



Vocational Review Unit Review Report

**Leaders Institute for Training and Development
Al Seef District
Kingdom of Bahrain**

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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 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:

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

Leaders Institute for Training and Development was established in 2009. It is licensed by the Ministry of Labour to offer training in soft skills, business, basic health and safety, and *neuro* linguistic programming. Most courses offered are mainly short, and non-accredited, and a few are externally accredited such as the Certified Business Professional (CBP) and Highfield Awarding Body for compliance courses.

Leaders operate from a single branch in Seef District. The organisation structure consists of a managing director who is the owner of the institute; it employs a full-time training manager who also work works as a trainer, three full-time sales representatives, two full- time administrative staff, one full-time training coordinator, who also work as a quality staff and a trainer as well, and a full-time accountant. Leaders institute also has a pool of 25 part-time trainers.

During the last two years, leaders enrolled 1666 learners, most of whom are sponsored by their employers.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over three days, by a team of five reviewers. During the review, reviewers attended 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, employers and trainers.

In the previous review, overall effectiveness was judged as satisfactory. Learners' achievement, the quality of training, programmes and leadership and management were all also judged as satisfactory. Support and guidance were judged as good.

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 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 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 3: Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all students?	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

Leaders' provision is satisfactory overall. All aspects of provision are judged as satisfactory. Learners develop appropriate knowledge and skills and make the progress expected of them considering their prior attainment. Most trainers recruited have theoretical and practical command of their specialisms and use their experience to enrich learning with relevant vocational examples. They effectively use a range of training methods and activities to engage and motivate learners. Assessment and record keeping are generally adequate but there are no marking schemes used and learners are not always aware of their progress.

Leaders offer an appropriate range of non-accredited and a few externally accredited courses in soft skills, basic health and safety, business and English language. Most courses offered are of short duration and are based on labour market needs, although not always reviewed in a systematic or regular way. Trainers are supportive and approachable. Employers are provided with reports, however, these reports provide insufficient information on learners' individual performance.

Leaders' capacity to improve is good. During the last two years, leaders has made appropriate improvements to the provision which includes recruitment of more staff and expanding the range of courses offered by introducing external accredited courses. In 2011, Leaders Institute became an authorised centre for the Certified Business Professionals (CBP-USA) and in June 2012, Leaders were granted the approval of Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance qualification (HABC-UK) as a training and examination centre. The provider has also signed an agreement with a local partner as part of a quality improvement initiative which includes reviewing overall performance and improving the current strategic plan, although it is too early to judge the impact of this. Leaders have sufficient and appropriate human and physical resources to enable improvements to be carried out. Enrolment numbers increased markedly between 2011 and 2012 from 573 to 1093 learners and repeat business is good.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade 3: Satisfactory

Learners acquire and develop relevant knowledge and skills and make satisfactory progress from their starting points. From the observed sessions a few were able to reflect on how well they are progressing. Learners are motivated and enjoy their learning experience; they are able to work both independently and collaboratively as a leader or team member, when needed. Analysis of learners' work reflects a satisfactory standard achieved on most courses. Attendance and punctuality are recorded and the attendance percentage is high. However, punctuality was an issue during session observations. Leaders' retention rate is generally high as expected on courses which are mostly of short and very short duration.

In 2012, around half of learners were enrolled on soft skills courses, a quarter on team building workshops, and the rest were distributed between the Certified Business Professional courses (CBP), NLP, IT, and health and safety which includes both the non-accredited courses and Highfield externally accredited courses. Learners' achievement is mainly measured through pre- and post-course assessment on the vast majority of courses conducted. Analysis of pre- and post-course results reveals that the added value is satisfactory for 2012 but varies between courses. Learners' progress in English business writing skills, the new *Headway* beginners and elementary courses, is adequate, regardless of the fact that initial assessment is mainly focused on grammar.

On the externally accredited courses, the pass rate on the level two Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) course is more than the Highfield international pass rate, and comparable to it in on the Fire Safety course. However, these two courses make up only one per cent of the total enrolment of 2012. The pass rate in the Certified Business Professionals courses is 90 per cent compared to the international pass rate of 70 per cent; these courses account for just four per cent of the 2012 total enrolment.

