



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
Education & Training Quality Authority

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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BQA Overview

The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA) is an independent national body that carries out its mandate and objectives under the guidance of its Board of Directors and reports to the Cabinet of Ministers.

BQA plays a critical role in providing learners, parents, employers, education and training institutions, policymakers, and relevant stakeholders with an objective assessment of the quality of education and training in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

BQA delivers its mandate through three core functions:

1. Carrying out reviews of education and training institutions.
2. Conducting National Examinations.
3. Administering and maintaining the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Our Vision

To be an effective partner in driving continual quality enhancement for world-class education and training sectors in Bahrain.

Our Mission

To play a critical role in advancing quality and raising trust in the education and training sectors, by providing reliable insights in a timely, responsive, and transparent manner.

Our Values

		
Fairness	Competitiveness	Sustainability

Board of Directors



HE. Mr. Hamad bin Faisal Al Malki
Chairman



Shaikh Hamad bin Mohammed Al Khalifa
Vice Chairman



Mrs. Yara Redha Faraj
Member



Mrs. Sara Ishaq Hasan
Member



Dr. Faisal Isa Hammad
Member



Mr. Munther Abdullatif Almudawi
Member



Mr. Amer Hasan Marhoon
Member



Mrs. Dalal Iqbal Sangoor
Member

Management Team



**Dr. Maryam Hasan
Mustafa**
Chief Executive Officer



Dr. Esmat Jaffar
Deputy Chief Executive
Officer



**Dr. Sh. Lobna
Al-Khalifa**
Director of Higher
Education & Vocational
Institutions
Performance Reviews



Ameera Jaffar
Director of Human &
Financial Resources



Dana Rabeaa
Director of National
Framework Operations



Nayla Al Kaabi
Director of Schools &
Kindergartens
Performance Reviews



Najma Ghuloom
Director of Planning &
Projects



Dr. Thajba Al Jowder
Director of Information
Technology

Chairman's Message

2025 marked a year of steady delivery and institutional progress for the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA). Throughout the year, the Board of Directors continued to oversee the implementation of BQA's 2023–2026 Strategy, guided by the vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the directives of the Government, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, while reinforcing alignment with national priorities and supporting the continued development of Bahrain's education and training system.

During the year, BQA continued to strengthen its national role in quality assurance across education and training sectors. Strategic milestones were achieved, and core functions were delivered with consistency and professionalism, reflecting a well-established and increasingly integrated quality assurance framework.

The Board also welcomed key leadership appointments, reinforcing organisational continuity.

As BQA enters the final phase of its current strategy, the Board remains confident in BQA's direction and its capacity to consolidate progress, deepen impact, and continue strengthening trust across Bahrain's education and training sectors.



H.E. Hamad bin Faisal Al Malki
Minister of Cabinet Affairs
Chairman of the Board of Directors

Chief Executive Officer's Message

2025 marked a year of sustained implementation and organisational strengthening for the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA). As the 2023–2026 Strategy progressed into its later stages, our focus was on translating strategic priorities into consistent delivery across all quality assurance functions.

During the year, BQA introduced the Kindergarten and Special Education Needs review frameworks, expanding national quality assurance coverage through a structured and developmental approach. Engagement with institutions centred on clarity of standards, readiness, and practical application to ensure smooth adoption across the sectors concerned.

Review activity across schools, vocational institutions, and higher education institutions continued in line with approved cycles. Institutional review findings, National Examinations results, and National Qualifications Framework (NQF) operations collectively informed the education and training system, strengthening coherence across BQA's functions and reinforcing evidence-based decision-making.

Internally, attention was directed toward strengthening operational systems and coordination. Digital workflows were refined to improve efficiency and transparency, internal processes were streamlined, and continued investment in staff capability supported operational consistency.

The progress achieved in 2025 has strengthened delivery capacity and positioned BQA to sustain measurable impact across Bahrain's education and training sectors, while also expanding opportunities to share BQA's expertise and experience with regional and international partners.



Dr. Maryam Hasan Mustafa
Chief Executive Officer

Executive Summary

In 2025, the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA) continued implementing its 2023–2026 Strategy, marking a year of measurable progress across reviews, national examinations, and National Qualifications Framework (NQF) operations.

