategic planning committee, the health and safety committee, and the trainers' development committee. Nevertheless, the overall success rate is declining from 71.62% to 52.7% from the year 2010 to 2013. The total number of enrolment is fluctuating; decreasing from 7608 learners in 2010-2011 to 6121 learners in 2011-2012, then increasing to 7483 learners in 2012-2013, and decreasing again to 4602 learners in the academic year 2013-2014. BTI has sufficient and appropriate human resources, however the current physical resources are insufficient and do not reflect the commercial and/or industrial standards for most of the programmes; a point BTI management is aware of and has developed plans and started executing these to address this shortage.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The majority of learners, who complete their programmes at BTI, generally develop suitable vocational skills enabling them to have sufficient exposure to the requirement of the workplace and the necessary employability skills needed at appropriate entry level jobs. Learners exhibit the relevant vocational skills they gained through their assignments, laboratory work, workshop practical activities, projects and eventually the on-the-job training (OJT) where learners must report on successfully and pass. However, the range of competencies learners gain varies across the different training programmes, where in particular, the English communication skills, the higher critical thinking and evaluative skills are not developed sufficiently. Notwithstanding the above, cases of highly successful achievements by some learners in the IT and electrical and electronics programmes are evident from the prizes these learners achieve in local and regional skill competitions such as the Bahrain Skills 2012, GCC World Skills 2013 and Cisco Networking Academy NetRiders 2013 competitions. Furthermore, the range of tasks assigned to the graduating learners to perform on their three-month OJT and the assessments of their direct work supervisors indicate that in the majority of cases learners develop sufficient practical skills, which they apply and enhance during these placements. Learners also expressed their satisfaction with the level of vocational skills they develop during their training at BTI.

Most learners pursuing the BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma (ED) programmes are entering BTI with relatively low ability as indicated from their secondary school's grades and streams, which have determinate effect on their progress and final attainment. Learners who are continuing over levels in BTI make varying progress, with learners proceeding from the First Diploma programmes (FD) to the ED programmes making appropriate progress considering their starting points. Since the phasing out of the FD programme in 2011, the majority of those who entered directly to the ED programme make just sufficient progress over levels but with decreasing competency levels as indicated by their semester Grade Point Average (GPA). However, those who proceed to the ED programme from the foundation programme, which was discontinued in 2013, are not making adequate progress. On the other hand, the pass rate varies noticeably across training programmes and levels where the overall pass rate indicates that slightly more than half of the learners achieve the BTEC qualification requirements. However the BTI requirements modules are not always successfully met, particularly for the English communication modules, which affect the overall pass rate. The BTEC level 5 Higher National Diploma (HND) has better pass rate of just over 60% whereas the corporate courses have higher pass rate of 88%.

From the sessions observed, generally learners are attentive and tend to be more engaged in the laboratory and practical work however, they are not always self-motivated. In the more effective sessions observed, learners were able to work independently and in groups when provided the opportunity. Generally learners approaching graduation are able to reflect sufficiently on their learning through their projects and during the OJT as reflected from their OJT log books. However, this is not developed progressively throughout the programmes. Overall, the attendance rate is at 87%. However, a minority of learners do not attend their classes punctually or even regularly. This affects their eligibility to stay in the programme and, hence, achieving the retention the qualification they aim for. The retention rates within some programmes are low particularly in the first entry semesters.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The effectiveness of teaching and training is inadequate overall. A significant minority of the sessions observed were judged inadequate as training methods used were trainer-centred and failed to engage and motivate learners. Generally, the assessment tools, used in most of the programmes are accurate but the rigor applied to assessment decisions is inconsistent and assessment is not used effectively by trainers to help learners to further improve.

The majority of trainers are qualified and have theoretical and practical command of their specialisms; they provide accurate explanations and respond clearly to learners' questions. In the majority of the sessions observed, trainers used useful and sufficient vocational examples to clarify and simplify the taught concepts. However, a few trainers have limited related vocational experience or do not acquire the most updated professional qualifications in their fields, which is vital for effective course delivery as well as trainers' continuous professional development.

