



هيئة ضمان جودة التعليم و التدريب
Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training

Vocational Review Unit

Review Report

National Institute for Industrial Training
Hidd
Kingdom of Bahrain

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The Vocational Review Unit

The Vocational Review Unit (VRU) is part of the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET), an independent body set up under Royal Decree No.32 of 2008 amended by Royal Decree No. 6 of 2009. 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 five-point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
1: Outstanding	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all or nearly all aspects and is/are exemplary or exceptional in many.
2: Good	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are better than the basic level. Practice will be at least sound and there may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
3: Satisfactory	This describes a basic level of adequacy. No major areas of weakness substantially affect what learners, or significant groups of learners, achieve. Some features may be good.
4: Below satisfactory	This describes situations where major weaknesses in some areas affect the outcomes for learners and outweigh any strengths in the provision.
5: Very weak	This describes situations where there are major weaknesses in all, or almost all, areas and where, as a result, learners are very poorly served.

Introduction

Description of the provision

The National Institute for Industrial Training (NIIT) was established in 2006 as joint venture between 53 share holders. The institute began offering courses at the end of 2008, after completing its preparatory and construction works. The institute operates in partnership with a UK-based college, which approves course materials and externally verifies and accredits programmes, as well as helping with wider quality and management issues. NIIT offers long programmes in engineering at basic, intermediate and advanced levels covering four major areas: electrical and electronic engineering, fabrication and welding, mechanical engineering and motor vehicle engineering. The engineering courses are either offered as single skill programmes, or combined to make multi skills programmes. The institute also offers a range of short, non-accredited courses.

NIIT is located in the Hidd Industrial Area. The institute is managed by a director and assistant director, and employs two business development officers and six full-time trainers. Additional part-time trainers deliver some modules and courses. To date, around 460 learners have taken different programmes and courses at NIIT.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over three days by a team of five reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed training sessions, analysed data about the qualifications learners achieve and the courses they complete and talked with managers, trainers, administration and support staff, learners and employers.

This report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations for improvement.

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Grade 2: Good

NIIT's provision is good overall. Learners' achievements, teaching and training, the range of programmes and the leadership and management of the institute are all good. Learners at NIIT are satisfactorily supported and guided.

Learners achieve good skills and knowledge, relevant to their needs and to the requirements of local industry. Retention and success rates are very high across all courses. Learners' progress and achievements are well monitored, assessed and recorded. There is an effective internal verification system, along with external verification for externally accredited programmes. Learners attend regularly and punctually and demonstrate good motivation.

Trainers at NIIT use exercises and work-related examples effectively to reinforce learners' understanding and engage their interest. Initial assessment is systematic and used effectively in lesson planning to accommodate learners' varying needs. Many trainers include individualised activities in their sessions. Learners receive sufficient verbal feedback, but those on internally accredited courses are not always given constructive written feedback.

NIIT offers a good range of courses with clear progression routes and appropriate materials. Many externally accredited courses are on offer, and short courses are designed in most cases to form modules of longer accredited programmes. Programmes are the result of a thorough feasibility study and are based on a clear and sound rationale. They are well customised to suit specific employers and learners' needs.

Learners are satisfactorily supported and guided at NIIT. Effective weekly personal tutorial sessions are conducted for those on externally accredited courses. The institute does not have suitable arrangements to encourage and motivate more able learners. Health and safety measures are adequate and the learning environment is pleasant and appropriate.

Managers maintain strong and productive links with the international partner and shareholders. Trainers' performance is rigorously monitored through an effective internal and external lesson observation system. The outcomes of observations are used effectively in improving trainers' performance in the classroom, but are not directly linked with the appraisal system. Learners' views are systematically gathered and analyzed, and their achievements are closely monitored via a structured verification process. The institute has

proper plans for improvement, and takes adequate steps to gather and analyse employers' views.

Capacity to improve

Grade 3: Satisfactory

NIIT maintains strong links with its international partner and shareholders, and uses these links effectively to improve its provision. The institute is working actively to introduce more long accredited programmes, mainly for job seekers, including more engineering multi-skills and higher national certificate (HNC) programmes. The premises has sufficient, spacious classrooms and workshops, and is well equipped to cater for more courses and learners. The management team is recruiting more full-time staff.