Operational activity remained strong across all areas. A total of 197 review operations were conducted during the year, including:

- 51 kindergarten reviews (launched February 2025)
- 101 school reviews (77 government and 24 private schools)
- 13 Special Education Needs (SEN) institutes reviews (framework launched September 2025)
- 25 vocational institutes reviews
- 3 higher education institutions reviews
- 4 academic programme reviews

The launch of the Kindergarten Review Framework in 2025 marked the first national approach to reviewing early childhood education provision. In September 2025, BQA launched the first national Special Education Needs (SEN) Review Framework, expanding quality assurance coverage. Both frameworks were introduced through a phased and developmental approach to support sector readiness, without overall performance judgements during the first cycle.

National Examinations were administered as scheduled:

- Grade 12 examinations (27–29 April 2025): 12,690 students examined
- Grade 9 examinations (6–11 May 2025): 12,839 students examined

National Qualifications Framework (NQF) operations increased significantly. During 2025:

- 253 NQF operations were completed (23% increase compared to 2024)

- 25 institutions were listed, bringing total institutional listing to 85 institutions (95% of eligible institutions)
- 119 national qualifications were placed
- 79 international qualifications were aligned
- 13 national and 2 international qualifications were re-validated
- 5 national qualifications, 5 international qualifications, and 5 listed institutions were archived

At the regional level, BQA concluded a comprehensive school performance evaluation training programme with the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) in February 2025. The programme included in-person training and on-the-field review training delivered in Oman, strengthening regional capacity building and reinforcing BQA's role as a regional quality assurance partner.

As BQA enters the final year of its 2023–2026 Strategy, focus will centre on completing review cycles, advancing qualification pathways, strengthening system integration, and consolidating measurable impact across Bahrain's education and training.

2025 Highlights

60%

Progress on Strategic Initiatives

2

New Review Frameworks Launched (Kindergartens and Special Education Needs)

25,529

Students Examined (Grade 9 & Grade 12)

197

Review Operations

253

NQF Operations

95%

of Institutions Listed on the NQF

Our Strategy

In June 2023, the Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA) launched its four-year strategy (2023–2026), setting a clear direction for BQA’s development and long-term impact.

The strategy development began with the identification of 7 strategic priorities, informed by national education and training needs, stakeholder expectations, and an assessment of BQA’s institutional maturity. These priorities defined the key areas where focused efforts were required to strengthen BQA’s effectiveness and contribution to the education and training system.

The identified priorities were then consolidated into 3 overarching strategic objectives, which together form the core pillars of the strategy:

1. Create high impact on national education and training policies
2. Build enabling structures
3. Increase engagement and accessibility

To operationalise the strategy, the three strategic objectives were translated into 20 strategic initiatives. These initiatives represent the practical delivery mechanism through which the strategy is implemented across BQA’s operational and support functions.

By the end of 2025, twelve initiatives had been successfully implemented, while the remaining eight continued to progress in line with their approved timelines.



Our Priorities

- 1 Adaptive Organisation:** We build on our success to ensure BQA remains responsive to national needs and aspirations.
- 2 Streamlined for value:** Our frameworks and processes will be streamlined to deliver value for the government and our partners in the education and training sectors.
- 3 Outputs that improve regulation and quality:** Our reviews, exam results and NQF operations will form a critical part of regulation and will support the systemic improvement of education and training.
- 4 A skilled workforce:** We will ensure we have the knowledge and expertise we need through a flexible recruitment strategy, a talent retention programme and capacity building activities.
- 5 Sustainable growth:** We will develop a sustainable plan to enable our growth and expansion.
- 6 Outreach and engagement:** We will be open and accessible to our different audiences, understand their needs and respond to them through improved client-facing communications
- 7 Insights that improve national policies:** We will utilise the rich database we have acquired over the last 15 years, going beyond technical reporting, to support national education and training system development.

Strategy 2023 - 2026

3 Core Objectives

1

Create high Impact on National Education and Training Policies

2

Build Enabling Structures

3

Increase Engagement and Accessibility

20 Strategic Initiatives

1. Redesign BQA outputs to inform regulatory processes

- ✓ 1.1 Integrate school review results in MoE regulations
- ✓ 1.2 Integrate higher education review results with HEC processes
- ✓ 1.3 Integrate vocational review results with licensing and funding processes
- ✓ 1.4 Conduct grade 9 and grade 12 national examinations
- ✓ 1.5 Link NQF operations to HEC, MoL, and Tamkeen processes
- 1.6 Develop RPL and flexible pathways frameworks
- 1.7 Develop new approach to academic programme reviews

