



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

Vocational Review Unit

Repeat Review Report

Talal Abu Ghazaleh Training Group

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

Talal Abu Ghazaleh Training Group (TAG) is a member of Talal Abu Ghazaleh Organisation (TAGorg) which provides services in various fields such as training, accounting, management consultancy, legal services and translations. TAGorg has more than 70 offices worldwide; its Bahrain office started operations in 1976. The training centre is licensed by the Ministry of Labour and offers short non accredited courses in management, accountancy and finance. From April 2009 to date, TAG has enrolled a total of 178 learners; after its first review. Learners are mostly employed by different government agencies.

TAG has one centre located in Manama and it is operated by a training manager, a marketing manager and two training officers. They report to the executive director of training academies in Jordan and to the regional office executive director. In addition, TAG utilises a pool of part time and full time trainers within TAGorg worldwide.

The repeat review

TAG was first reviewed in March 2009. The provision was below satisfactory overall. Although the range of programmes offered, and the level of support for learners, were satisfactory, the quality of training and the leadership and management of the provision were below satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to grade learners' achievement. TAG was therefore subject to a repeat review to ensure that these areas improved to the required standard.

The repeat review comprised two one-day monitoring visits and a final three-day visit by a team of three reviewers. During the repeat 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 TAG should do to improve further.

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Grade 3: Satisfactory

Talal Abu Ghazaleh Training Group (TAG) is now satisfactory overall. All aspects of the provision are also judged to be satisfactory by the review team.

The majority of learners are gaining knowledge and skills applicable to their work place. Learners' progress is now appropriately measured through pre-and post-assessment in the courses conducted from 2010 onwards. However, the process is not sufficiently rigorous as the assessment is optional. Records show satisfactory progress of learners with an average ranging between 30 to 40 per cent. Most learners have the basic skills and the retention rate is high as expected on short courses. TAG keeps accurate records of attendance and punctuality. Although attendance is good, punctuality is an issue as judged by an analysis of the centre's records and observed lessons. Learners generally enjoy the courses when working in groups.

Trainers are well qualified and experienced in TAG and the majority of them use relevant vocational examples appropriately. Course objectives are mostly in place and shared with learners. However, most learners are insufficiently engaged and motivated by trainers to participate. Trainers assess learners during lessons well enough and provide them with useful verbal feedback. Although learners' information and expectations are obtained prior to the courses, these are not used effectively in lesson planning and for accommodation of learners' varying needs.

TAG considers local market needs well enough through conducting a detailed survey involving thirty employers from the public and private sectors. Based on a useful analysis of the survey, a number of new courses are on offer in 2011. Currently, the range of courses offered is adequate; these are mainly short non-accredited courses in accounting, auditing and management with no progression levels. Course contents and details are usually sent in advance to employers and learners. The majority of employers are satisfied with the range of courses; however, learners are not made aware of these by TAG. Limited enrichment activities are offered on the conducted courses.

Trainers are supportive and most of them provide learners with their contact details. A detailed health and safety policy is in place and all the necessary health and safety measures are in place. These have very recently been communicated to learners at the start of the courses. The premises are appropriate with the required facilities. Learners however do not

have enough access to well informed advice and guidance on courses as the website and brochures are not updated and also not specific to training in the Bahrain branch.

Appropriate vision and mission statements, a set of values and strategic objectives are in place; however, these objectives are not sufficiently detailed. Qualified staff are recruited and deployed and they are provided with a few internal development opportunities. Regular meetings are conducted which have recently been documented. Learners' feedback is appropriately collected at the end of courses and analysed; moreover, their feedback is taken after two hours from the start of the courses to take immediate action if required. However, employers' feedback is not regularly taken and the form is not suitable. Recently, employers have been updated on learners' attendance and performance at the end of courses; additionally, learners are contacted to check if they have benefited from the courses in their work place. TAG has recently introduced a suitable lesson observation system and an appropriate course analysis. The SEF is critical and informative.

