



Vocational Review Unit

Review Report

**Delmon Academy for Computer and Managerial
Sciences
Tubli
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 24-26 December 2012

Table of Contents

The Vocational Review Unit.....	1
Introduction	2
Description of the provision.....	2
Scope of the review.....	2
Table of review judgments awarded.....	3
Review judgments	4
Overall effectiveness	4
Learners' achievement	5
The quality of provision.....	6
Leadership and management.....	8
The provider's key strengths	10
Recommendations.....	11

The Vocational Review Unit

The Vocational Review Unit (VRU) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (NAQQAET) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed by a Board of Directors and is supervised by the Council of Ministers . Established to raise standards in vocational education and training, the VRU is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the quality of vocational provision, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, establishing success measures, spreading best practice and offering policy advice to key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education.

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

Review grades are awarded on a four-point scale:

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

Introduction

Description of the provision

The Delmon Academy for Computer and Managerial Sciences, hereinafter referred to as Delmon Academy, was established in 2010 and is licensed by the Ministry of Labour.

Delmon Academy is located in Tubli, in the Central Governorate. It is managed by a Board, a managing director and a training manager. The Academy employs a pool of trainers; almost all of whom are employed on a part-time basis.

Delmon Academy offers a range of non-accredited courses mainly in business, management, English language, and soft skills such as: motivating others, effective customer service, and effective time management. All courses range from 15 to 40 hours and are internally designed. In addition, it offers two externally accredited programmes, namely: ICDL and Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT). AAT is offered at three levels; level 2 certificate in accounting, level 3 diploma in accounting and level 4 diploma in accounting. The Academy has trained 130 learners in 2011 and 192 learners in 2012, 30% of them on accredited programmes.

Scope of the review

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

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

Table of review judgments awarded

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

The overall effectiveness of Delmon Academy is inadequate, as are the learners' achievement and the quality of support and guidance. The quality of teaching and training, the effectiveness of programmes in meeting the needs of learners and stakeholders and the effectiveness of leadership and management are, however, satisfactory.

Although teaching and training, from the evidence available, are just sufficient to deliver the materials, learners are not routinely successful in achieving the targeted qualifications, or in making sufficient progress, especially on the longer accredited programmes. There is clear evidence that a significant proportion of learners are not achieving well enough. This results either from inappropriate placement of learners, or from providing insufficient support measures needed to help those learners struggling to achieve better. Most of the available support and guidance activities are offered on *ad hoc* basis and are based mainly on trainers' own initiatives.

The provider offers an adequate balance of internally and externally accredited programmes which are planned, resourced and delivered by experienced and qualified trainers. General leadership and management practices are in place. Delmon Academy has developed and implemented a procedure for the recruitment of trainers and they are selected based on clear and consistent criteria. The academy has a performance management system now in place (based on employee appraising management and *vica-versa*), but this has just recently been initiated and is not consistently applied. Records of a limited number of training opportunities for the staff exist. The Academy is yet to develop and implement an effective strategic plan.

Delmon Academy has a satisfactory capacity to improve, provided that existing procedures and practices are further tuned and effectively implemented. The basic procedures and forms are in place but need to be critically and consistently followed. The annual employee appraisal system, although not always applied, is designed to identify training needs. Learners' achievement records are kept and management are aware of the outcomes. The analyses however, need to be used more effectively to improve the trainers' achievement rates on all programmes. The provider has sufficient human resources to carry out improvement actions, and the self-evaluation form (SEF) shows a satisfactory capacity of the provider to identify its strengths and areas for development.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Learners' achievement at Delmon Academy is inadequate overall. In the longer and accredited programmes, it is evident that a significant proportion of learners are not making sufficient progress or their success rates are low. These programmes represent around 30% of the total enrolment. In the AAT programmes, pass rates are on average below the international pass rates by a significant margin. In the ICDL programmes, the pass rates are much lower than those seen with similar providers. The ICDL programme is of a basic nature and the pass rate is expected to be much higher with programmes of this type.

In the English language courses, the progress, and/or the value-added, that learners achieve is low especially on level 2 English and business English courses. The enrolment on the English programmes represents around 13% of the total courses offered. There are no effective placement tests and the pre- and post-course assessments are not fully aligned with the intended learning objectives. The value-added, as seen from the pre- and post-course assessments was not significant given the duration of the courses.

