



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

Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**Modern Institute of Science and Computer
Isa Town
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 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 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

Modern Institute of Science and Computer (Modern Institute) was established in 1997. It is licensed by the Ministry of Education to offer three types of courses; tutorial courses, information technology (IT) courses and general English language and conversation courses. The tutorial courses are based on the public school and university curriculum and of a very short duration, lasting 12 hours per each enrolment. The general English programmes are offered for two main age groups; children (aged 7 to 17) and adults (aged 18+) with each programme comprising five main levels. The English conversation courses are offered in four main levels. In addition, the institute also offers preparatory courses for sitting the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Arabic for non-Arabic speaking and Arabic calligraphy courses are also offered.

The institute is an approved centre for the International Computer Driving License (ICDL) and CompTIA. It offers a few externally-accredited IT courses that include ICDL, CompTIA Network+ and CompTIA A+. A range of internally-designed IT programmes are also on offer, such as the Advanced Computer Certificate (ACC), graphic design, video montage, web page designing, Visual Basics, Oracle, a hardware and software maintenance programme, computer networks, AutoCAD, 3D Studio Max, and Cisco. The institute is also an approved test centre for ICDL and Pearson VUE for Adobe and Cisco.

Since the last review conducted in 2011, Modern Institute has enrolled 8,211 learners in general English language and IT courses; 3,066 in 2011, 2529 in 2012, 2276 in 2013 and 340 in 2014 up to the date of this review. In addition to this, approximately 157,000 enrolments have been made by 36,750 learners in the tutorial courses since the last review, amounting to the vast majority of learners.

The institute has three branches located in Isa Town, Arad and Hamad Town. The institute is overseen by the Executive Manager, who is also the owner, a senior branch manager who takes care of health, safety and maintenance aspects for the three branches, three academic department heads for the tutorial courses, English and IT. The institute also employs one marketing manager, two IT support staff and three programme coordinators. Each branch is administered by a branch manager and employs a registration and an administration team as well as a bus driver who also takes care of security. A total of 25 administrative and support staff work in the three branches. The institute has a pool of just over 100 part-time teachers in different specialisations.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over five days, by a team of seven reviewers. During the review, reviewers attended lessons and other related activities, analysed data about the courses and the qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' work, studied documents and the materials provided by the institute and met with the management, staff, learners, parents and teachers.

In the previous review, the overall effectiveness of the institute was judged satisfactory as were learners' achievement, the quality of training, and leadership and management were all judged satisfactory. Both the quality of the programmes offered, and the support and guidance were judged good. The provider's capacity to improve was judged satisfactory.

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: 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 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: 3 Satisfactory

The overall effectiveness of Modern Institute is satisfactory, as are all other aspects of its provision, with the majority of learners gaining suitable and relevant skills and knowledge across the courses offered. While learners' make noticeable progress in IT and general English language courses, the progress of learners in tutorial courses vary across all subjects and levels. Parents and learners acknowledged that attending tutorials at the institute helped learners to get better grades at school. The institute offers a broad range of programmes and tutorial courses that are suitably resourced and structured to match the needs of learners and parents. These courses are delivered by appropriately qualified teachers who adequately use relevant activities to engage and assess learners' progress. The learning environment is generally fit-for-purpose and has sufficient learning resources for most of the offered courses. Useful programme information and guidance are provided to learners during enrolment, and effective support is provided to those learners preparing for the ICDL examinations. The management team has a focused vision and uses various mechanisms to monitor the teachers' performance. However, the effectiveness and impact of these vary.

