



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

# **Vocational Review Unit Review Report**

**EMIC Training  
Manama  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 8 -10 October 2012**

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## The Vocational Review Unit

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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 and 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:

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

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### **Description of the provision**

EMIC Training (EMIC) was established in 2010. The centre is licenced by the Ministry of Labour (MOL) to offer vocationally related courses in the areas of leadership and management, employee relations, personal development (soft skills) and strategy development. Most courses on offer are designed and customised according to the clients' needs, and run as non-accredited. However, the clients have the option to receive external endorsement for these courses from the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) and the centre is also accredited by Edexcel. Approximately 600 learners have enrolled on EMIC's courses since they started in 2010. They are all employed adults who are sponsored by their companies or Tamkeen.

The centre operates from one location in Manama. However, most courses are conducted in the clients' premises or hospitality venues. The centre is managed by a full-time team that includes a managing director, a general manager who is also a trainer, a training manager who is also a course designer and a trainer, a business development officer, a quality and human resources advisor, a training coordination manager, a quality records officer and seven part-time trainers.

### **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 courses and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and the materials provided by the provider and talked with staff, learners and employers.

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

## Table of review judgments awarded

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<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	
How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the full range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?	Grade: 2 Good
<b>Learners' Achievement</b>	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 2 Good
<b>Quality of Provision</b>	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	Grade: 2 Good
How well do courses meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	Grade: 2 Good
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	Grade: 2 Good
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all students?	Grade: 2 Good

## Review judgements

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### Overall effectiveness

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

**Grade: 2 Good**

The overall effectiveness of EMIC is good, as are all other aspects of the provision, with the vast majority of learners gaining very useful, vocational skills across a highly relevant range of management and supervisory programmes that are well structured and planned to meet stakeholders' and learners' needs. Learners are provided with an effective learning experience in a very safe and inspiring environment by experienced trainers who provide ample opportunities for learners to reflect on their own learning and relate it to workplace practice.

The management team has a clear shared vision focused on the continuous improvement of the provision to meet the needs and aspirations of learners and employers. Most learners and employers acknowledged the positive impact of the programmes on attitude change and work behaviours. The vast majority of those opting for ILM endorsement passed the work-based assignment which entitles them to receive an ILM external certificate. Group activities are effectively assessed and very useful feedback is provided to learners, although trainers do not keep a thorough record of learners' progress on all courses. Clear guidance is provided to employers and learners and the institute maintains highly effective communication links with their stakeholders from the very early stage.

EMIC has good capacity to improve, with a management team systematically putting well designed policies and procedures into practice and monitoring their effectiveness by regular internal and external reviews of the quality of their provision. In addition, all trainers complete their own course evaluation report. A comprehensive training quality manual has been developed and is well used by staff and trainers. The training design as well as course files have been continuously improved in line with the requirements of the quality manual. The management has taken a clear strategic approach to standardising their operations and documentation which they have almost successfully completed. A senior member of staff responsible for training design and an additional member of the administrative staff have recently been recruited to expand the EMIC team. A web-based training administration database is used effectively for data management and reporting and is currently being developed for further uses. EMIC has good repeat business with major employers and their clients' base has expanded within the last two years.

## **Learners' achievement**

### **How well do learners achieve?**

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

Learners' achievement is good overall. Most learners develop useful knowledge and vocationally-related skills and make good progress given their prior attainment. The vast majority of those opting for ILM endorsement passed the work-based assignment which entitles them to receive an ILM external certificate. Learners receive EMIC completion certificates on all other programmes. The success and retention rates on these programmes, which represent around 85 per cent of the total enrolment, are both high at 91 per cent. Nearly all employers indicated that they observed the high level of skill development and change of attitude and behaviour as a result of their staff attending these programmes. Learners also reported that they are highly satisfied with their learning at EMIC and found the skills gained very valuable.

