



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

# **Vocational Review Unit**

## **Review Report**

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

**Date Reviewed: 14 - 18 March 2010**

## Table of Contents

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<b>The Vocational Review Unit</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Description of the provision.....	2
Scope of the review.....	2
<b>Overall judgement</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Effectiveness of provision.....	3
Capacity to improve .....	4
Summary of grades awarded.....	6
<b>Main judgements and recommendations</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Strengths .....	7
Areas for improvement.....	7
Recommendations .....	8

## The Vocational Review Unit

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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:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
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**

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### **Description of the provision**

Bahrain Training Institute (BTI) was established as a vocational training centre in 1981 by the High Council for Vocational Training. In 1992, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs re-structured the centre and gave it the status of an institute, charged with providing training to meet the needs of the manufacturing, process, construction, commercial and service industries.

BTI offers vocational programmes in the areas of business, arts, health and safety, information technology, travel and tourism and engineering. Engineering and business are the largest areas. Programmes offered by the institute include provider-accredited, full-time First Diplomas, and National and Higher National Diplomas accredited by BTEC. There are also craft certificate and diploma courses for a small number of learners who have not completed their school education. A range of professional and corporate programmes is run for major employers. BTI also offers customized training programmes for job-seekers, including university graduates registered with Ministry of Labour. During 2009, the institute enrolled approximately 2900 learners on full time courses, most of them aged 19 and above and self sponsored.

BTI is led by a director general, who reports to a board of directors chaired by the Ministry of Labour. The director general leads an executive management team. The institute is divided into several administrative and training divisions. BTI has around 400 full time staff, and also uses part-time trainers when required.

### **Scope of the review**

This review was conducted over five days by a team of eleven reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed training sessions, analysed data about the qualifications learners achieve and the courses they complete, and talked with staff, learners and employers.

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

## Overall judgement

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### Effectiveness of provision

#### Grade 3: Satisfactory

BTI's provision is satisfactory overall. Learners' achievements, the support and guidance they receive, and the leadership and management of the institute are all satisfactory. The range of programmes on offer is good. The quality of teaching, however, is below satisfactory.

Learners at BTI develop useful vocational skills. During 2009, success and retention rates on externally accredited corporate courses were high, at just over 91%. Achievement rates on First Diploma courses showed a declining trend, however, dropping from 61% in 2007 to 47% in 2009. Learners' attendance is good, averaging 90%, but their punctuality is often poor. Although most learners have the basic skills to progress in their class; some First Diploma learners have difficulties with English and Maths which hinder their progress. Achievement on National and Higher National Diploma courses is satisfactory.

Learners' progress is measured and monitored thoroughly; their assignments and projects are well assessed, internally and externally. The feedback provided to learners, however, is largely verbal, and often too brief, giving them insufficient information about how to improve.

Although most trainers are well qualified, many lack practical vocational experience. Over 40% of them have less than three years' experience in their field. Often, trainers fail to enliven sessions with relevant practical examples. Generally, they use only a narrow range of training techniques and do not adequately engage or retain learners' attention or encourage participation. In most workshop sessions, trainers make insufficient use of the resources available, giving learners too little time to practice their skills. There is not enough equipment in some workshops to cater for the number of learners in each group. BTI's admission testing is adequate to place learners on the right type and level of programme, but, except on corporate courses, is not effective in assessing learners' varying abilities and ensuring that their needs are met.

The institute offers a good range of vocational programmes that satisfy learners' and labour market requirements; the range and content of these programmes are reviewed periodically on the basis of useful input from BTI's Programme Advisory Committee. BTI has recently introduced more programmes in the areas of information technology, and travel and tourism, extended the range of corporate programmes, and modified and enhanced modules

on some existing courses to satisfy industry-specific needs. Most of BTI's programmes are accredited and offer good progression routes.

Good, relevant enrichment activities are offered as part of most of programmes. BTI organises a number of forums and participates in global exhibitions. On-the-job training is an integral part of all BTI's National Diploma courses, and it is well managed and monitored.

BTI provides effective support and incentives for good achievers and those who need financial support. The institute's graduate recruitment centre gives learners useful help with job-seeking. A satisfactory proportion of BTI's graduates, 30%, gained employment in 2009, most of them in the areas of building and construction, motor vehicle technology, chemical engineering and ICT. Although BTI has adequate health and safety policies in place, some buildings lack proper exits and some learners in workshops were observed working without the necessary safety apparatus.

BTI's staff are satisfactorily managed and their performance is regularly monitored. Employees are appraised annually and their development needs are properly identified. They are not set clear targets related to raising learners' achievements, however. Most trainers are provided with sufficient opportunities for professional development and updating. Although learners' performance data are monitored at departmental and institutional levels, these data are not sufficiently analysed or aggregated. Not enough attention is paid to trends in performance, and the institute has not been successful in increasing achievement levels. Managers do not systematically share with staff the outcomes from learners' feedback questionnaires to enable improvement planning.

## **Capacity to improve**

### **Grade 4: Below satisfactory**

BTI has a few plans to improve its provision. These include introducing new lesson planning strategies and improving course materials. New programmes will shortly be introduced, including externally accredited courses in tourism and hospitality and a paint coating technology course, which will be run in conjunction with an international paint manufacturer.

