



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

Vocational Review Unit

Review Report

Success Training Centre
Manama
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

Success Training Centre (STC) was established in February 2009. It offers provider-accredited courses in English language and soft skills. The English courses are at five levels, and use materials from an accreditation body in the UK.

STC has one centre in Manama. It trained 128 learners in its first year of operations. It is staffed by a chief executive, a general manager, a head of quality, an exam moderator, two sales and marketing officers, an administration and support manager, three administration and support staff, a counsellor, a part-time health and safety officer and 15 trainers. All but one of the trainers are part-timers.

Scope of the review

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

This report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what STC should do to improve.

Overall judgements

Effectiveness of provision

Grade 3: Satisfactory

STC's provision is satisfactory overall. Learners' achievement, the quality of teaching, and the support given to learners are all satisfactory. The extent to which programmes meet learners and employers' needs, and the leadership and management of the institute, are good.

Success and retention rates for learners on English language courses are high, at 97%. Learners' achievement is properly measured by means of mid-course and final examinations. STC have very recently introduced an adequate internal moderation process, but this does not yet cover all courses. Learners' progress and development are monitored appropriately through pre- and post-course assessments. Most learners have the basic skills required for their courses and gain appropriate skills in English. They participate satisfactorily and enjoy their training. Learners' attendance is adequate, at 86%. Their punctuality is not logged by STC, and was poor in the lessons observed.

STC's trainers rigorously assess learners' work and provide helpful feedback. They are qualified and experienced in their fields. Although lesson plans are detailed they do not sufficiently take into account the varying needs of learners. Lesson objectives are usually shared with learners at the start of lessons. Trainers make satisfactory use of resources and use appropriate training techniques.

STC offers provider-accredited English Language courses with clear and sufficient progression routes. Each of the five levels of course has sub-levels. Course outlines are sent to employers in advance but are not always received by learners. Learners and employers are satisfied with the training outcomes. STC's trainers provide suitable and appropriate enrichment activities.

STC's counsellor gives effective support and guidance to individual learners facing personal or course-related problems. STC has a clear health and safety policy. Learners receive appropriate information at the start of a course about the health and safety measures it takes. The learning environment is adequate at STC and car parking is available. High achievers are recognised at a ceremony after the completion of courses. Sufficient information on course selection is available from staff and trainers, STC's informative website, and clear brochures. Trainers make themselves accessible to learners during and after courses.

STC has a useful quality management system, as part of which the head of quality systematically observes lessons. Although staff performance is appropriately evaluated through an appraisal system, the lesson observation process is not linked to performance management. Qualified staff are recruited and deployed, and given satisfactory development opportunities. Regular meetings are held and documented. Learners' and employers' feedback is collected and employers are properly informed about their learners' attendance and results. STC's vision and mission statements are sufficiently focused on raising learners' achievement and the institute's objectives are clear and time-bound.

Capacity to improve

Grade 2: Good

Since its establishment a year ago, STC has increased its staff numbers to 27, including part-timers, and is planning further recruitment. Recently, it has been certified by City & Guilds to offer courses in health and safety, sales and marketing, English language and business skills. It has approval from the Ministry of Labour to run five soft skills courses. Plans to link with the Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) are at an advanced stage. STC sufficiently considers labour market needs by taking into account studies done by Tamkeen and data extracted from the Labour Market Regulation Authority about Bahrain's labour force and skill gaps.

STC has a comprehensive quality management system, which is supervised by its quality manager. A quality committee meets regularly to discuss best practice and areas for improvement; it issues circulars on these subjects to all staff. The quality committee carries out regular quality reviews on the provision, focusing each time on a specific area, such as learners' achievement. The findings and recommendations from the quality reviews are documented, discussed and acted upon.

STC is introducing useful new practices for forthcoming courses. It will carry out training needs' analyses for employers and their employees and ask each learner to specify their course objectives on a form and record whether they have achieved them. The managing director is currently compiling an employee booklet covering all that employees need to know about the institute's working practices and paperwork. STC's processes will be automated when work is completed on a database, which will include all the data related to each learner including achievement and progress through successive levels.

STC enrolled 128 learners during its first year of operation and has had repeat business from two of its four client employers. The institute has the physical and human resources needed

to carry out its improvement plans. Its self-evaluation form (SEF) is informative and provides evidence for its statements, but over-estimates the quality of the provision.

Summary of grades awarded

Overall judgement	Grade
Effectiveness of provision	Grade 3: Satisfactory
Capacity to improve	Grade 2: Good
Review findings	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How effective is training?	Grade 3: Satisfactory
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 on English language courses.** Success and retention rates on English language courses are high, at 97%. Achievement is appropriately measured through mid-course and final exams.
- **Assessment of learners' work.** Trainers assess learners' work rigorously through a well chosen combination of assignments, exercises, homework and exams. They provide detailed and useful feedback.
- **Quality management system.** STC has a comprehensive quality management system, overseen by a quality committee that meets regularly. The institute's quality procedures focus appropriately on learners' achievement, the quality of provision and leadership and management. The internal quality team carries out four or five reviews of the provision annually, with a specific focus at each review. The reviews result in findings and recommendations. The head of quality frequently issues useful circulars to trainers on good practice and areas to be improved. Useful pre-course meetings are held between the head of quality and trainers to ensure consistency of practice. Lessons are systematically observed in STC by the head of quality with a focus on relevant criteria such as how materials are used, group work and lesson management.

Areas for improvement

- **Punctuality and its recording.** Punctuality is not recorded by STC and it was poor in the lessons observed; there were cases of learners arriving up to 20 minutes late.
- **Accommodation of learners' varying needs.** Although STC conducts appropriate tests before a course to check learners' abilities and ensure they are placed at the right level, neither the lesson plans nor the sessions themselves take learners' varying needs sufficiently into consideration.
- **Self-evaluation.** STC's SEF is informative and provides evidence for its statements. However, it does not identify areas for improvement found by the review team and the grades it proposes are high.

Recommendations

In order to improve, STC should:

- record learners' levels of punctuality and tackle lateness
- identify and address learners' individual needs
- ensure that self-evaluation is regular and objective.