



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
Education & Training Quality Authority
مملكة البحرين - Kingdom of Bahrain

BQA Webinars – 2020

Under the COVID-19 Pandemic

Findings and Recommendations

“Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain with and Beyond COVID-19 Pandemic”

Wednesday June 24, 2020

Speakers / Working Papers



Dr. Jawaher Shaheen Al Mudhahki, Chief Executive of the Education & Training Quality Authority
- Keynote paper: “Education and Training in the Kingdom of Bahrain with and Beyond COVID-19 Pandemic”



Prof. Riyad Hamzah, President of the University of Bahrain
- A paper entitled: “Technical Support for Students and Faculty Members; by Recording Scientific Experiments through Virtual Laboratories”



Dr. Mohammed Mubarak Juma'a, Assistant Undersecretary for Resources and Services at the Ministry of Education
- A paper entitled: “Virtual Classrooms”



Dr. Shaikha Mai Al Otaibi, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of The Bahrain Bayan School
- A paper entitled: “Experience of the Bahrain Bayan School within COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond”



Dr. Maitham Aloraibi, Senior Manager of Quality Assurance at the Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance (BIBF).
- A paper entitled: “The Institute’s Experience with E-Education”



The Forum sessions were facilitated by Dr. Tariq Al-Sindi,
General Director of the National Qualifications Framework and National Examinations at BQA.

Themes

- Discuss the current practices in distance education.
- Identify the opportunities and challenges in the education and training sector under the current exceptional circumstances.
- Actions taken by the Kingdom of Bahrain: Addressing the spread of COVID-19.
- Identify the most important lessons learned from the current crisis, and utilize the Forum’s suggestions and recommendations that can be implemented on the ground, with a special focus on the current and post COVID-19 situation.

Recommendations

- The need to provide and support the necessary technology to offer distance learning services for all students in government and private schools alike.
- Provide the necessary training on the use of programs for all students for Grade 4 to Grade 12.
- The need to focus on core subjects under the COVID-19 pandemic, and use assessment methods that are based on students’ e-bags.
- The importance of having a clear plan for communicating with and raising the awareness of students and parents, in addition to organizing virtual meetings; in order to provide them with psychological, professional and technical support.
- Develop an e-learning strategy and activate the peer observation system, in addition to ensuring technical support for all lessons.

Distance Educational Assessments and Related Challenges under the COVID-19 Pandemic

Wednesday December 23, 2020

Speakers / Working Papers



Dr. Abdullah Al Qata'ee, CEO of the National Center for Assessment at the Education and Training Evaluation Commission (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)

- A paper entitled: "Distance Achievement Test – Components and Results"



Dr. Reem Ahmad Al Buainain, Deputy CEO for Academic Affairs in Bahrain Polytechnic

- A paper entitled: "Electronic Admission Tests – Bahrain Polytechnic"



Mr. Ahamd Assaf, Seniro Manager / Middle East and Gulf Region at the University of Cambridge – Cambridge Assessment / International Education (United Kingdom)

- A paper entitled: "Cambridge Programs and Qualifications for International Education"



The Forum sessions were facilitated by Mrs. Wafa Al Yaqoobi, Director of National Examinations

– Education & Training Quality Authority.

Themes

- Distance assessment methods.
- Shedding light on a range of experiences in distance educational assessment via technical platforms.
- Discussion of future development plans.
- Challenges facing this type of assessment.

Recommendations

- Benefit from local, regional and international experiences regarding distance educational assessment, future development plans and challenges facing this type of assessment; in order to improve the quality of the various components of the distance education system, including educational assessments and achievement tests.
- The need to provide students with equal opportunities in distance educational assessments; in order to measure their performance in a transparent and credible manner, in addition to raising families' awareness of the requirements of distance assessment.
- To prepare the proctors to deal with the main problems that students may encounter, assist them in overcoming technical difficulties and provide a comprehensive manual for testing situations, the platform used, and how to use it. This is to ensure that students receive and understand this information. There is also a need to teach them the meaning of practice tests and their requirements. Such that the testing systems and regulations are updated to include the duties and penalties related to distance tests, as well as diversifying the assessment activities, to ensure maximum benefit from the technologies used and credibility and security of tests.
- The need for the virtual college admission test (SAT) environment to be similar to that of conventional SAT, in terms of close monitoring and provision of support when necessary.