Modern Institute has satisfactory capacity to improve. The management team has developed recently a strategic plan for the years 2014-2017 that stipulates four main objectives. These are translated into a focused operation plan with specific goals, timelines, budget and responsibilities. The institute also has a useful quality assurance manual that has a range of relevant policies and guidance for the main processes. However, these are not detailed enough. Moreover, monitoring of various operations is yet to develop consistent practices amongst different teachers and subjects. The provision has adequate physical and human resources to implement the development plans with the support of the Labour Fund's (Tamkeen's) different schemes and its access to a large pool of teachers in various specialisms. The management team has introduced various relevant developments since the last review including the installation of smart boards, upgrading of the IT equipment, introducing new general English language syllabus, performing systematic collection and aggregation of learners' feedback. In addition, the institute has continued to maintain high enrolment rates and recently started maintaining useful achievement and for IT and English courses. However, insufficient data is kept for tutorial courses, which comprises the most percentage of learners' enrolment.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Learners' achievement is satisfactory overall. The majority of learners acquire appropriate skills and relevant knowledge across the various courses. From the available assessment records of the IT and general English language courses, the majority of learners achieve the qualifications they aim for such as in the ICDL and other external accredited courses, and in a few cases learners accomplish high scores. Whilst the pass rate of the general English language courses is high and learners' grades over levels are slightly improved, the majority of learners develop appropriate level of English language skills and make adequate progress as observed in lessons and from learners' assessed work. However, the writing skills are less developed where grammatical mistakes, spelling and punctuation errors are repeatedly made. The retention rates for the IT and the general English language courses are high at 100%. These represent only a small portion of the total enrolment, which is mainly concentrated in the tutorial courses.

From the lessons observed and the scrutiny of the provided samples of learners' work, learners generally achieve lesson objectives and gain suitable skills and relevant knowledge in the majority of the tutorial lessons. However, a minority of learners in the Intermediate school level still have difficulties in developing their basic and accumulated skills. Learners' achievement is measured during the class through appropriate activities and relevant exercises. Nonetheless, sufficient progress records of these assessments are not kept. As indicated from the lessons observed, in a significant minority of mathematics and English language tutorial lessons, learners and particularly those coming with less developed basic skills do not progress as expected. Notwithstanding the above, most of the learners and parents interviewed expressed their high satisfaction with the learning experience and acknowledged the positive impact of the tutorial sessions on improving learners' general performance and their grades at school.

From the observed lessons and meetings with learners, it is evident that the majority of learners are attentive and enjoy their learning experience at the Modern Institute. The scrutiny of learners' work and the observed lessons also indicate that learners are generally able to work independently. Nevertheless, they are not always self-motivated and a minority of the learners still need continuous support from their teachers. In the more effective lessons, a few learners reflected critically on their learning and on what they need to do to improve further and engaged with their teachers for further elaborations. Attendance records are regularly maintained by the institute and these indicate that the majority of learners attend the institute regularly. Aggregated attendance records are not readily

available, however, the attendance rate for the last three years from an aggregated random sample provided is at 87%. While proper follow-ups are carried out for the absent cases, punctuality is not well recorded and it is an issue in a few of the observed lessons.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Teaching and training at Modern Institute is satisfactory overall. Teachers are qualified, knowledgeable, and have command of the subjects they teach. Whilst the vast majority of the teachers have relevant teaching experience as they teach similar subjects in public schools, there are a few teachers with limited teaching experience. During the observed lessons, almost all teachers started and ended their lessons on time; however, time management during the lesson is an issue in the less effective lessons. Moreover, English language tutorial teachers sometimes use Arabic language as a medium of instruction. The majority of teachers plan their lessons and share the lesson objectives with learners appropriately, and occasionally start their lessons with a useful recapitulation on the previous lesson. Generally, teachers succeed in engaging and motivating learners adequately using questioning techniques, class activities and exercises. However, in a minority of the observed lessons, the teaching methods used do not engage the learners sufficiently, and the individual needs of the less able learners are not accommodated. Notwithstanding the above, in some of the better lessons observed, teachers enable learners to further their understanding by challenging their abilities through follow-up questions.