Most learners are attentive and show a positive attitude to their learning; their level of enthusiasm is high while completing the practical activities in the sessions. They are able to work collaboratively in an effective manner in different roles. From the meetings and the observed sessions, learners were able to extend what they have been taught by questioning their trainers and challenging them with examples. Moreover, learners on long courses are able to reflect critically on how well they are learning and are able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. They plan for themselves how they can improve their performance by setting their personal goals through the use of a Personal Development Journal (PDJ) on each course. However, the data provided upon course completion and the observed sessions show that a small minority of learners are not making the progress expected from them. Furthermore, pre-course assessment on the very short courses could be improved so that the measurement of learners' progress on these courses is more effective. From the records of attendance, and observed sessions, it is evident that learners are attending mostly on-time and on a regular basis but there were a few cases of learners arriving in class up to 30 minutes late.

## **The quality of provision**

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

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

EMIC trainers have broad experience and command of their vocational specialism and use relevant real life examples while engaging and motivating learners by effective use of a range of teaching methods, activities and learning resources. The majority of sessions are well planned with clear objectives and effective recapitulation. In the sessions observed, group activities were effectively assessed and very useful feedback provided to learners. However, trainers do not keep a thorough record on learners' progress on all the courses conducted. In the good or better sessions, trainers enable learners to further their understanding and solve problems and appropriately accommodate the needs of most learners in the group.

Sessions start on time and are timely managed with a clear structure. In most of the sessions observed, trainers used a highly interactive learner-focused approach and delivered the sessions enthusiastically with a very clear exposition of the topic. They always invite learners to provide answers and cases from their workplace and link this to the class topics. Learners reported that they participate actively and effectively in group discussions, role plays and presentations by all the teams and this was evident from the sessions observed. Each group is asked to monitor and discuss their peer group performance on a daily basis and share critical feedback. Most trainers handle learners' questions effectively by using their background and appropriate body language and a friendly approach. Trainers use a variety of teaching styles to accommodate the needs of most learners.

Trainers effectively use formative assessment and provide constructive feedback to the groups during sessions. They assess learners' understanding through different techniques such as open and direct questioning, group work and individual exercises. Trainers also use summative post-course assessment for all the courses which includes a final test and in addition, for the longer courses, they also assess learners using relevant work-based assignments and presentations, often in the presence of employers' top management. However, post-course assessments in the shorter courses are not always rigorous enough. For the majority of the programmes, EMIC issue detailed and useful reports to record individual learners' achievement. The centre also sometimes conducts training impact assessments for employers to measure changes in learners' work behaviour six months after the course.

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

### **Grade: 2 Good**

EMIC offers a range of non-accredited competency based programmes that have the option of ILM endorsement as well as a few stand-alone ILM externally accredited courses. Programmes on offer cover training in leadership and management, employee relations, personal development (soft skills) and strategy development. These courses closely match the needs of most learners and employers. EMIC programmes are well planned and effectively structured to meet the needs of stakeholders. Programmes are customised by the selection of modules or short courses which are based on employers' needs. Although EMIC does not carry out a formal labour market needs analysis, an effective business immersion process is carried out as part of assessing clients' needs to develop customised programmes. A number of additional activities are used on long courses to enrich the learning experience.

The longer programmes, such as the supervisor development programme and the management development programme, are offered to corporate businesses in a format consisting of several modules that are customised and selected based on employers' requirements utilising a thorough, detailed and relevant training needs analysis. Employers are extremely satisfied with these programmes which have been in demand by a number of major clients who enroll many groups and batches of learners on these programmes. The institute depends on the highly effective working relationship with their current clients to introduce new courses and match their needs successfully on the range of courses on offer. EMIC ensures that courses are developed and reviewed based on employers' needs and regularly update their content. The training materials are of good quality and have clear and detailed course outlines and objectives. Courses are appropriately resourced and a number of relevant additional activities are used to enhance the long courses such as encouraging learners to do their work based assignment (WBA) in departments other than their own to enrich their learning experience. In addition, they occasionally invite their senior management to facilitate group discussions.