In the team building outdoor workshop, the review team had the opportunity to observe one session, see samples of video clips and debriefing sessions of learners reflecting on their benefits and to interview learners and stakeholders. This all indicated that learners really enjoy the group activities and gain appropriate team building skills according to their levels but no achievement data are kept for these workshops.

The quality of provision

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

Grade 3: Satisfactory

Training is satisfactory overall with some good features. The majority of the sessions observed were judged as satisfactory and a significant minority were judged as good. Most trainers have a theoretical and practical command of their specialisms; this was clearly reflected in the accurate explanations of concepts and the use relevant vocational examples. Sessions usually start on time with recapitulation with the previous session and sharing of objectives. Time management is satisfactory; in a minority of the sessions observed, activities took longer than expected. Lesson plans used by the trainers are suitable, however, they do not reflect how learners' varying needs will be accommodated. The outcomes of the pre-course assessment and pre-course screening are informally used by trainers to customised delivery based on learners' prior knowledge and their work industry. Accommodation of learners' individual needs was appropriate, however, in a few sessions, less able learners needed more support and feedback than that provided.

A range of teaching methods and activities are effectively used to engage and motivate learners through exercises, questioning techniques, and group activities. In the most effective sessions observed, trainers challenge learners and enable them to further their understanding. Useful learning resources are used to promote learning which include relevant video and pictures, relevant resources such as fire extinguishers and learning games. Assessment is adequate across the majority of the courses; there were no marking schemes used by trainers and in the few samples provided, marking is not rigorous. However, during sessions learners are provided with useful verbal feedback although they are not always appropriately assessed at an individual level. Trainers keep records of pre- and post-course assessment results. However, in the team building workshops, where there is a lack of relevant records, the assessment does not provide sufficient information on how well learners are doing and whether they are on target to meet the course objectives.

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

Grade 3: Satisfactory

Leaders offer an appropriate range of internally designed non-accredited courses and a few externally accredited courses. The internally designed non-accredited courses include basic health and safety, marketing, management and soft skills, and business report writing.

Externally accredited courses include neuro Linguistic programming (NLP), the certified business professional courses (CBP), and Highfield basic health and safety courses. Leaders also offers outdoor teambuilding workshop which are based on experiential learning. The offered courses are mainly of short duration, typically between six and eight hours. Courses are offered based on labour market requirements and national studies and are suitably planned, structured and resourced to meet learners' and stakeholders' needs. A few learners and trainers highlighted the issue of courses being too short to cover all activities. Courses are updated but not in a systematic or regular way.

Externally accredited courses are well structured to meet the needs of learners and employers. Non-accredited courses material and activities are reviewed prior to the commencement of a course prior to ensure matching stakeholders' needs. However, the pre- and post-course assessments or presentation slides are not always structured to reflect course objectives. For example, the Electricity Safety course is an introduction to Electricity rather than Electricity Safety. The majority of the non-accredited courses are generally altered or translated to meet the needs of stakeholders and course outlines are available in advance. Although the institute keeps updated versions of Velsoft soft skills courseware, there are no relevant procedures in place to ensure the regular updating of these courses.

The programmes at Leaders are well resourced with suitable training rooms, learning aids, videos, Headway printed booklets and laptops. The Highfield and the purchased training materials for the non-accredited courses are of good quality. The vast majority of courses are conducted in suitable hospitality venues, employers' premises and outdoor recreational places. Although courses are mainly of short and very short duration, learners are sometimes provided with enrichment activities such as guest speakers and meditation sessions in stress management.

Marketing staff communicate with employers through visits and calls. Leaders took the marketing seminars, conducted for introducing the externally accredited courses, as an opportunity to collect more information about employers' training needs through relevant questionnaires.

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

Grade 3: Satisfactory

The quality of support and guidance is satisfactory overall. Learners are appropriately supported during the course to help them achieve better. Regular pre-screening by telephone is carried out to identify future learners' potential difficulties, for example by helping learners with English difficulties by providing useful translations when necessary. In addition, basic private coaching is provided to help low achievers to pass the post-course assessment or final examinations. Learners are allowed to repeat the tests free of charge.