In the most successful sessions, trainers start with useful recapitulation of the previous session through interactive open-ended questions. However, session objectives are not always communicated to learners or not fully covered as shared, resulting in learners being unsure of what is expected of them.

Generally, trainers use questioning techniques or practical activities to check learners' understanding however, in a significant minority of the sessions observed, delivery was mainly trainers-centred where learners were not provided with sufficient opportunities or encouragement to assume an active part in the learning process.

Standardized session plans are used by the majority of trainers; others depend mainly on the available schemes of work as a general guidance on what is to be covered. The available session plans do not always include activities to ensure the achievement of allocated learning objectives and in most cases, they are not informed by prior or continuous assessment of learners to accommodate the individual varying needs of learners. Moreover, a significant minority of the observed sessions have issues with class time management and utilization. For instance, recapitulation or class activities takes more than the expected time; learning resources needed for the session are not prepared ahead of time or do not work properly, or in a few cases, trainers and learners arrive late to class.

Generally, sessions are delivered for the average level learners, and the individual learning needs are not always considered. This, although works well enough for the majority of learners, it provides insufficient learning opportunities to the less and the more able learners. A lot of do not master English language sufficiently to enable them to participate actively during the session or to fully understand the information provided by the trainers. In a few cases, trainers are supportive to the less able learners and offer one-on-one mini demonstrations, proper guidance and semi guided writing tasks but generally the more able learners are insufficiently challenged.

In the most successful sessions which represent only a minority of the observed sessions, trainers enable learners to further their understanding through suitable questioning techniques and extra requirements on the provided exercises. The majority of trainers utilize the available learning resources appropriately such as whiteboards, appropriate PowerPoint presentations and data shows. However, in a few cases, the data show was not set properly to provide a clear display for learners.

Summative assessments are carried out for all BETC programmes and assignments have clear assessment criteria. Although assessment is accurate generally, the rigor applied to assessment decisions varies around programmes. For example, Merit and Distinction grades are awarded on assessments where only Pass criteria are applied. This has been highlighted by the internal verifiers in a minority of cases. Moreover, some of the samples provided show that assessment insufficiently assesses critical thinking skills required for the programme level, and the written feedback provided to learners is not critical and focus on identifying grammatical mistakes rather than the context of the course of study. As for the professional certificates, assessments are set by the awarding bodies.

Although results of the summative assessments are kept, limited records are maintained of learners' continuous actual progress. Recently, the institute started to address this issue as learners are provided with online trainers' feedback on their progress. This includes comments on how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve further.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

BTI offers two types of vocational training programmes. These are the regular full-time training and the corporate training. Most of the regular programmes are externally-accredited by the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) of the United Kingdom, the range of these training programmes is wide and covers many specializations. BTEC programmes are offered at two levels; the Higher National Diploma (HND) and the Extended Diploma (ED) in the following streams: Engineering, Business, Information Technology, and Art & Design. In addition to Cisco Networking Academy programmes, Travel & Tourism programmes, Diploma in Art & Design for special needs, and the internally designed Craft Certificate programmes for school leavers, which are designed to provide learners with basic knowledge and skills within a chosen discipline. In order to graduate from the Extended Diploma programme, learners must undergo a three months on-job-training (OJT). This is a BTI requirement that aims at offering learners with an induction to the work environment, and focuses on enhancing their confidence and occupational skills. The regular programmes were offered originally based on the input of the Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), which is currently inactive. The PAC was responsible for designing and reviewing modules' content to ensure that programmes meet industry requirements and incorporate changes in the relevant sector.

The corporate training programmes are offered by the Corporate Training Centre (CTC) at BTI. These programmes include a range of off-the-shelf short courses and tailor-made training solutions especially designed to meet the corporate training requirements of both the public and private sector in the areas of Business, Management, Engineering, Health and Safety, Communication skills, and Information Technology. Furthermore, it offers consultation, which includes training needs analysis (TNA), programme design, evaluation and development of work related performance criteria. The CTC also offers professional qualifications such as Cisco, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) and the Association of Accounting Technician certificates (AAT).