✓ 2. Launch kindergarten reviews

✓ 3. Launch special education needs reviews

4. Introduce flexible recruitment strategies

4.1 Develop sector capacity through professional training and certification (BQA Academy)

4.2 Launch secondment and fellowship programmes

5. Develop skilled and satisfied team

5.1 Diversify capacity building strategies

5.2 Restructure and enhance HR agility through flexible HR regulations

✓ 6. Build a sustainable financial model

7. Utilise technology for efficiency (AI Integration)

✓ 8. Strengthen BQA's brand

9. Improve reporting and information accessibility

✓ 9.1 Introduce differentiated reporting

✓ 9.2 Publish national thematic reports

✓ 9.3 Distribute useful guides and manuals to education and training institutions

10. Increase regional and international partnerships

10.1 Collaborate on actionable research linked to national needs

✓ Delivered initiatives

BQA Operations in 2025

In 2025, BQA delivered its core operational functions across reviews, examinations, and National Qualifications Framework (NQF) operations, maintaining momentum across all education and training sectors.

Reviews

 **51**

Kindergarten
Reviews

 **77**

Government Schools
Reviews

 **24**

Private Schools
Reviews

 **13**

Special Education Needs
Institutes Reviews

 **25**

Vocational Institutes
Reviews

 **3**

Higher Education
Institutions Reviews

 **4**

Academic Programme
Reviews

National Qualifications Framework Operations

 **25**

Institutions Listed on
the NQF

 **119**

National Qualifications
Placed on the NQF

 **79**

International Qualifications
Aligned to the NQF

National Examinations

G9

 **12,839**

Government
School Students

G12

 **12,160**

Government
School Students

 **530**

Private
School Students

Kindergarten Reviews

In February 2025, BQA launched the Kindertartens Review Framework following a successful pilot phase. The introduction of this framework marked the first national approach to reviewing early childhood education provision in the Kingdom of Bahrain and contributed to BQA's delivery of its commitments under the National Education Strategy and the Government Priorities Framework (GPF 4.1), reinforcing the focus on strengthening early childhood education as a foundation for long-term educational outcomes.

The first phase of the kindergarten performance review cycle commenced in February 2025 and covered 22 independent kindertartens during the second semester of the 2024-2025 academic year. A second phase followed in September 2025 with a review of further 29 kindertartens during the first semester of the 2025-2026 academic year.

As this represented the first-ever national kindertartens review cycle, reviews were conducted without the application of overall performance judgements. The focus was placed on identifying key strengths and areas for improvement, supporting early childhood education institutions, and understanding sector-wide needs. This formative approach was designed to promote improvement, support capacity building within the sector, and establish a shared baseline to inform future review cycles.

The kindertartens reviews cycle remains on track to achieve the goal of reviewing 75% of the independent kindertartens by the end of 2026.

Kindertartens Reviews

Cycle 1 (Feb 2025 to May 2028)



147

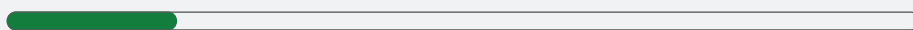
Total No. of Independent Kindertartens in Bahrain



51

Reviews in 2025

35%



51 Completed - 96 Remaining

School Reviews

In 2025, BQA continued the implementation of the updated School Reviews Framework, marking the second year since its launch in February 2024, with new review cycles starting in March 2024 under the updated framework.

The total number of schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain stood at 273, comprising 207 government schools and 66 private schools. During 2025, BQA reviewed a total of 101 schools, including 77 government schools and 24 private schools.

By the end of 2025, completion rates for the current review cycles reached 67% for government schools under Cycle 5 and 64% for private schools under Cycle 4. These levels of progress reflect steady advancement under the updated review framework.

The schools' reviews cycle remains on track for full cycle completion for both government and private schools by the end of 2026.



273

Total No. of Schools
in Bahrain



101

School Reviews in 2025

Government School Reviews

Cycle 5 - (Mar 2024 to Dec 2026)



207

Government Schools



77

Reviews
in 2025

67%



139 Completed - 68 Remaining

Private School Reviews

Cycle 4 - (Mar 2024 to Dec 2026)



66

Private Schools



24

Reviews
in 2025

64%



42 Completed - 24 Remaining

Special Education Needs Institutes Reviews

In September 2025, the first national Special Education Needs (SEN) Review General Framework was launched, marking a significant milestone in strengthening quality assurance for inclusive education provision in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The review framework applies to SEN institutes that provide educational and training services. Institutions offering exclusively rehabilitative, medical, or care-based services fall outside the scope of the framework. The total number of SEN institutes within scope stood at 49.