Recently NIIT has introduced several useful initiatives, with the help of their international partner. These include better arrangements for gathering learners and employers' feedback, and for evaluating the impact of the training offered. The institute intends to improve lesson plans to cater better for differentiated learning outcomes and learning styles, and is offering development programmes for personal tutors, to enable them to improve their skills.

Despite these useful improvement plans, NIIT's overall strategic direction is not sufficiently coherent, or effectively shared throughout the institute. The strategic plan has not yet been finalised or translated into clear operational or business development plans. The business plans currently used focus mainly on marketing and finance. NIIT's quality improvement plans, which are based on the outcomes of course reviews and lesson observations, do not link directly into the strategic plan.

Learners' achievements are closely monitored and analysed, chiefly through the internal verification process. The analysis undertaken is insufficient to establish trends in performance, however.

Summary of grades awarded

Overall Judgement	Grade
Effectiveness of provision	Grade 2: Good
Capacity to Improve	Grade 3: Satisfactory
Review Findings	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade 2: Good
How effective is training?	Grade 2: Good
How well do programmes meet the needs of learners and employers?	Grade 2: Good
How well are learners guided and supported?	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade 2: Good

Main judgements and recommendations

Strengths

- **Success and retention rates.** Success and retention rates are high across all programmes, averaging 95% for externally accredited courses, and 100% for internally accredited courses. Learners develop appropriate knowledge and vocational skills that meet industry requirements very well.
- **Assessment of learners' progress and achievements.** Learners' achievement is assessed thoroughly. Assessment covers the vocational skills and knowledge gained and, on many courses, learners' understanding of work ethics and their English language ability. Trainers monitor learners' progress effectively and keep detailed records.
- **Use of practical activities and examples.** Trainers make particularly good use of their work-related knowledge and skills to reinforce learning and relate theory to practice. They use well chosen practical activities to illustrate difficult theoretical concepts.
- **Initial assessment and the accommodation of individual needs.** A written pre-assessment is carried out for externally accredited courses. In addition, the institute collects information about learners, their knowledge and experience, and any special learning needs, from their respective employers before the course. This information is passed on to trainers, who adjust the training materials accordingly. Trainers further assess learners' knowledge and basic skills on the first day of the programme and use the information gathered to ensure that their individual needs are met.
- **Customization of programmes.** Before they started offering courses, NIIT engaged an international consultant to conduct a comprehensive and thorough feasibility study and identify the vocational and technical needs, as well as the soft skills, of the Bahrain industrial and construction sectors. The programmes were designed based on these outcomes. NIIT also customizes programmes successfully to meet the needs of the Labour Fund's (Tamkeen's) Career Progression Programmes (CPP). The institute communicates well with individual employers and, where appropriate, designs courses based on their specific needs, as in the Burners and Heating programmes.
- **Range of accredited courses.** Learners have the option to focus in depth on a single skills area, or to widen their knowledge base by enrolling on a multi-skills course. Most of the short courses offered can be used as modules of the longer accredited programmes.

- **Personal tutorial sessions on externally accredited courses.** Learners on long, externally accredited courses are given effective weekly personal tutorial sessions, during which their individual needs are discussed. There is good communication between personal tutors and trainers. Employers are kept well informed about their employees' progress, attitude and any problems faced during the course.
- **Links with international partner and shareholders.** NIIT maintains highly productive links with its international partner, which takes an active and effective role in external verification and the approval of course materials, and provides ongoing staff development and advice on good practice. The institute also benefits from the backing of 53 shareholders, top business people in Bahrain, who meet regularly and provide the institute with direct insight into local industry requirements.

Areas for improvement

- **Written feedback on learners' work.** Although correction of course work is generally accurate, learners on internally accredited courses are not always provided with constructive written guidance on how to improve.
- **Incentives for better performing learners.** The institute lacks effective measures to celebrate the success of high achievers and provide them with incentives to continue performing well.
- **The breadth of evidence used in staff appraisal.** NIIT's staff appraisal system does not draw sufficiently on data about learners' achievements or on the outcomes of lesson observations.

Recommendations

In order to improve provision, NIIT should:

- ensure that learners are always provided with effective written feedback on their work.
- provide more incentives for talented and high achieving learners.
- use a wider range of evidence in staff appraisals, including the findings from lesson observations and data on learners' performance.