Trainers are generally accessible outside training hours. Leaders encourages distinguished learners with prizes presented at the end of each course.

Most courses are held at hospitality venues which are fit for purpose and adequately equipped and where the learning environment has sufficient space, training aids and comfortable furniture. Learners have Wi-Fi access upon request and leaders' fit for purpose website provides learners with purposeful information regarding programmes, trainers and upcoming events. Moreover, Leaders have available a suitable range of relevant books and publications, however, there is no dedicated place to keep them and learners are not aware of their existence so that they could make effective use of them.

The provider is very flexible in the timing of the delivery of courses to suit the needs of learners and employers. Courses are held during weekends and in a few cases, courses are held at employer's premises. Course outlines content and plans in place. These are made available in advance for employers who distribute them to their learners. Learners are supported by trainers who are helpful, responsive, supportive and cooperative. For example, in the Certified Business Professional (CBP) programme, one learner was sponsored for three basic levels only, and leaders successfully managed to get him sponsored and enrolled in the master level to get a diploma.

Although useful verbal feedback is provided during sessions, learners are not always aware of their progress and what they need to do to improve further. After each course, Leaders generally send trainers' reports to the employers which include attendance, overall participation, assessment, pre- and post-course test results of each learner. However, this report does not provide individualised feedback about each learner and the written feedback section is not always completed. Leaders also keep learner feedback reports, completed after the course, detailing participation, final assessment and observed behavior but this is available to learners upon request only.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 3: Satisfactory

Leadership and management have a general understanding of the provision, the mission statement is suitably focused on learners' achievement and strategic plans are in place. Objectives have been set but they are more of operational tasks rather than strategic objectives. Action planning has clear targets but progress monitoring is not included and mainly done informally. Leaders' organisational structure is fit for purpose considering the

number of enrolments and the type of the courses offered. Appropriate training staff are recruited although monitoring their performance could be more critical to secure further improvement.

Most trainers recruited are qualified with sufficient vocational and training experience; they are suitably inducted and deployed. Trainers' performance is monitored through internal lesson observations and learners' end of course evaluation. However, lesson observations completed so far are insufficiently detailed, more focused on training rather than learning, and the majority do not identify areas for development. Pre-course assessment is relevant for the majority of courses with the outcomes informally used by trainers to customise delivery but not necessarily to accommodate learners' individual needs.

Learners' achievement is adequately monitored and relevant data are kept for the majority of the courses conducted. Leaders analyse the added-value for all courses for each year; this analysis however does not provide a clear picture of trends over years for different course types. Furthermore, learners' achievement in the outdoor team-building workshops is only informally measured and relevant records are not kept. At the end of the workshop, Leaders conducts debriefing sessions to discuss with learners' what they have learnt but these are not documented. Leaders relies on learners' enjoyment and employers' demands as indicators to measure impact of these workshops.

Learners' views are regularly sought through end of course evaluations which are aggregated and analysed. However, employers' feedback about the provision is informally sought via marketing visits and calls. Although the provider maintains good links with employers, a more systematic gathering of feedback could be used for further development of future training events. Appropriate health and safety policies and procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety and wellbeing of learners and staff. Precautions are generally communicated to learners. Although Leaders' management has general understanding of the quality of provision, and the self-evaluation form (SEF) identified some areas for development, the grades of a few aspects of the provision were slightly overestimated.

The provider's key strengths

- Qualified trainers who have a good command of their specialisms
- The range of teaching methods and activities which are effectively used to engage and motivate learners
- The highly flexible timing of the delivery of courses to suit the needs of learners and employers.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Leaders Institute should:

- improve learners' achievement on the non-accredited courses
- ensure that all learners are made aware of their progress and what they need to do to improve
- improve leadership and management by:
 - improving the current internal lesson observations to be more informative and critical
 - ensuring that employers' feedback about the provision is regularly collected and used for improvement
 - ensuring that learners' achievement is measured and records are kept for the team building workshops
- ensure that the pre- and post-course assessments and presentation slides are structured so as to reflect course objectives.