During 2025, 13 SEN institutes were reviewed, representing 26% completion of the first review cycle. The rollout followed an initial pilot phase involving six institutes and adopted a phased

approach, with the first formal review phase commencing during the first semester of the 2025-2026 academic year.

As this represented the first national review cycle for SEN institutes, reviews were conducted without the application of overall performance judgements. The focus was placed on identifying strengths, areas for improvement, and sector-wide needs, with an emphasis on supporting institutions and establishing a baseline to inform future review cycles.

The introduction of SEN institutional reviews represents an important step towards promoting inclusive, equitable, and accountable education provision, while enhancing understanding of sector needs and informing future policy and regulatory development.

Special Education Needs Institutes Reviews

Cycle 1 - (Sep 2025 to May 2027)



49

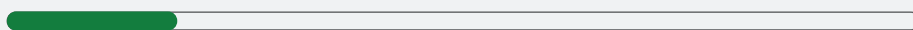
Institutes within Scope



13

Reviews in 2025

26%



13 Completed - 36 Remaining

National Examinations

National Examinations continued to play a key role in assessing learning outcomes at basic and pre-university stages of education through the administration of Grade 9 and Grade 12 examinations.

Grade 9 examinations are aligned with the national curriculum, while Grade 12 examinations are designed to reflect international attainment standards, supporting consistency and comparability of results.

Grade 9 National Examinations (2025)

The examinations assess students' achievement at the end of the intermediate education stage and provide system-level insights into learning outcomes. Grade 9 National Examinations were conducted from 6 to 11 May 2025 and covered four core subjects.

- **Students examined:** 12,839
- **Subjects:** Arabic, English, Mathematics, Science

Grade 12 National Examinations (2025)

These examinations measure student achievement at the end of secondary education and support alignment with international standards. Participation is mandatory for government school students, while private school students may participate voluntarily.

Grade 12 National Examinations were conducted from 27 to 29 April 2025.

- **Government school students examined:** 12,160
- **Private school students examined:** 530
- **Subjects:** Arabic, English, Mathematical Skills

Enhancements and Improvements

During 2025, several improvements were introduced to enhance quality, clarity, and accessibility of national examinations.

Student performance reporting was enhanced to provide clearer and more consistent outcomes, supporting comparability and understanding of results. Improvements were also made to the Arabic Reading examinations for Grades 9 and 12, enhancing consistency while maintaining a strong focus on core language skills.

To support transparency and confidence in the examination system, public communication was strengthened through collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Practice questions were made available to support student preparation and teacher guidance.

In addition, examination processes were further modernised through increased use of digital delivery, including the electronic distribution of listening test materials, supporting accessibility.

Grade 9

(6 to 11 May 2025)

12,839

Government school students examined



Arabic



Mathematics



English



Science

Grade 12

(27 to 29 April 2025)

12,160

Government school students examined



Arabic



Mathematical Skills



English

530

Private school students examined

Vocational Institutes Reviews

In 2025, vocational institutes' reviews continued under the updated vocational reviews framework introduced in 2024, which strengthened the consistency and clarity of review processes and reporting.

The total number of vocational institutes within scope and remit stood at 62. The scope includes training institutes that offer programmes leading to qualifications. During the year, 25 institutes were reviewed, bringing overall completion of Cycle 5 to 66%.

The review cycle maintained steady progress throughout the year, supporting oversight of vocational education and training provision and contributing to quality assurance across the sector.

Current progress indicates that the vocational review cycle remains on track to be completed within the planned timeframe.

Vocational Institutes Reviews

Cycle 5 - (Mar 2024 to Dec 2026)



62

Institutions within Scope



25

Reviews in 2025

66%



41 Completed - 21 Remaining

Higher Education Institutions' Reviews

Higher education institutional reviews continued in 2025 under Cycle 3 of the review framework, which commenced in May 2024.

The total number of higher education institutions scheduled to undergo reviews stood at 16. During 2025, 3 institutions were reviewed, bringing overall completion of Cycle 3 to 88%.

Most institutions reviewed during the year were found to be compliant with the standards of the framework for higher education institutional reviews. This reflects a growing level of maturity within the higher education sector and a deepened understanding of quality assurance practices, developed progressively over successive review cycles.

In response to this level of maturity and the evolving nature of tertiary education, work is currently underway to review and update the higher education review framework. This review aims to raise expectations, align more closely with international practices and standards, and ensure continued relevance to the changing higher education landscape.