In other non-accredited courses, learners are evaluated using pre- and post-course assessments. These assessments are linked to course learning objectives, but the progress that learners make is barely satisfactory. Although Delmon Academy has a form named 'Training Impact Form', which is intended to measure the impact of training at the work place, it is not always completed or used effectively. Furthermore, when learners have been asked if the objectives of the courses they have attended have been achieved, a number of them stated that they were expecting more out of the course.

Learners attend regularly and records of attendance and punctuality are kept. The recorded attendance rate is high at 93% in 2011 and 95% in 2012. From lesson observations however, punctuality was an issue as some learners showed up between 10 and 45 minutes late. The retention rate is high at between 80 and 100% for 2011 and 2012.

Learners are generally attentive in sessions and seem to enjoy their learning experience and gain some relevant knowledge. This however was not always sufficient enough to make them achieve the qualifications they aim for. Generally, learners were able to work independently in the majority of sessions. However, in a few of the AAT sessions, learners faced difficulties working independently.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Although all learners do not consistently achieve sufficiently well, trainers at Delmon Academy generally deploy satisfactory teaching and training methods. Most of the trainers are qualified with relevant backgrounds and experience in their vocational field. Trainers generally present themselves as appropriate role models and enrich their learning with purposeful examples and cases reflected from their own vocational experience.

The majority of trainers use training methods and activities to engage and motivate learners through direct questioning, group work and presentations. However, in the less effective sessions observed, training tended to be too trainer-centred, and the training techniques used were inappropriate to effectively engage all learners and to fully accommodate different learners' needs.

In a number of cases, trainers allowed learners to think critically through questioning and sometimes through practice, as was the case in one of the ICDL sessions. Trainers at Delmon Academy utilize fit for purpose resources such as text books, appropriate hand-outs, whiteboards, IT laboratories, overhead projectors and Powerpoint presentations to deliver their sessions. However, in a few of the observed sessions, soft skills courses were conducted in computer laboratories, where the set-up of the room hinders group work and a clear vision of the whiteboard.

Although pre-course assessment and personal information forms are in place the outcomes are not used effectively enough to plan for sessions or to accommodate the full range of learners' needs. The English placement test is not sufficiently effective and lacks two major skills: listening and writing. Moreover, English pre- and post-course tests are not fully aligned with the intended learning objectives.

For the majority of courses, detailed course outlines and objectives are in place and available in advance to learners. In almost all the lessons observed, lesson plans were shared with learners and trainers used them appropriately to deliver their sessions. In the better training sessions, time was properly managed; however, in a few sessions observed, activities and exercises took much longer than planned.

For the accredited courses, records for individual learners' progress are kept; however on the non-accredited courses, results of assessments and feedback are not aggregated to make it easy to track individual learner's progress and not all learners are assessed formally on these courses.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The quality of programmes at Delmon Academy is satisfactory overall. The Academy offers an appropriate balance of internally-designed and externally-accredited programmes. It offers a useful range of non-accredited courses mainly in soft skills, business and management, as well as English language. In addition, Delmon Academy offers two externally accredited programmes, namely the ICDL and Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) courses.

In general, the range of courses available meets most learners and employers' needs with a few learners who highlighted the need for more specialised, advanced, and more work-related courses and some basic levels for certain topics. Programmes are appropriately resourced with suitable IT laboratories, overhead projectors and power point facilities but some programmes, especially the longer ones, lack sufficient opportunities for enrichment activities. The vast majority of course materials are fit for purpose with useful and detailed information that suits the level of the courses conducted. Outlines are made available to learners and employers in advance.