Capacity to improve

Grade 3: Satisfactory

TAG has acted on the outcomes of its first review, and has improved the quality of its provision. It has moved to a new full facility building, has appointed a full time training manager in July 2010 and a part time quality advisor six months ago. More time is still required to observe the effectiveness of these appointments. Although there is no quality manual yet in place, work is in progress on the development of procedures and forms to improve the quality of provision.

In terms of programmes, appropriate steps have been taken. TAG Bahrain branch as well as other branches can utilise the accreditation arrangement reached between the TAG regional office and various external bodies. In June 2009, the Bahrain branch got accreditation from the University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) to offer the International Diploma in Information Technology Skills but the course has not yet been conducted. An Abu Ghazaleh Cambridge (AGCA) officer is available in the Bahrain branch for technical arrangements. In addition TAG Bahrain got approval in 2010 to run the "Accredited Quality Manager" course from Arab Knowledge and Management Society (AKMS) which is certified by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM). TAG Jordan got accreditation as a British Council attached centre to promote and supply the main suite of English Language Examinations offered by the University of Cambridge International Examinations. This will apply to all TAG's regional branches, including the Bahrain branch which can now offer these courses but the examinations will be conducted by the British Council. In addition, an agreement was reached between TAGorg and Global Assessment Certificate to offer English

programmes at three levels. TAG Bahrain branch is in the process of obtaining Ministry of Labour approval for these.

TAG has adequate repeat business from five of its employers and enrolment has increased from 41 learners in 2009 after the first review to 137 learners in 2010. The institute has suitable human and physical resources to carry out further improvements. TAG has conducted a useful SWOT analysis; however, its strategic objectives are not detailed enough in terms of actions plans, responsibilities, time frame and measuring of performance against targets. Its Self Evaluation Form (SEF) is informative, critical in terms of grades and highlights some areas of improvement also identified by the review team.

Summary of grades awarded

Overall judgement	Original grade	Repeat review grade
Effectiveness of provision	Grade 4: Below satisfactory	Grade 3: Satisfactory
Capacity to improve	Grade 4: Below satisfactory	Grade 3: Satisfactory
Review findings		
How well do learners achieve?	Insufficient evidence to grade	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How effective is training?	Grade 4: Below satisfactory	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How well do programmes meet the needs of learners and employers?	Grade 3: Satisfactory	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How well are learners guided and supported?	Grade 3: Satisfactory	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade 4: Below satisfactory	Grade 3: Satisfactory

Main judgements and recommendations

Strengths

- **Consideration of the local market needs through conducting of a relevant market survey.** Employers from both the public and private sectors have recently been surveyed and as a consequence TAG has expanded the number of courses on offer for 2011, including new courses in marketing and health and safety.

Areas for improvement

- **A lack of engagement and motivation of learners to encourage them to participate in sessions.** Trainers at TAG are not adept at engaging and motivating learners to participate in sessions. The majority of learners stated that the courses were mostly lecturing in style rather than trainers using a range of different training methodologies to engage them more effectively.
- **Initial assessment and the use of its outcomes in lesson planning and the accommodation of learners' varying needs.** Although TAG obtains information on learners' levels and their expectations from the courses, this is not effectively used in placing learners on the appropriate courses or in preparing lesson plans. Invariably, lesson plans are insufficiently detailed and do not show how learners' varying needs are accommodated.
- **Information and guidance provided to learners on courses.** Learners at TAG do not have sufficient access to well informed information and guidance on courses. The website and brochures are not updated and do not provide learners with sufficient information on training at the Bahrain branch. A considerable number of learners stated that they were not aware of the courses offered by TAG other than those they had taken.

Recommendations

In order to improve provision, TAG should:

- use more effective training techniques to engage and motivate learners to participate
- ensure that the outcomes of initial assessment are used effectively, particularly in preparing detailed lesson plans and for the accommodation of learners' varying needs
- provide learners with well informed and updated guidance on courses.