Higher Education Institutions Reviews

Cycle 3 - (May 2024 to Nov 2026)



16

Institutions within Scope



3

Reviews in 2025

88%



14 Completed - 2 Remaining

National Qualifications Framework Operations

In 2025, BQA completed 253 NQF operations, representing a 23% increase compared to 2024. This growth reflects enhanced integration between BQA directorates, updated internal procedures, and stronger links between NQF operations, licensing, and funding processes.

Key outcomes included:

- Listing of 25 institutions brought the total to 85 institutions, representing 95% of licensed institutions and a 28% increase compared to 2024.
- Placement of 119 national qualifications raised the total to 466, representing 60% of licensed national qualifications and a 14% increase compared to 2024.
- Alignment of 79 international qualifications increased the total to 182, representing 44% of licensed international qualifications and a 17% increase compared to 2024.
- Re-validation of 13 national and 2 international qualifications to ensure continued relevance and quality.
- Archiving of 5 national qualifications placed, 5 international qualifications aligned, and 5 institutions listed.

Integrated Approach to Academic Programme Reviews:

In 2025, BQA continued work on integrating Academic Programme Review (APR) requirements into NQF operations, expanding re-validation processes to cover both programme design and delivery. This integration marked a shift towards a more streamlined, mature, and internationally aligned quality assurance model.

Bahrain Vocational Qualifications and Recognition of Prior Learning:

In parallel, BQA advanced work on Bahrain Vocational Qualifications (BVQs) and the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) framework, in collaboration with stakeholders through the VET Advisory Committee. This work focused on aligning National Occupational Standards with NQF levels, in preparation for pilot implementation in 2026.

Regionally, BQA participated in the GCC Qualifications Framework project, supporting vocational qualification inclusion and enhancing regional mobility and mutual recognition.

Institutional Listing

89

Eligible Institutions

25

Listed on NQF in 2025

95% (85)

5% (4)

National Qualifications Placement

784

National Qualifications

119

Qualifications Placed in 2025

60% (466)

40% (318)

International Qualifications Aligned

414

International Qualifications

79

Qualifications Aligned in 2025

44% (182)

56% (232)

■ Listed/Placed/Aligned
 ■ Remaining

Human Capital

BQA's people remain central to the delivery of its mandate and strategic objectives. In 2025, workforce stability, national talent development, and continuous capability building remained key priorities.

As of the fourth quarter of 2025, the total headcount stood at 129 employees, remaining aligned with the approved organisational structure. Workforce composition remained stable, reflecting strong organisational continuity and effective talent management.

Following the organisational restructure in 2024, leadership sustainability was further

reinforced in 2025 through strategic appointments, including the appointment of a Deputy Chief Executive Officer and five directors covering School and Kindergarten Reviews, Higher Education and Vocational Reviews, National Qualifications Framework operations, Planning and Projects, and Information Technology. These appointments support succession planning and contribute to the development of a resilient leadership pipeline.

Workforce Snapshot

These indicators reflect a strong commitment to developing national talent, promoting gender balance, and sustaining institutional knowledge.



129

Total Staff



97%

Bahrainisation



71%

Women



30%

Youth
(<35 Years)

100%

Retention Rate

40

Average Age

10

Average Years of Service

Secondment Programme

The partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE) continued through the secondment programme, which supports capacity building and knowledge exchange. Under this programme, qualified teachers join BQA for a minimum of one academic year and receive training to become certified reviewers.

2025 marked the third year of the programme:

- First cohort (September 2023): 8 secondees
- Second cohort (September 2024): 16 secondees
- Third cohort (September 2025): 12 secondees

During 2025, the third cohort joined BQA, while secondments for 16 secondees from the second cohort were extended to ensure continuity and effective knowledge transfer.

Certification outcomes to date include certification of a total of 24 reviewers:

- Batch 1: 8 reviewers and 2 lead reviewers
- Batch 2: 16 certified reviewers

This programme continues to strengthen reviewer capacity and deepen collaboration between BQA and the Ministry of Education.



Batch 1 secondees meeting the Minister of Education & BQA Chairman



Batch 3 secondees meeting the CEO

Training and Development Programmes

In 2025, training and development continued to serve as a strategic enabler for delivering BQA's mandate and advancing the objectives of the 2023–2026 Strategy. The focus shifted from activity-based training towards targeted capability building aligned with operational priorities, leadership sustainability, and future system needs. By the end of 2025, staff had accumulated **over 3,000 training hours**, reflecting sustained investment in workforce capability.