The Communication and Language Division (CLD) is a service division within the institute that caters for the learners' language needs by tailoring its curricular offerings to be in line with the nature and needs of the various programmes offered in the institute. The CLD conducts a useful language needs analysis at the institutional level and offers English for specific purposes modules. These are English for Business; English for IT; English for Art and Design; English for Engineering; English for Travel and Tourism; and English for Health and Safety.

Programmes at BTI appropriately meet learners' and corporates' needs. The majority of the learners interviewed are highly satisfied with the range of courses offered by the institute and indicated that these meet their needs and aspirations. Programmes are well-planned and structured with clear module descriptors, assessment mapping sheets, session plans and schemes of work. Moreover, assessments are mapped clearly to the set of learning outcomes of the individual modules. Employability and technical skills are integrated in the structure of core modules. In addition, generic modules are included in the programme structure to enrich the learners' skills such as Communication and Information Technology.

The range and quality of learning resources vary from one division to another. Programmes in some divisions are resourced adequately with fit for purpose learning materials, whereas resources and equipment in almost all laboratories and workshops are not sufficient to cater for the number of learners and mostly do not reflect commercial and industrial standards. The institute is aware of this issue and has developed and started to implement plans to purchase the needed equipment for different divisions.

Programmes are supported with a wide range of relevant and engaging additional activities to enrich their learning experience of learners. These include the invitation of external speakers, arrangements for field visits, the organization of forums and seminars, exhibitions of learners' final projects and participation in international events. In addition to the OJT, these activities provide learners with valuable opportunities to refine their technical skills and develop their potentials.

Modules are regularly reviewed and evaluated in terms of instructional methods and assessment approaches. At the end of each semester, the module leaders meet with trainers to discuss and evaluate the different inputs to the programmes in light of the outcomes. The result of the evaluation is reflected in the structure of the programmes by adding, reordering and omitting of modules. Lately, BTI established a curriculum development committee to be responsible for reviewing and formalising all processes.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Learners are provided with appropriate range of support and guidance to help them achieve better outcomes. At the beginning of the academic year, learners are offered a useful induction programme to help them settle in their study. The counselling and guidance centre at BTI gives consultancies on behaviour issues and, in a few cases, on academic or achievement matters. A useful trainee guide is accessible to all learners; it includes different information about the available programmes, attendance and assessment policies. However, the available version is for the academic year 2012-2013. Documents provided from the

Guidance & Counselling Centre at BTI show different cases of learners' complaints management and appropriate behaviour analysis being conducted by the centre. Furthermore, at-risk learners are provided with the opportunity to attend extra tutorials classes in mathematics and English, in addition to trainers' office hours. However, according to learners' feedback, trainers' contact information is not always shared with learners. BTI provides useful support and flexibility to learners with special needs by providing special parking areas and re-examination considerations. Provision of rewarding talented learners through scholarships is available in the institute's support policy however, it is currently on hold.

The majority of the classrooms are fit for purpose with appropriate furniture, lighting and ventilation. However the learning environment is not inspiring enough and the facilities provided to learners are inadequate. Parking is not sufficient, and the rest and study areas are limited. Toilets are not always kept hygienic; the number is insufficient to accommodate the large number of learners and comparably far from most of the buildings. The learning resource centre at BTI encompasses insufficient reference books and the available periodicals are out-dated. There are very limited numbers of individual stations and there is no place for collaborative work or group discussion. The canteen, which is used by learners and staff members, is small with poor ventilation. Meetings with learners and trainers confirmed the above findings.

Learners receive appropriate guidance on programmes on offer through the brochures, the trainee guide and the institute's website. In addition, appropriate course outlines are provided to learners at the start of a semester. National Diploma learners are exposed to work environment through the on-job-training, which is part of their course of study. In addition to the annual career week, which facilitate learners' communication with employers and employment opportunities. Learners have access to the institute's online system where they can access their grades, their attendance reports, and lately are enabled to view trainers' brief feedback about their performance and how to improve further.

Although BTI does not have regular or formal procedures on keeping stakeholders informed about learners' progress, evidence shows that employers are updated on their employees' attendance and grades. Based on the limited sample provided, progress reports sent to employers provide suitable information about learners' progress. However, the feedback provided is focused more on learner's behaviour rather than on the achievement.