During the observed lessons, the majority of teachers check learners' understanding appropriately and provide them with useful verbal feedback. However, the written feedback is minimal as well as it is not always consistent nor effective. Lesson plans prepared by the teachers for the general English language and IT courses are clear and fit for purpose. On the other hand, tutorial subjects' teachers schedule their lessons to closely match the public school schedules. However, tutorial lessons do not always have well prepared lesson plans, and generally, lesson plans are not informed by effective assessment of learners' prior attainment. While, appropriate achievement records are kept for the general English language and the IT courses, learners' achievement during tutorial lessons are not recorded. Generally, teachers use the available range of learning resources, such as the whiteboard, flashcards, audio-recorders, data show projectors, and relevant text books and worksheets, suitably. Whilst it was noted from the lessons observed that some of the IT teachers also use

the readily available smart boards and current software. This was not consistent amongst all teachers. Moreover, teachers conducting tutorial lessons mostly use the whiteboard only.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Modern Institute offers a broad range of internally-designed and externally-accredited courses covering tutorials for school and university students in addition to IT and general English language and conversation courses. The institute is suitably sensing and responding to parents needs for tutorials and general English language courses. However, the institute does not conduct systematic evaluation of the market needs for the other courses. The IT and general English language courses, including the small offerings of conversation courses, are of longer durations, whereas the tutorial courses are only of 12 hours long. However, parents very often continue to re-enrol their children on these tutorials following the school's schedule. Generally, appropriate resources are allocated to deliver the stated courses including basic teaching materials needed for the general English language courses such as audio-visual aids and technical hardware and equipment needed for the IT classes. However, resources available for the tutorial courses, particularly for the English language and science subjects, are not of a sufficient variety. Teachers in most tutorial classes have the whiteboard and the worksheets as the only resources available to use.

Courses offered in general English language and IT courses are appropriately structured. The general English language programmes are grouped into two main categories, one for children and the other for adults, with each category having five main levels. However, these levels are not mapped against any known external language competency framework. While the general English language courses for adults have clear and explicit structure the general English language courses for children require further enhancement. The IT courses are either externally-accredited, such as ICDL and CompTIA, or internally designed, such as the graphics package and Microsoft Office. Both offerings are well structured and have useful course material. General English language courses are enriched with a suitable range of additional activities delivered by external native speakers such as a workshop titled the 'characteristics of good writing', another one titled 'reading for pleasure', and a third one which was on the form of a puppet show. However, the offered IT programmes lack such extra enrichment. IT and general English language courses are suitably updated by introducing new versions and textbooks. Tutorial classes are also updated in response to any changes in the public schools' syllabus or examinations. The quality of the tutorial handouts vary between subjects and levels. While some are clear and useful, others are not well presented to cover the subject in sufficient details.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Learners receive suitable support and guidance overall. Learners and parents indicated that the teachers and the staff members are approachable when needed. Learners on the IT courses are supported well to achieve better, particularly those pursuing ICDL. They are offered a free of charge *Primer* Test to prepare for their examination. Mock examination questions are also made available for the externally-accredited courses besides the additional handouts, which exist for most of the IT courses. Extra and compensation classes are provided to learners when required. There are different attempts by some of the teachers in the tutorial courses to support the less able learners through filling the 'individual support form'. However, the impact of this support is not always sufficient to help learners, especially those having problems with their basic subject knowledge and skills. The institute has some useful support arrangements for learners who have physical or learning difficulties by providing a ground floor classroom for the disabled and some assistant to those with certain difficulties.

Learners have access to appropriate course information and guidance on course selection through brochures, an informative website, advertisements and social media. Detailed course outlines are available for the general English language and the IT courses in advance and most of the IT course outlines are available on the institute's website. In addition, learners can go through the 'After School Guide', published by Tamkeen and available in the reception area of the institute, to guide learners after graduation from high school. Along with that, there are different posters displayed in the corridors with useful information about career guidance and programmes. The learning environment and the premises are fit-for-purpose with facilities that are adequately equipped with the necessary furniture. Most parents are highly satisfied with the learning environment. However, a few learners raised concerns about the air conditioning and the small size of some of the classrooms. Arrangements for the delivery of programmes are flexible to accommodate learners' and parents' needs. This includes for example, flexibility in the timings of course delivery especially near school examination days, offering separate classes for males and females based on parents request, and having one-to-one classes when requested.