The provider surveys its market through employers' needs questionnaires and learners' expectation forms. The response so far is not high, and there is no evidence of effective use of such outcomes to inform the range or structure of the programmes. Externally accredited programmes are well structured to meet the needs of learners and employers. In the non-accredited courses, however, there is no clear mechanism for the effective review or customisation of materials in response to learners' and employers' needs.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Support mechanisms at Delmon Academy are neither systematic nor sufficiently individualised to assist all learners to achieve better. In the long accredited programmes, where the support is mostly needed, learners are not well prepared to sit for their examinations nor always admitted to the right level of programme. Learners on these programmes do not receive effective, nor systematically individualised support to help all of them achieve their qualifications. The absence of such support is evident in the low achievements rates of learners on the accredited courses. Although trainers are approachable and provide guidance and support when needed, it is left to the trainers' own initiative. The

impact, however, of this has not yet been felt. Learners on the AAT and ICDL courses are provided with some support activities, but these are not targeted to respond to individual areas for improvement and the impact is not yet evident. Support mechanisms for learners on the English courses were also not clearly evident.

Guidance is accessible for learners and stakeholders on programme choices and progression as in the case of AAT. The Academy shares with learners and employers information about learners' progress and grades and learners generally know how well they are progressing on the AAT and ICDL courses, but this is not always the case for the English courses.

Delmon Academy is flexible in the arrangements for the delivery of programmes in relation to time and location. Stakeholders are satisfied with the fact that Delmon Academy is flexible in holding training events on their premises and with different timings and duration. The Academy shares with stakeholders learner grades, attendance and performance reports at the end of a programme or when needed. Progress reports are descriptive in nature and information on pre- and post-course assessment is misleading especially when the quoted added-value is minimal and not reflective of the actual progress of learners with regards to the intended learning outcomes, as is the case with English.

The learning environment is adequate overall, although a few learners raised issues concerning the air conditioning and the cleanliness of the place during busy periods. Moreover, the IT laboratory is sometimes used as a normal classroom, which is not an appropriate environment for delivering non-IT sessions.

Leadership and management

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The leadership and management processes and measures at Delmon Academy are satisfactory overall. However, the provider lacks effective strategic planning. The existing documents rather show very generic objectives, without sufficient details and the time lines are not realistic. The monitoring of objective implementation is not established yet. The provider has a fit for purpose governance arrangement, and internal meetings are regularly held. The focus is mostly on operational and marketing issues.

Learners' achievements are recorded and management are made aware of the results but the achievements are not aggregated to establish trends for improvement and a significant number of learners are not achieving as well as they should be. Very basic internal

verification measures are in place, but are undeveloped, for example in capturing shortfalls in assessments and programme structures.

The outcomes of initial assessment are not utilised sufficiently well to support and prepare learners. The procedure for initial assessment and placement is in place, but failed to capture the number of learners on wrong courses or to provide them with the necessary support from the start of courses, especially on the long accredited programmes such as the AAT.

Delmon Academy has developed and implemented a procedure for the recruitment of trainers and trainers are selected based on clear and consistent criteria. The academy has a performance management system now in place (based on employee appraising management and *vica-versa*), but this has just recently been initiated and is not consistently applied. Records of a limited number of training opportunities for the staff exist. Although trainers are observed, the lesson observations are not sufficiently critical. Moreover, the lesson observation form focuses mainly on delivery aspects but not on learning.

Views of employers and learners are always gathered, *via* questionnaires and a grievance system, and some actions are taken, but the analyses and monitoring of learners' views is not systematic enough to identify and monitor improvement trends.

Basic safety and health measures are in place, but there is a need for some training and awareness amongst staff on first aid and emergency plans.

The self-evaluation form (SEF), which was filled prior to the review, referred to some relevant evidence. However, it was over graded.

The provider's key strengths

- Attendance rates and punctuality are recorded; attendance is high
- Course objectives which are in place and shared with learners
- An appropriate balance of internally-designed and externally-accredited programmes
- Clear and consistent criteria for selection of trainers.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Delmon Academy should:

- improve learners' attainment and progress in AAT, ICDL and English courses
- ensure that all learners are assessed initially, continuously and at the end of the course; and ensure that assessments are reliable and relevant to course objectives
- make courses, particularly the longer ones, more engaging by enriching them with relevant extra-curricular activities
- improve all learners' achievement by providing them with systematic and personalised support to overcome their individualised weaknesses
- introduce more specific and detailed strategic objectives to improve the provision overall and regularly monitor their progress
- enhance trainers' performance by applying lesson observations more critically
- ensure that the outcomes of learners' and employers' views are fully utilised by introducing improvement actions based on their feedback.