Leadership and management

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

BTI has clear vision and mission statements, focused on learners' achievements and improving the provision that is shared with the majority of staff members. The institute currently implement the 2009-2014 strategic plans, which was developed with specific goals based on a suitable SWOT analysis, and is focused towards improving learners' achievements. The plan is translated into an overall operational plan, detailed into individual division's operational plans. The overall action plan is monitored by the top management; however, some objectives of the operational plan are not implemented fully. Recently, the management formed a strategic committee to develop BTI's new strategic plan for the period 2015-2019. The institute's current organizational structure is fit for its purpose; there are clear roles and responsibilities for each position within the institute.

Learners' achievement is sufficiently measured and relevant data are maintained, aggregated in the form of useful database and statistical summaries and regularly monitored and analysed, however, the outcomes are not utilized sufficiently to inform decision-making and improve the provision. BTI has a useful quality manual and a systematic verification process, which verifies assessment tasks and assessment decisions. However, the effectiveness of this process is inconsistent and varies across divisions and individual verifiers.

The institute recruits qualified and experienced local and international trainers. They are suitably inducted and deployed according to their different specialization. Head of departments (HoDs) meet frequently with trainers to discuss all issues related to learners' achievement and assessment. In addition, top management meets HoDs to reflect on improvement matters and minutes of all these meetings are maintained. Trainers' performance in classrooms is observed mainly by the quality assurance division and sometimes by the HoDs; however, these observations are carried out occasionally. A suitable session observation form is used and trainers are provided with useful feedback on how to improve. A yearly performance appraisal is conducted for all staff, and the form used is fit for purpose. Based on the outcomes of the session observations and the performance appraisal, staffs are provided with limited opportunities for training and development.

The institute has clear policy and procedures for learners' admission to different programmes. Admission tests are carried out for all new entrants to the institute. These tests are used to evaluate learners' potential and a computerised system is used to place each

individual learner to the chosen programmes accordingly. However, the outcomes of the admission process are not utilized effectively by the institute for other aspects such as session planning.

Adequate links are maintained with local and some international institutions and relevant section of the community. On yearly basis, the institute collects learners' feedback through useful and informative online questionnaires, which covers course evaluation and learners' perception of the institute's facilities. The outcomes of these questionnaires are aggregated, analysed and some actions are taken by the management in response of learners' comments and recommendations. In addition, the management seeks learners' feedback verbally by direct communication with learners. The institute's management team places priority on the health and safety of learners and staff; appropriate health and safety measures are in place to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for all. Adequate risk assessment is carried out, where actions plan is prepared based on the outcomes of the risk assessment to address all the recommendations. There are evidence that critical and major recommendations of the latest action plan are implemented by the institute, while others are in progress according to the timeline stated in the action plan. In addition, the management recently established a formal health and safety committee, with clear remits, to address all relevant issues.

BTI's self-evaluation form (SEF) submitted for the purpose of this review is well-detailed with reference to appropriate set of evidence to support the judgements made; however the SEF did not highlight clearly the main areas for development and improvement, although as evident are known to the institute's management.

The provider's key strengths

- The wide range of programmes on offer, which includes internationally accredited programmes in different specializations, professional and short courses tailor-made for corporates
- The variety of additional activities used to support programmes and enrich the learning experience.

Recommendations

In order to improve, BTI should:

- enhance learners' attainment and achieving the qualifications across all programmes by:
 - ensuring that the admission criteria are effective in placing learners on programmes matching their entry level abilities
 - developing learners English language and communication skills to an acceptable level that enables them to attain the programme learning outcomes and progress as expected.
- improve the quality of training by:
 - enhancing training methods used to engage and motivate learners, in spite of their needs and abilities
 - ensuring that assessment decisions are rigorous and learners are provided with effective verbal and written feedback on how to improve further
 - reinforcing the internal quality assurance of teaching and training through more regular and frequent training audits and more consistent and rigorous internal verification process.
- enhance programme resources and equipment to reflect industries standards and cater for the number of learners.