Learners are sufficiently updated on their progress through receiving their marked work, knowing their marks and the feedback they receive. However, this is not always effective enough to help learners to improve as the feedback given is not always consistent across all the courses and whenever given does not clarify clearly how to improve further. Formal reports are sent to parents who have children in the general English language courses and to learners in IT courses. However, these reports have only generic information about learners' progress and mostly on behaviour. In addition, progress reports are not issued for learners

in tutorial classes. Nevertheless, the administrative staff normally facilitate formal or informal meetings between teachers and parents and through telephone calls when needed.

Leadership and management

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The Modern Institute has a well-structured strategic and operation plan for 2014-2017 with relevant objectives focusing on improving the provision. A useful monitoring mechanism has been recently used to follow-up on planned actions. However, many of these actions are timed to start later in the year, from May 2014 and beyond. Hence, the impact of these are yet to be measured. Both the operation plan and the fit-for-purpose organizational structure indicate that roles and responsibilities are allocated appropriately. Quality monitoring tasks are shared among the three head of sections and recently contracted a local consultancy company. A suitable recruitment procedure is in place to select teachers with the required qualifications, and those who are hired undergo a useful induction. However, the day-to-day practices, such as lesson planning, marking, feedback and teaching approaches are not consistent amongst different teachers. Teachers are observed regularly by head of sections and the outcomes of these are recorded on a useful form. However, the quality of the observations and the level of details of the feedback provided vary, with the feedback provided to the English language teachers being particularly very critical and detailed. Relevant development opportunities are provided to administration staff members and occasionally to teachers.

Appropriate aggregations of learners' achievement for the IT and the general English language courses are available with useful trend charts produced. However, these are not analysed further to explain the outcomes and to recommend solutions. While some form of verification of the assessment tools used in the general English language courses are in place, assessment records for other subjects are not verified sufficiently and the achievement records for the tutorial courses are not maintained to monitor progress and trends over time. Despite the introduction of pre-course assessments and the training need analysis (TNA) form, assessment of prior attainment of learners is not effective enough for assessing learners' individual basic skills and needs, particularly for those on the tutorial courses. Learners' feedback is collected, aggregated and shared with teachers regularly. However, parents' feedback is sought occasionally and informally. Nonetheless, some actions have been taken based on these feedback such as replacing teachers and changing course timings.

Suitable links are established with parents, awarding bodies and local sponsoring organizations such as charities.

The premises are free from obvious hazards and a suitable health and safety policy is in place. A three-members committee is responsible for looking after the health and safety and maintenance. The committee conducts a basic monthly risk assessment and assesses the maintenance needs for each branch. Relevant instructions on health and safety aspects are made available to learners and occasional emergency evacuation drills are arranged by the committee. However, the premises lack smoke detectors and fire alarm, some outside steps need anti-skidding tapes and other steps need repair and ventilation needs to be improved in a few classrooms and corridors.

The institute conducts a useful self-evaluation using SWOT analysis to inform the strategic plan, and the SEF submitted is sufficiently informative and has reference to a range of relevant evidence. However, the grades are overestimated.

The provider's key strengths

- The broad range of programmes and tutorial courses offered to match the needs of learners and parents
- The effective support provided to the learners on the ICDL courses to help them achieve better
- Learners have access to very useful information and guidance about programmes.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Modern Institute of Science and Computer should:

- ensure that learners, particularly in mathematics and English language tutorial courses make the progress expected from them
- improve teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that teachers use more effective teaching methods to engage learners and provide more useful written feedback
 - introducing a more effective record keeping system for tutorial courses and ensure that parents and learners are well informed about the progress.
- strengthen the role of the management team in assuring the quality of the provision by:
 - improving the monitoring and the verification process across the different courses to ensure that practices among teachers are consistent
 - devising more effective measures to assess learners prior attainment, particularly for tutorial courses and use the outcomes to address learners' individual needs.