



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

Directorate of Vocational Reviews

Review Report

ILC Training
Adliya-Manama
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 the vocational provision, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, establishing success measures, spreading best practices 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

ILC Training (ILC) was established in June 2011. It is licensed by the Ministry of Labour (MoL) to offer English language, management and soft skills courses. The offered English language courses include general English, business English and conversation which includes 'Boost', in addition to the one-on-one 'Explore' courses delivered to accommodate individual learner's needs. All courses on offer are non-accredited and are a mixture of externally and internally designed. ILC uses Cambridge material for general, Business and conversational English, while Boost courses are mainly internally designed courses.

ILC operates from a single branch in Adliya. The organisational structure consists of a general director who reports to the management team, a full-time academic director who manages trainers, a full-time business development director who manages the business development team consisting of two full-time members; one of whom is the general director. ILC recruits one full-time administrative staff. Currently, ILC employs three full-time trainers; two of whom are the academic director and the business development director. The management team consists of the general manager, the academic director, the business development director, and the third full-time trainer.

ILC enrolled 49 and 334 learners in the years 2011 and 2012 respectively; 64% of whom were enrolled in the general English courses, 17% in business English courses, 12% in conversation and 6% in Explore courses. Learners are adults and the majority are job-seekers who joined ILC's English courses through the MoL.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over three days, by a team of five reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons and other related activities, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieved, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and the materials provided by the provider and talked with staff, learners, employers and trainers.

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: 2 Good
Learners' Achievement	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 2 Good
Quality of Provision	
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
Leadership and Management	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all students?	Grade: 2 Good

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 2 Good

ILC's overall effectiveness is good, as are all other aspects of the provision. Most learners reach their course expectations without difficulties and make good progress from their starting point; especially in 'Boost' and conversation courses. They develop good speaking, listening and reading skills and satisfactory writing skills. Most learners are self-motivated, able to work independently and collaboratively and enjoy their learning experience. ILC provides an effective learning experience facilitated by qualified and experienced trainers who use a variety of learners' focused activities to engage and motivate learners. Learners are sufficiently assessed, assessment tools are structured well enough and records of learners' progress are maintained and regularly updated. However, marking of the writing parts of examinations is inconsistent and insufficient written feedback is provided on how to improve further. ILC offers a wide range of externally designed non-accredited courses in English language with progression levels, as well as internally designed courses which meet learners' and stakeholders' needs. While general English courses are supported with the 'Community' activity to promote learners' conversation skills which is part of the course structure in 'Boost'. Most interviewed learners find this activity to be highly effective in improving their speaking skills and self-confidence. Learners are well supported to help them achieve better, and are generally kept aware of their progress. Trainers are friendly, supportive and approachable when needed. Stakeholders are well informed about learners' progress. The institute leadership and management have a shared vision which is focused on providing quality provision. Qualified trainers are recruited and suitably deployed. Overall performance is closely monitored and used to inform decision making. A useful SWOT analysis was conducted and used to set the institute's milestones. Action planning however is insufficiently structured and monitoring is mainly done informally through regular meetings and communications.

ILC has good capacity to improve. The management team has a sufficient understanding of the labour market needs and knows the institute's strengths and areas for development. Senior staff have clear responsibilities and are well-equipped to carry through improvement. The institute is planning to expand the range of the offered courses to include management and soft skills courses, and medic basic health and safety courses. Recently, ILC signed a memorandum of understanding with another training provider to exchange material and services in order to expand their training services. There are sufficient quality assurance

measures in place to monitor performance and ensure continuous improvement. Number of enrolment has increased remarkably between 2011 and 2012 from 49 to 334 learners.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 2 Good

Learners' achievement at ILC Training is good overall. Most learners achieve their course objectives and make good progress from their starting point. Learners are highly self-motivated and enjoy their learning experience which has a positive impact on improving their English skills and enhancing their self-confidence.

Learners' achievement is measured through Cambridge assessments, which are well-structured and focused on courses learning outcomes. Most learners make good progress as a result of the effective teaching strategies and the good support provided. According to the lessons observed and the comparison of learners' performance in placement tests, mid-term and final examinations, most learners develop good reading, listening and speaking skills in general and business English courses. The development of the writing skill and language grammar are satisfactory and samples of learners' work show that the marking is not always consistent and insufficient written feedback is provided. In 'Boost' and conversation courses, which mainly focus on communication skills, samples of oral assessment show that most learners gain good speaking and communication skills considering course duration which is five days. Oral assessment tools have clear relevant criteria which include comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation and accuracy. In these courses, learners are exposed to different speaking activities such as debates, defining names and their meanings. Such focus enables learners to progress well by time. In addition to 'Community' activity where learners have the opportunity to practice their speaking and communication skills with native speakers outside the classroom. Most learners interviewed are highly satisfied with ILC's approach to language training. They stated that it is learners' focused and helps them to develop their language skills. They also find the 'Community' activity to be very effective in improving their communication skills and self-confidence.