Although based on a useful SWOT analysis, the institute's new strategic plan is not sufficiently challenging. It does not focus enough on raising learners' achievements. The plan is not yet fully implemented; it has not been effectively shared with departments, which are still working to individual, stand-alone operational plans.

Learners' achievements have declined steadily since 2007. Achievement across the whole of BTI's provision fell from 69% in 2007 to 60% in 2009, with the most serious drop, of 13%, on First Diploma courses. BTI's research department undertakes some analysis of the available data, but does not investigate trends in performance, or examine why some programmes and groups of learners do better than others.

Insufficient use is made of the feedback gathered from learners and employers. Learners' feedback is analysed, but the outcomes are not disseminated to all concerned, and are made available to department heads only on request. There is no systematic procedure to review the analyses produced and use the outcomes to improve provision. Although BTI maintains links with employers through the Programme Advisory Committee, and use these properly to adjust the design of programmes, it does not systematically gather or use employers' feedback on the quality of the training offered.

Although BTI has a sufficient number of trainers for the programmes offered, over one-third of them lack sufficient practical experience. The turnover amongst trainers is high, and a significant number leave BTI shortly after joining.

The institute's self-evaluation form (SEF) is comprehensive; it provides sufficient evidence and identifies some areas for improvement. However, the SEF inaccurately proposes grades of outstanding in all areas, casting doubt on the ability of managers to reflect objectively on the quality of provision.

## Summary of grades awarded

Overall Judgement	Grade
Effectiveness of provision	Grade 3: Satisfactory
Capacity to Improve	Grade 4: Below satisfactory
Review Findings	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How effective is training?	Grade 4: Below satisfactory
How well do programmes meet the needs of learners and employers?	Grade 2: Good
How well are learners guided and supported?	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade 3: Satisfactory

## Main judgements and recommendations

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### Strengths

- **Success and retention rates on corporate courses.** Success and retention rates are high, standing at 91% overall during 2009, on BTI's externally-accredited corporate programmes, including the AAT (Association of Accounting technicians), CCNA (Cisco certificate Network Associate) and NEBOSH (National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health) courses.
- **Assessment and verification of learners' written work.** The assessment of learners' written work is rigorous and well executed; the strategies used include assignments, case studies, quizzes, exams, presentations and projects, and the criteria are fair and consistently applied. Assessment is thoroughly internally and externally verified. Learners' progress is well monitored.
- **Range of BTEC programmes and progression routes.** BTI offers a wide range of externally accredited and provider-accredited programmes, with clear and coherent progression opportunities. The programmes cater for a variety of learners, and include craft certificates for school leavers, diplomas at three levels, two of which are externally-accredited, and a good range of corporate and professional offerings. National Diploma courses include, as an addition to the required course content, a three-month period of on-the-job training. This is well managed and monitored; it widens the experience available to learners, and enhances their confidence and their interpersonal and employability skills.
- **Enrichment activities.** BTI offers particularly good enrichment activities on its programmes. These include the use of outside speakers, the organization of forums, exhibitions of learners' projects, and participation in international events.
- **Opportunities for high achievers.** BTI effectively supports learners who perform well through its high achiever scheme; 50 learners who have scored GPA 3.5 or above and have a good record are exempted from the fees for that semester, and awarded a prize of 50 Bahraini dinars.

### Areas for improvement

- **Decline in First Diploma success rates.** On the First Diploma, success rates have dropped over the last three years, from 61% in 2007 to only 47% in 2009. Twenty-two per cent of First Diploma learners failed to continue to National Diploma in 2009. A

significant proportion of First Diploma learners have difficulty with English and mathematics, which hinders their progress.

- **Training techniques.** Generally, training sessions observed are too teacher-centred, and only a narrow range of training techniques are used. Not enough effort is made by trainers to engage and motivate learners, encourage their participation, or check their understanding.
- **Trainers' practical experience.** A substantial proportion of trainers lack the necessary practical experience in their area of expertise, and around 40% have less than three years of hands-on experience. Few trainers provide a good model of vocational practice, demonstrate sufficient in-depth, up-to-date industrial knowledge, or make appropriate use of practical work-related examples during sessions.
- **Equipment and resources in engineering workshops.** Most engineering workshops have insufficient equipment and resources to cater for number of learners in each group; at times, learners have to wait to use the equipment they need to practice their skills.
- **Health and safety measures and awareness.** The institute's approach to health and safety is not thorough enough. Whilst there are sufficient first aid kits, fire alarms, emergency doors and assembly points, some buildings lack proper exits and clear emergency signage. A proportion of the learners observed in workshops were not wearing suitable safety equipment; a few of them were even wearing slippers.
- **Use of learners' performance data in improvement planning.** Although monitored after each semester at departmental and institutional level, data on learners' performance are not effectively used to bring about improvement. The analyses produced do not consider sufficiently trends in achievement over time.

## Recommendations

In order to improve provision, BTI should:

- improve success rates on First Diploma courses
- enhance the range and nature of training techniques used
- ensure that all trainers have sufficient, relevant vocational experience
- improve and extend the range of resources and equipment in the workshops

- implement the existing health and safety policies to ensure a risk-free environment for learners and staff
- use all available data in planning for improvement and raising learners' achievements.