Below are the highlights of staff training initiatives, professional development and institutional capacity building:

❖ **Operational and Technical Training**

Targeted operational and technical training was delivered to strengthen BQA's core functions. Reviewers of vocational training institutions participated in a dedicated workshop on vocational reviews in the Kingdom of Bahrain, delivered in collaboration with Penta International, supporting consistency and quality in vocational review practices.

Within National Examinations, 8 staff members completed specialised technical training with Cambridge University Press & Assessment, covering Angoff standard-setting, Arabic item writing, and test specifications development. 10 external consultants were also trained in Arabic item writing, and question paper production team received technical training on Adobe InDesign.

Two staff members from the Information Technology Directorate completed training leading to Project Management Professional (PMP) certification. Internal workshops were delivered based on identified training needs, reaching 96 staff members focusing on core digital, analytical, and professional skills.

❖ **Leadership and Professional Development**

Developing the leadership capabilities of BQA staff is one of the key priorities that the

Authority is keen to enhance on an ongoing basis.

By the end of 2025, 20 employees participated in the National Programme for Government Leadership Development delivered by the Institute of Public Administration, across multiple leadership tracks.

Two employees were also accepted into the "Ro'athon – Future Visions" programme delivered in collaboration with the Institute of Public Administration in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, supporting forward-looking leadership and strategic thinking.

❖ **Future-Oriented and International Exposure**

To support future readiness and international benchmarking, 1 selected staff member participated in the TVET Leaders Workshop on Emerging Technologies, Digitalisation, and Generative AI in Singapore, enhancing BQA's understanding of global trends in vocational education, assessment, and quality assurance.

❖ **Data Analytics Capability Building**

As part of strengthening analytical and evidence-based decision-making, 5 staff members were accepted into the Career Data Program Development delivered by General Assembly in collaboration with Tamkeen. The programme provided participants with practical skills in data analysis, interpretation, and visualisation to support BQA's reviews, examinations, and qualifications operations.

❖ **Health, Safety, and Workplace Readiness**

Training also supported a safe and resilient working environment. 18 staff members completed first aid training, while 10 staff members completed fire-fighting training. These initiatives were complemented by health and safety awareness sessions delivered in collaboration with the General Directorate of Civil Defence, contributing to organisational preparedness and staff wellbeing.

Staff Recognition and Engagement Activities

Recognising staff contribution and fostering engagement remained a priority throughout the year.

Outstanding Employees in Each Quarter of 2025



Leena Jameel
Executive Secretary



Fatima Bader
Senior Documentation Specialist



Dr. Ghayda Salman
Head Educational Review



Dana Buhamood
Executive Secretary

Employee of the Year 2025



Dalya Shaker Mohamed Aljerjawi (Second from the left)
Senior National Examination Specialist

Staff Engagement Activities



Sports Day – February



Youth Day – March



Eid Al Fitr Celebration – April



BQA Talks – June



Strategy Day – July



New Academic Year – September



Think Pink Workshop – October



Health and Safety Workshop – November



Bahraini Women's Day Event – December



National Day Celebration – December

Digital Innovation

In 2025, digital innovation continued to support BQA's operational effectiveness, service delivery, and engagement with stakeholders. Progress during the year focused on strengthening digital platforms, enhancing infrastructure resilience, and introducing intelligent tools to support core quality assurance functions.

In this context, BQA implemented a number of qualitative digital initiatives that supported operational efficiency and enhanced the quality of corporate services:

✦ Launch of the Redesigned BQA Website

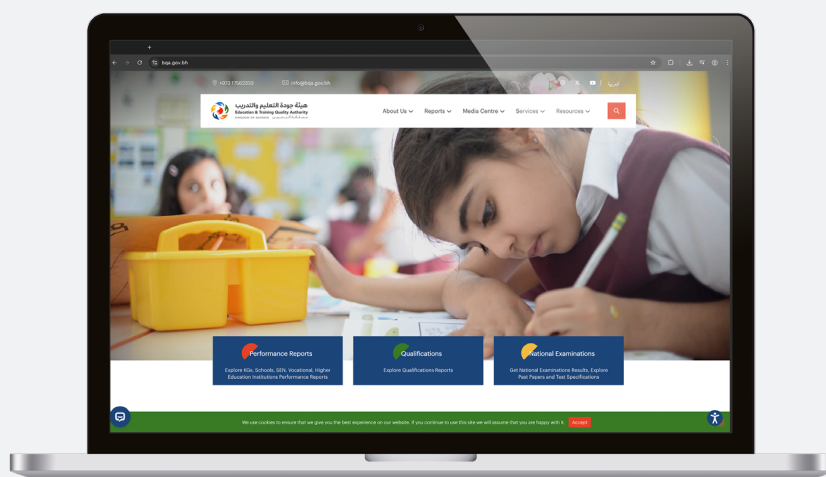
In April 2025, BQA launched its redesigned website, providing a modern and user-centred digital platform. The new website enhances accessibility, transparency, and engagement through improved navigation and streamlined access to services, resources, and publications. Designed to serve both Arabic and English users, the platform supports dynamic content management and reflects BQA's commitment to effective digital communication.