The institute sets the minimum passing rate at 64%. Most learners achieve their course objectives with the majority scoring 85% and above. Overall retention rate is at 93% and 97% for conversation and general English courses, respectively. In 'Boost', business English and Explore, overall retention is at 100%. Overall success rates ranges between 94% and 95% for general and business English courses, 93% for conversation courses, and 100% for 'Boost' and Explore courses.

Learners are self-motivated and participate effectively in class activities and discussion. They are able to work independently and collaboratively through pair and group work. Moreover, in the lessons observed, learners were able to reflect critically on how well they are progressing.

Attendance and punctuality are well recorded. ILC has a clear attendance and punctuality policy which is shared with learners. Learners attend regularly and the average attendance rate is at 94% for the last two years. However, from the records kept, punctuality is an issue in few cases where learners reach their sessions 20 to 60 minutes late.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: 2 Good

ILC's trainers are qualified, native speakers and have experience in teaching languages. Most of them have Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA). This was clearly reflected in the observed sessions and confirmed by learners' testimonials. Trainers display proficiency in their subject knowledge, and at the same time keep the learners in the centre of the learning process. Lessons start on time and objectives are shared and discussed with learners at the beginning of the lessons. In the observed lessons, trainers involved learners in this process using suitable warmer or introductory questions which prepared them well for the lesson. A good range of teaching methods and activities are used to engage and motivate learners. According to the observed lessons and learners' testimonials, trainers use a wide range of learners' focused class activities which provides individual learners with the opportunities to participate and contribute; these activities include role play, vocabulary games, debates, speech presentations, pair and group discussions. Lesson plans are always in place and contain sufficient details about objectives, procedures to be used by the trainer and some plans include time allocation, however, these plans do not include differentiated activities to accommodate individual varying needs of learners. The observed lessons are well planned, timely managed and the learners' different needs are appropriately catered for. In the observed lessons, trainers enabled learners to further their understanding and develop higher order thinking skills using inferring and reasoning.

Learners are sufficiently assessed through class activities, homework, mid-terms and final examinations. During lessons, homework and class activities are discussed with the whole group and useful verbal feedback is provided. However, the marking of the writing parts of the examinations is not consistent as there is no common marking scheme used by all trainers, and insufficient written feedback is provided on how to improve further. As a results, there were cases of learners repeating the same writing mistakes. Trainers maintain

and regularly update records of learners' progress; these records include attendance, participation, placement test grades, mid-term and final examination grades which show learners' performance in the four main language skills.

Resources and materials are effectively used to promote learning; this includes the utilisation of visual and audio aids, extra hand-outs, data show, relevant CDs and original Cambridge textbooks.

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

Grade: 2 Good

ILC offers a wide range of externally designed, non-accredited, as well as internally designed English language courses which meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. Externally designed non-accredited provision include 'Advance' courses which are general English courses with progression levels ranging from pre-exposure to TOEFL, in addition to conversation English courses which are offered in three main levels, and business English courses which are offered in five main levels. Internally designed provision include 'Explore' courses which are one-on-one courses tailored to meet individual learners' needs, 'Boost' conversational English which are offered in four main levels, in addition to industry-specific English courses tailored to meet specific stakeholders' needs. Courses are supported with additional English conversation practice activity called 'Community' where learners are connected with American native speakers outside the classroom to promote their conversation and communication skills. Most learners interviewed found this activity to be highly effective in developing their communication skills and their self-confidence. Moreover, records show that learners who utilised this activity have scored better results.

ILC is aware of the labour market needs and makes use of the available national labour studies to inform the provision. In 2010, ILC evaluated its provision by inviting 20 to 30 learners to attend sessions free of charge and gathered their comments and feedback about the overall provision and utilised the outcome for further improvement.

Courses are well planned, structured and resourced to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. ILC utilises Cambridge textbooks, learning materials and assessment tools, such as 'Interchange', 'Passages' and 'Let's Talk'. The institute has sufficient and appropriate resources needed to deliver its current offerings such as dictionaries, grammar books, videos, LCD TV screens, ipads, sound system for listening audios, picture files, and various group games. Courses offered are regularly reviewed and updated; ILC has a clear policy to ensure periodic review and update of its offerings. All course materials are up-to-date and relevant.

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

Grade: 2 Good

Learners at ILC are well supported and guided to achieve better outcomes. Learners in general English courses are provided with very useful conversation practice sessions enabling them to improve their communication skills and build-up their self-confidence. The institute records show that learners who attended this activity have scored better results. At the start of a training course, learners are provided with a useful induction file comprising courses offered by ILC and how they are mapped to the Common European Framework, information about the course they are going to attend, assessment methods, attendance and punctuality policy, learners' code of conduct, and general health and safety instructions.