“Moving forward: External Quality Assurance Reviews of Higher Education Institutions’ Programs under the COVID-19 Pandemic”

Wednesday September 9, 2020

Speakers / Working Papers



Dr. Sh. Lobna Al Khalifa, Director of Higher Education Reviews
- A paper entitled: “BQA’s Efforts Since the Outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic”



Dr. Karen Taylor, Head of the Dialogue Group; and Emily Goode, International and Industry Professional Bodies Manager at the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Australia)
- A paper entitled: “The Importance of External Quality Assurance in the Proper Delivery of Information”



Dr. Mark Frederiks, International Coordinator - The Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO)
- A paper entitled: “International Experiences in Distance Reviews”



Ms. Dorothy Christopherson, former CEO of the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ)
- A paper entitled: “Challenges Facing External Quality Assurance Bodies”



The Forum sessions were facilitated by Dr. Nina Abdul Razzak, Academic Consultant at the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews – Education & Training Quality Authority.

Themes

- Introducing BQA’s efforts in reviewing the performance of higher education institutions under the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The importance of external quality assurance reviews for all forms of education.
- Presenting a number of international experiences in distance reviews.
- Main challenges and opportunities in higher education under the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendations

- To provide training for all stakeholders in quality assurance bodies and higher education institutions; in order to prepare them for online reviews, with a particular focus on issues such as: Information security and confidentiality and the effect on the cost of reviews.
- To keep pace with developments in higher education, taking the increasing work burden into consideration, demonstrating flexibility in order to maintain the work of higher education institutions and working in a transparent manner with respect to expected results.
- To build the capacity of higher education staff for the purpose of designing electronic curricula and encouraging distance learning.
- To adopt an authentic performance-based assessment.
- To provide various online administrative and academic support services to higher education students, in order to achieve the desired learning outcomes.
- To reconsider certain review procedures and measures, to ensure maximum academic integrity in the online learning environment.

"Towards an Effective Vocational Education and Training during Exceptional Circumstances"

Monday July 27, 2020

Speakers / Working Papers



Ms. Hana Nasser, Chief of Promotion and Information Section - Ministry of Labor and Social Development
- A paper prepared by the Ministry entitled: "Directions of the Training Sector and Dealing with Main Challenges"



Dr. Nahed Showaiter, Trainee Affairs Manager - Bahrain Training Institute
- A paper entitled: "Bahrain Training Institute online: Opportunities and Challenges"



Dr. Hameed Abdullah, CEO of the Training Center of the Bahrain Society of Engineers
- A paper entitled: "How to Train Qualified Engineers Who Can Overcome the Challenges of the 21st Century in Line with the National Skills Required in the Labor Market and in Collaboration with Relevant Parties, including the Education & Training Quality Authority"



Mr. Manaf AL Anni, Director of Berlitz-Bahrain
- A paper entitled: "Another Day, Another Challenge!!"



The Forum sessions were facilitated by Dr. Wafa Al Mansoori,
Director of Vocational Reviews – Education & Training Quality Authority.

Themes

- Discuss the directions of the training sector during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Current practices in distance learning instead of education and training.
- Challenges of the current situation.
- Identify future opportunities and plans as well as shed light on the provided proposals.
- The practical recommendations extracted by end of this forum which focus on the current and post-COVID-19 stages.