✦ Strengthening Digital Infrastructure

Targeted enhancements were made to digital infrastructure to support the delivery of core functions. These included system modernisation, improved data integration, and the adoption of secure cloud-based environments. Together, these upgrades strengthened system resilience, improved operational efficiency, and supported continuity across reviews, examinations, and National Qualifications Framework operations.

✦ Integration of AI-Enabled Tools

AI-enabled tools were introduced to support institutional reviews and listing processes, enhancing consistency and evidence-based analysis. These tools aim to improve workflow efficiency and support more informed decision-making, contributing to the continued development of quality assurance practices and positioning BQA at the forefront of innovation in education quality assurance within the region.



Engagements and Partnerships

In 2025, engagement and partnership activities supported BQA's work to strengthen quality, alignment, and readiness across education and training sectors. Efforts focused on recognising institutional performance, supporting the implementation of new frameworks, and reinforcing collaboration with key stakeholders.

Local

❏ Institutional Recognition

Institutional recognition continued across sectors to promote quality and excellence. Compliance certificates were awarded to two higher education institutions. In the schools sector, 22 government schools and 7 private schools received Gold Seals for outstanding performance. In the vocational sector, 7 institutions were awarded the Gold Seal of Excellence.

❏ Sector Coordination and Readiness

Engagement activities supported the rollout of new and updated frameworks across the education and training system through focused coordination with key stakeholders.

- **Bahraini Vocational Qualifications (BVQs):** Engagements supported the establishment of the Bahraini Vocational Qualifications Working Group, contributing to alignment on the development and implementation of vocational qualifications.
- **Special Education Needs (SEN) Framework:** Coordination was undertaken with the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), and National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) in preparation for the launch of the SEN review framework, supporting clarity of scope, roles, and implementation readiness.
- **Early Childhood Education (ECE) Awareness and Engagement Campaign:** A joint communication campaign was implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Education to introduce the Kindergartens Review Framework, clarify expectations, and support sector readiness ahead of implementation.



Government Schools' Gold Seal Quality Recognition Ceremony in Collaboration with the Ministry of Education



Bahrain Bayan School Golden Seal Quality Recognition Ceremony

Regional

Regional engagement in 2025 focused on strengthening cooperation with quality assurance authorities across the Gulf region and supporting shared priorities related to education and training quality. These partnerships focused on supporting common goals aimed at developing quality practices, improving the efficiency of education and training systems, and enhancing their alignment with regional and international best practices.

Regional Capacity Building – Oman Partnership

In partnership with the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA), BQA completed a comprehensive school performance evaluation training programme that began in 2024 and concluded in February 2025. The final phase included in-person training delivered by BQA teams in Oman, alongside on-the-field review training conducted in schools across multiple governorates, supporting practical application and capacity building for Omani reviewers.

Regional Quality Assurance Engagement

- **Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE):** The Chief Executive Officer and four staff members participated in the ANQAHE Conference held in Riyadh, KSA, in November, contributing to regional dialogue on quality assurance and strengthening collaboration with peer agencies across the Arab region.
- **GCC Quality Assurance Network (GNQAHE):** Participation continued in the Third Annual Meeting on Higher Education Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation in GCC Countries, organised by the Gulf Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (GNQAHE).



BQA team delivering on-the-field training programme in the Sultanate of Oman

International

International engagement in 2025 focused on strengthening alignment with global quality assurance practices, supporting capacity building, and advancing strategic partnerships. These partnerships have contributed to supporting the development of institutional processes and enhancing BQA's readiness to keep pace with international developments and trends in the education and training sectors.

In this context, BQA has strengthened its international cooperation and participation through a number of initiatives and partnerships, most notably:

✦ **International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)**

The Chief Executive Officer participated in the INQAAHE Conference and Board Meeting held in Tokyo, Japan, in May, supporting international dialogue, knowledge exchange, and alignment with global quality assurance practices.