Learners' prior attainment is effectively measured. Accordingly they are placed at the appropriate course level. Those who missed a session, once justify their absenteeism, are compensated. Trainers are cooperative, supportive and approachable. Learners are provided with appropriate guidance on course selection; for example a lot of learners come to ILC for conversation courses however, they are advised to take general English as most of them lack basic language skills.

Learners are made aware of their progress and what they need to do to improve further. In addition to the useful verbal feedback provided throughout the course, learners are provided with two progress reports, one with the results of the mid-term examinations which also reflects the acquired skills at this stage of the course with some useful comments, the other progress report is received upon the course completion. ILC maintains effective communication with stakeholders to update them on learners' attendance and progress; individual performance reports are provided to the sponsors at the end of the course. Arrangements for delivery of courses are highly flexible to meet learners' and stakeholders' needs. Stakeholders receive useful course outlines in advance and have access to general course information through leaflets and the institute's useful bilingual website. Announcements and reminders are sent to learners as well through SMS messages and emails.

The provider's learning environment is fit for purpose with four classrooms equipped with different resources such as video projectors, DVD player, whiteboard and sound system. However, there were insufficient training posters displayed on classrooms. The institute has a wide refreshment and reception area and two dedicated prayer rooms for male and female. Learners can use ILC's laptops and have access to Wi-Fi services. Nevertheless, interviewed learners stated that car-parking areas are insufficient and the institute is located in crowded area.

Leadership and management

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

Grade: 2 Good

Leadership and management have clear understanding of the provision and how to improve further. Learners' achievement is closely monitored; progress is recorded and used to inform management of trends and issues. There is a sense of shared purpose amongst the management team. The institute has a clear focus on quality assurance and continuous improvement guided by an accurate evaluation of current practices. Health and safety policies and practices are in place and communicated to learners.

ILC has clear vision and mission statements which are suitably focused on providing quality training and are shared amongst senior staff. A useful SWOT analysis was conducted and used to set the institute's milestones. Action planning however is insufficiently structured and monitoring is mainly done informally through regular meetings and communications. Management structure is fit for purpose considering the type of the offered courses and the number of enrolment. Senior staff are qualified, competent and effectively utilised.

Learners' prior attainment is effectively assessed through a well-structured placement test which covers the four main skills of the English language. The placement test gradually increases in difficulty to measure and assess the abilities of different learners. Accordingly, learners are placed at the appropriate course level. Moreover, learners are carefully observed by trainers during the first week of the course to further ensure the appropriateness of the placement process.

Learners' achievement is closely monitored; learners' attainment and progress are sufficiently measured and relevant data are kept. ILC management oversees individual session's training reports as well as the annual training report to monitor trends over time. Qualified and experienced trainers are recruited and suitably deployed, and their performance is effectively monitored through detailed and sufficiently critical internal lesson observations that identify areas for development. The identified areas are followed up to ensure the addressing of issues identified and continuous improvement. Trainers are provided with opportunities for training and development. ILC trainers are either CELTA certified or are working towards achieving the Certificate.

Learners' feedback is regularly gathered through the end of course evaluation forms. The feedback is aggregated, analysed and where possible used to improve the provision. However, employers' feedback about the provision is informally sought. ILC maintains appropriate links with stakeholders. The institute has just completed two years of

performance in the market and so far, the majority of its services has been to the MoL as it won a tender to train around 270 job seekers. The rest of the learners are walk-in individuals. The institute started approaching more employers through marketing visits and calls and they are in the process of finalising some training contracts with employers.

The submitted ILC Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) is informative for most areas of performance, accurate and reflects a sufficient understanding of the provision.

The provider's key strengths

- Most learners acquire good speaking, listening and reading skills and make good progress especially in the 'Boost' and conversation courses
- Trainers are qualified, experienced and succeed to engage and motivate learners
- Good range of English courses which are enriched with effective additional activities
- Good communication with learners and stakeholders on learners' progress
- Learners' achievement is closely monitored and analysed and outcomes are used to inform management of trends and issues
- Detailed and sufficiently critical lesson observations are conducted and outcomes are followed-up to ensure the addressing of the issues identified and continuous improvement.

Recommendations

In order to improve, ILC institute should:

- further develop learners' writing skills by ensuring that the assessing of writing part of the learners' work is consistent with clear marking schemes and that learners are provided with sufficient written feedback on how to improve further
- ensure that employers' feedback about the provision is systematically gathered and used to improve the provision
- develop a structured action plans with clear indicators and improved monitoring mechanism to ensure timely achievement of the set targets and objectives.