



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

# **Vocational Review Unit Review Report**

**Success Training Centre (STC)**

**Manama**

**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 18 - 20 December 2012**

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## The Vocational Review Unit

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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:

<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**

Success Training Centre (STC) was established in February 2009. It is licensed by the Ministry of Labour to offer training in soft skills, general and business English, and basic health and safety. Courses offered are mainly short and non-accredited.

STC is one part of a training and consultancy group. It operates from a single branch in Manama. The organisation structure consists of the chairman who is the owner of the centre, a general manager, two part-time quality officers, one part-time health and safety officer, one full-time public relations officer who is in charge of marketing as well as administrative support. STC also employs five full-time sales and marketing staff, one full time counsellor, and one full time training coordinator as shared resources with other training providers within the group. The provider has a pool of 12 trainers who are used as and when required.

### **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 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. Programmes, and leadership and management were judged as good, learners' achievement, the quality of training, and support and guidance were all judged as satisfactory.

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: 3 Satisfactory
<b>Learners' Achievement</b>	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
<b>Quality of Provision</b>	
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
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all students?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory

## 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: 3 Satisfactory**

All aspects of STC provision are judged as satisfactory. Learners acquire and develop appropriate knowledge and skills relevant to their workplace; the majority make satisfactory progress from their starting points. However, a small proportion of learners do not make the progress expected of them especially on the English courses. STC trainers have effective command of their vocational areas and use appropriate methods to engage and motivate learners. Although during sessions, learners' understanding is checked and useful feedback is provided, summative assessment is inconsistent and insufficient written feedback is provided.

STC is approved to offer a range of courses in soft skills, general English and basic health and safety, in addition to a few externally accredited courses in business and management, although it has not recently conducted the latter. Courses are offered based on a current market study and meetings with employers, and resourced sufficiently to meet the needs of stakeholders although not all course materials are regularly reviewed and updated, and not all course assignments are structured to meet course objectives. Support and guidance are sufficient but learners are not always aware of their progress. Most aspects of leadership and management are in place. Strategic planning is sufficiently clear and shared among senior staff however, progress monitoring is insufficient. Appropriate trainers are recruited and their performance is suitably monitored, however, the completed internal lesson observations are insufficiently informative and rarely identify areas for development. Although achievement data is kept, the analysis undertaken is insufficient to monitor trends over time. Health and safety policies are sufficient to secure a safe and healthy environment for staff and learners.

The provider's capacity to improve is satisfactory. STC management has done some recent improvements to provision which include purchasing some training materials for corporate training and health and safety courses, however, only some of these courses have been conducted. By the beginning of 2011, STC had gained the approval of the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) and the Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) to offer their externally accredited courses. STC has sufficient and appropriate physical and human resources to enable improvements to be carried out, it maintains appropriate links with employers, repeat business is satisfactory and the number of enrolments has been maintained for the last two years. STC has appropriate quality assurance measures in place.

## **Learners' achievement**

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

#### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

Learners acquire and develop appropriate knowledge and vocational skills which are useful in their workplace and the majority of them make satisfactory progress from their starting points. However, a small proportion of learners do not make the progress expected of them upon completion of a course especially on the English courses. Meetings with stakeholders reveal that learners develop suitable skills and their attitude towards work has improved. English learners found skills' development in grammar and vocabulary appropriate while the development of other skills is limited especially in writing and speaking.

Although learners' performance data sheet (LPD) shows high success rates, standards of knowledge and understanding seen in the sessions observed and those reflected in the scrutinised learners' work were appropriate. Learners' achievement is measured via pre- and post-course assessment in most of the courses offered. In addition, mid and final examinations are also conducted in general and business English courses. While pre- and post-course assessments are suitably relevant to course content and objectives in the soft skills courses, this is not the case in English courses as assessment is not necessarily structured to measure the four main skills of language. The added-value in terms of the difference between the pre- and post-course assessment is satisfactory in the soft skills courses which constitute the majority of enrolments in 2012. Learners' work in English courses reflects at most a satisfactory standard, with a few samples with lower standards, especially in writing.

Learners are attentive and show interest in their learning but they are not always self-motivated. They are able to work independently and collaboratively in an appropriate manner. From meetings and the observed sessions, a number of learners were able to give a few examples of what they have been taught. Objectives and skills achievement forms are used to make learners aware of their personal course objectives but they do not always reflect on how well they are progressing or what they need to do to improve.

Attendance and punctuality are always recorded but in a few cases it is inconsistently recorded. According to the records of attendance and the sessions observed, attendance is acceptable for these types of short courses and the majority of learners are attending on time although there were a few cases of learners coming to their sessions more than half an hour late.

## The quality of provision

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

#### Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Training is satisfactory overall. STC trainers have relevant theoretical and practical command of their specialism. From the observation of sessions, trainers provided accurate explanations, responded clearly to students' questions, and used relevant vocational examples appropriately. Sessions generally start on time with the sharing of objectives and recapitulation of previously covered material. Lesson plans used by trainers are suitably detailed. However in delivering the sessions, time was not always managed well enough. For example, where course materials written in English had to be translated for learners for a session being delivered in Arabic and in one where instructions provided to learners was insufficient and as a consequence the activity took more than the time expected. In the sessions observed, trainers used appropriate training methods and activities to engage and motivate learners such as direct questioning and group activities and discussion. Accommodation of learners' individual needs in the observed sessions was not an issue as individual differences between learners was narrow however; the checking of individual learners' understanding was insufficient. Results of pre-, mid-, final- and post-course assessments are kept and regularly updated. Resources used are appropriate including the whiteboard, flip charts, PowerPoint presentations and relevant video clips. Some of the learning games used in English courses do not suit adult learners. Recently, all classrooms were equipped with *smartboards* and staff are provided with training on how to use them.