✦ **Cambridge University Press & Assessment**

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed to strengthen collaboration on the development of national examinations. The partnership supports technical alignment, next-phase implementation, and capacity building. The collaboration

was highlighted during the Chief Executive Officer's visit to Cambridge, United Kingdom, in November.

✦ **Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), UK**

Engagement progressed to activate the existing MoU, with preparations underway to deliver a higher education capacity-building programme scheduled for implementation in 2026.

✦ **Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ)**

Engagement was initiated to execute the MoU and explore opportunities for referencing, capacity building, and knowledge exchange, supporting international benchmarking and mutual learning.

✦ **International Networks and Memberships**

Active participation continued in leading international quality assurance organisations, including the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and the International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA).



BQA signs MoU with Cambridge University Press & Assessment

Financial Performance and Corporate Sustainability

During 2025, the Education & Training Quality Authority continued to enhance its financial efficiency and maintain its operational stability, by implementing well-thought-out financial plans and effective management of resources to provide high-quality support to its strategic and operational priorities, and enhance the sustainability of its operations and its ability to carry out its mandate and functions efficiently and effectively.

✦ Budget Position and Execution

In 2025, financial management remained stable and aligned with approved plans. Total expenditure reached **BHD 3.28 million**, consistent with the approved annual budget and planned spending profiles. Budget execution supported the delivery of all operational and strategic priorities throughout the year, with no cashflow disruptions recorded.

✦ Revenue Performance

Revenue performance in 2025 remained strong and aligned with BQA's operational plans. Total revenue reached BHD 600,000, exceeding the annual estimate

and representing approximately 18% of the annual budget. This reflects consistent cost recovery from service fees and the effective delivery of planned services and activities.

This outcome supports financial sustainability and responsible management of public resources. Cost recovery from services helps offset core budget requirements while ensuring continued delivery of BQA's public mandate.

✦ Variance and Risk Management

No material operational variances were recorded during 2025. Key cost areas remained stable, and all financial obligations were met in line with approved budgets and timelines.

In parallel, work continued to strengthen financial sustainability and risk management. The recurrent budget continued to provide full coverage for BQA's core functions and strategic initiatives, reflecting effective financial planning and disciplined expenditure management.



Our Focus for 2026

Based on 2025 milestones, the Education & Training Quality Authority will continue to strengthen its national role in improving the quality of education and training in 2026, through developing quality practices, enhancing institutional integration, and supporting innovation and sustainability, keeping pace with national trends and global changes in the education and training sector. Furthermore, BQA will continue to focus on national capacity building, reinforcing trust and transparency, and consolidating the principles of fairness and international credibility across various operations and initiatives.

✦ System-Wide Quality Assurance

Strengthen quality assurance across the full education and training sectors, with continued focus on national capacity building, system integration, and reinforcing trust, fairness, and international credibility.

✦ People and Capability Development

Advance professional development initiatives under the BQA Academy framework, delivering high-impact programmes that support capability development and embed a culture of quality.

✦ Review Cycles and Institutional Support

Complete upcoming review cycle phases across early childhood education, schools, special education needs provision, vocational education and training, and higher education, supported by targeted training and clear, accessible guidance for institutions.

✦ National Examinations

Continue improving the national examinations model in collaboration with Cambridge University Press & Assessment, enhancing reliability, fairness, and comparability, alongside the introduction of secure digital verification processes to reinforce confidence and public trust.

✦ Higher Education

Begin development of an updated higher education institutional reviews framework aligned with evolving national and international standards, alongside strengthened post-review monitoring and quality enhancement mechanisms supported by updated tools, guidance, and international benchmarking partnerships.

✦ Vocational Education and Training

Finalise the national database of vocational providers and strengthen digital coordination, data sharing, and system integration across the vocational sector.

✦ Qualifications and Pathways

Further reinforcing the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) by building institutional capacity, advancing international referencing and mutual recognition, progressing Bahrain Vocational Qualifications (BVQs) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and strengthening alignment between qualifications, licensing, funding, and workforce planning to support clear and flexible career pathways.

This will include the rollout of an integrated approach to academic programme reviews, whereby programme quality assurance is embedded within NQF qualification placement, alignment, and re-validation processes.

✦ Digital Transformation

Continue to drive digital transformation as a key enabler of impact and sustainability, expanding the use of intelligent technologies, data-driven decision-making, and secure digital systems. In 2026, the focus will be on scaling AI adoption and intelligent automation, enhancing platform interoperability and data quality, strengthening digital and AI capacity across the Authority, and reinforcing cybersecurity and infrastructure to protect system integrity.



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