Recommendations

- To benefit from the positive aspects of the pandemic in future planning in order to support the vocational education and training sector and enhance the national investment and economy by utilizing the technology in vocational education and training.
- to focus on the importance of the flexibility of the procedures adopted by licensing bodies through restructuring these procedures and by developing alternative solutions to promote virtual training; in order to minimize the damages incurred by institutions. In addition, support the institutes in adapting to the current situation and continue to provide their services with the required level of quality.
- To work on developing virtual laboratories in education and training institutions and implementing the best practices in e-learning, in addition to working on establishing an electronic education centre to support e-learning.
- To highlight on adapting the virtual training approach to meet the learners' needs and invest in the technological progress. This would help in including the virtual mode of delivery as part of the offering courses/ programmes and support the institutions in introducing new and innovative mode of delivery in distance learning.
- To focus on the importance of having a clear strategic vision for education and training institutions, as well as having mechanisms and legislations that contribute on learners' skills development. On the other hand, offering flexibly designed courses would also support learners and enhance mode of delivery in appropriate manner, such as distance, blended or in-class learning.

School Education during Crises Experiences and Future Directions, Prototypes

Wednesday August 26, 2020

Speakers / Working Papers



Dr. Fawzi AL Jowder, Undersecretary for Education and Curricula Affairs at the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain

- A paper titled: The Plans and Procedures Adopted by the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain to Deal with the Suspension of Study and Shutdown of Educational Institutions during the COVID-19 Pandemic



Prof. Gubinan Sarven, Lecturer at Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore

- A paper titled: School Education Practices and Prospects in Times of Crisis: International Experiences.



Mr. Christopher Green, CEO of the Gulf Education Services Foundation

- A paper titled: School Education Practices and Directions in Times of Crisis: International Experiences - England, USA and UAE – Vision and Practicalities; Learning from the COVID-19 Crisis



Mr. Pekka Aksima, International Education Curricula Designer at the University of Oulu in Finland

- A paper titled: COVID-19 in the Finnish Education System



The Forum sessions were facilitated by Dr. Khaled Al Baker,
Director of Government Schools Review – Education & Training Quality Authority.

Themes

- Discussing the immediate responses by various education systems to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on school education.
- Shedding light on these systems' plans for returning to school "normal" education.
- The short and long-term lessons learned from this crisis.

Recommendations

- To benefit from the positive aspects of the pandemic, on top of which is the increased utilization of technology in education and digital educational production,
- To stress the role of school leadership in assessing exceptional situations and developing alternative plans to deal with them.
- To stress the importance of teacher professionalization programme in the field of the utilization of technology, and incorporating them in new teachers qualification and current teachers performance improvement plans.
- To bridge the gap in students' learning due to the sudden shift to distance education, by adopting accurate assessment methods to determine students' educational loss.
- To raise parents' and communities' awareness of the importance of utilizing technology in education, and develop students' self-learning skills.

“The Way Ahead During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic”

Wednesday August 12, 2020

Speakers / Working Papers



Dr. Tariq Al Sindi, Director General of the National Qualifications Framework and National Examinations.
- A paper entitled: “The National Qualifications Framework: The Way Ahead with and after COVID-19”



Prof. Hazman Shah Abdullah, Member of the Advisory Committee of the Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- A paper entitled: “Maintaining the Integrity of National Qualifications Frameworks in an Education Environment Disrupted Due to COVID-19”



Ms. Melany Realton, Education Consultant
- A paper entitled: “Maintaining the Quality of Assessment – Ensuring Credibility and Reliability under the COVID-19 Pandemic”



The Forum sessions were facilitated by Mrs. Esmat Jaffar,
Director of National Framework Operations – Education & Training Quality Authority.

Themes

- Discussing the role of qualifications frameworks in ensuring the authentication of distance qualifications.
- Shedding light on the strategies, operations and standards adopted in the authentication of distance qualifications.
- Future opportunities and plans.

Recommendations

- The importance of recognizing all types of learning, including distance and blended learning, which became necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the role of the national qualifications framework in accommodating the needs of education during the crisis.
- The importance of sustainability, risk and crisis management, flexibility and continuous improvement, and the role of the national qualifications framework in maintaining assessment standards.
- The need to update the standards and practices adopted by quality assurance institutions; in order to ensure the quality of distance learning.
- To work on ensuring the quality and credibility of assessments of distance or blended learning; in order to maintain the integrity of qualifications placed on the national qualifications framework



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
Education & Training Quality Authority
مملكة البحرين - Kingdom of Bahrain