Although learners' understanding is sufficiently assessed during sessions and useful verbal feedback is provided, the marking of summative assessment is inconsistent. In the soft skills courses, there is no agreed formal marking scheme used by trainers. Assessment on the English courses is not always structured to meet course objectives; most samples seen dealt with just the two skills of reading and writing. The writing part is insufficiently emphasized; there are many cases of inconsistent and inaccurate marking. Learners are not always provided with sufficient written feedback on how to improve.

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

### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

STC is approved to offer a range of non-accredited courses in soft skills, general and business English, and basic health and safety. It is also approved to offer a few externally accredited courses in business and leadership and management but has no students enrolled on these. Programmes are offered based on a useful current market study and meetings with employers. Marketing staff communicate with stakeholders on their specific needs and modify course materials. However, assignments included on these courses such as presentations, although useful, are not relevant to the course objectives. On the other hand, the newly purchased corporate training material and the selected general English materials use a clear framework that explains levels based on the expected skills acquisitions. Although the purchased corporate training materials and English course materials are regularly updated, there is no procedure or system in place to review and update the internally designed soft skills materials. Overall, STC programmes are sufficiently resourced to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. Most learners and employers contacted are satisfied with the range of the courses offered and found them meeting their needs. Repeat business has remained satisfactory over the last two years.

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

### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

Learners at STC receive appropriate support and guidance. On the first day of a training course, learners are provided with suitable induction which includes general information about the provider, assessment methods, attendance policy, and guidance on health and safety measures. Learners are also provided with a useful trainee's manual. STC has a counsellor to deal with learners' personal matters and provide them with support to help them overcome their learning difficulties. Staff and trainers are cooperative and approachable. High achievers are provided with free of charge courses. Course outlines are available in advance for employers. Stakeholders have access to appropriate advice and guidance about courses through brochures and leaflets, however, some of the available information is out-dated. The STC website has insufficient information about the courses offered. Guidance on course selection is available when needed. Employers are updated on their employers' performance upon course completion, however, the performance reports provided to the review team were insufficiently detailed and did not reflect learners' actual levels. Learners are not always aware of their individual progress or what they need to do to improve. Arrangements for the delivery of courses are flexible to suit the needs of employers but not necessarily learners. Employers can choose venues, time and the language of training. The learning environment is fit for purpose and sufficiently equipped; courses are held either at STC's or employers' premises or at hospitality venues.

## **Leadership and management**

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

**Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

Most aspects of leadership and management are in place; however, current practices are not rigorous enough to secure continuous improvement. Strategic planning is appropriate; the objectives set have a suitable focus on improving learners' achievement and the quality of provision, with clear key performance indicators (KPIs) for the majority of them, however progress monitoring is insufficient. The management structure is fit for purpose considering the type of courses offered and the number of enrolments. The senior management are qualified and experienced. The provider has two quality assurance officers who carry out periodic reviews; reports of the conducted review identified some relevant issues. However, follow-up of the identified issues need to be improved for more effective quality improvements. The monitoring of learners' achievement is adequate; achievement is measured and relevant data are kept. Analysis however is done on an individual course level which does not give a clear picture of overall trends over time.

STC has appropriate health and safety policies, procedures and practices to maintain a safe, secure and healthy learning environment for learners and staff. Qualified and experienced trainers are recruited and most are suitably deployed. Their performance is monitored through both 'snap' and internal lesson observations. The snap visit is conducted for every training session utilising a summary check-list. The form used for internal lesson observation is based on relevant criteria, however, the completed forms are insufficiently informative and rarely identify areas for development. Performance appraisal is in place and some staff are provided with in-house training opportunities.

Learners' views and feedback are sought by an end of course evaluations, which are summarised and where possible used to improve the provision. Although STC maintains appropriate links with employers through marketing calls and some visits, their feedback about the provision is only occasionally sought. Pre-course assessments for most soft skills courses are relevant, however, the placement test for English courses is not appropriately structured and not all language skills are tested. The outcomes of the pre-course assessment is informally used by trainers to focus delivery based on learners' prior knowledge but not necessarily to accommodate learners' individual needs. Although the periodic quality review reports identified some relevant areas for development, these are not reflected in the submitted self-evaluation form (SEF).

## The provider's key strengths

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- Trainers command of their specialism, being able to respond appropriately to learners' enquiries using relevant vocational examples
- The appropriate range of programmes offered
- The corporate training and General English materials which are well devised and structured
- A fit for purpose organisation structure.

## Recommendations

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### In order to improve, STC should:

- improve learners' achievement, particularly on the English courses
- ensure that marking of learners' work is accurate and consistent
- ensure that all learners are made aware of their progress and what they need to do to improve
- improve trainees' performance reports to reflect learners' actual levels
- ensure that internally designed soft skills courses are regularly reviewed and updated
- improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that employers' feedback about the provision is regularly collected and used for improvement
  - improving the current internal lesson observations to be more informative and critical
  - ensuring that the placement test for English courses is well structured, based on the used course material, and the results are used to inform lesson planning.