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

### **Grade: 2 Good**

Learners at EMIC receive very useful support and guidance to help them achieve better. Clear guidance is provided to employers and learners through a detailed and useful learners' handbook and a focused induction session, which is particularly effective for the longer courses. EMIC are highly effective in communicating with their stakeholders from a very early stage in preparation for the delivery of their programmes, including being flexible with timings to meet employers' needs. Learners are compensated for hours missed by

attending extra sessions or joining another batch and are provided with easy access to recorded on-line course presentations. EMIC has their own inspiring premises with appropriate learning resources for the delivery of courses although more than 90 per cent of their courses are conducted on employers' premises or at hotels or resorts. In all cases, the venues used are always of high quality and provide an inspiring and conducive training environment for learners.

Stakeholders receive updated and detailed course outlines in advance. Learners are provided with clear guidance on the objectives and structure of the course, attendance policy and course regulations, code of conduct and health and safety aspects. Trainers are accessible after course hours and learners share with them their work related queries, seek advice on the work based assignment and follow-up with them on their personal development journal (PDJ). Employers are made aware of the performance of the learners by receiving detailed individual reports with recommendations or verbal feedback at the end of the course. EMIC has an updated website that provides additional useful information on their provision.

## **Leadership and management**

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

**Grade: 2 Good**

The centre has a clear strategy, mission, vision and value statements that are appropriately focused on providing quality training. These are shared with staff and form a common approach and a reference for the centre's development activities. Continuous self-evaluation processes are informed by regular internal reviews and external audits as well as very useful reflective trainers' diaries. The management holds regular meetings to reflect on improvement issues related to each conducted programme and the training process as part of a key strategic phase of standardisation of the quality of the provision. Basic trend analysis of learners' feedback, attendance and summative assessment is conducted and reported after each course. However, the pre-assessment for the shorter courses is not well developed. The relatively small management team is appropriately structured with all jobs having clear descriptions of relevant roles and responsibilities.

Experienced staff and trainers are appropriately recruited and inducted. They are made well aware of the standard expected from them. A detailed quality manual and various handbooks are available as guides to ensure consistent practice. The performance of trainers is regularly observed in class, recorded on a detailed form and useful feedback is provided. Staff are appraised biannually and suitably developed through internal coaching by their

peers and management and attendance on relevant courses. Health and safety measures are fully in place to ensure safe, learning environments for learners and staff.

Effective links are made with stakeholders, especially the major corporates where EMIC has established a thorough understanding of their culture and needs through different degrees of business immersion. In this approach, trainers spend extended time with potential clients studying their issues prior to conducting group and individual training needs analysis using a range of assessment tools, including psychometric testing. Useful formal feedback is periodically collected from employers and systematically collected from all learners after each course. The learners' feedback is aggregated and shared with employers. While most feedback rates the various aspects of the provision as high, the occasional dip in rating on some courses is not always thoroughly analysed. The SEF is generally informative, identified a number of appropriate areas for development and the grades are reasonably accurate for most aspects.

## The provider's key strengths

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- The good progress and very useful knowledge and vocational skills most learners develop
- The ability of the majority of learners to reflect critically on how well they are learning and plan for themselves what they need to do to improve
- Well planned lessons with effectively assessed group activities which engage most learners
- The effectively planned and structured programmes which meet the stakeholders' needs
- The highly effective communication and links with the stakeholders
- The continuous self-evaluation processes that are well informed by regular reviews and critical self-audits
- The clear and strategic approach to monitoring and standardisation of operations and documentation based on the highly developed quality training manual.

## Recommendations

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### **In order to improve, EMIC should:**

- ensure that all learners make the progress expected from them on all courses
- ensure that progress records are maintained and regularly updated
- enhance the programmes on offer by further expanding the range of additional activities
- develop more effective assessment arrangements both initial and post, for the shorter courses.