



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

Directorate of Vocational Reviews

Review Report

Al Mashreq Training
Seef District
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 17-21 November 2019

VO015-C4-R017

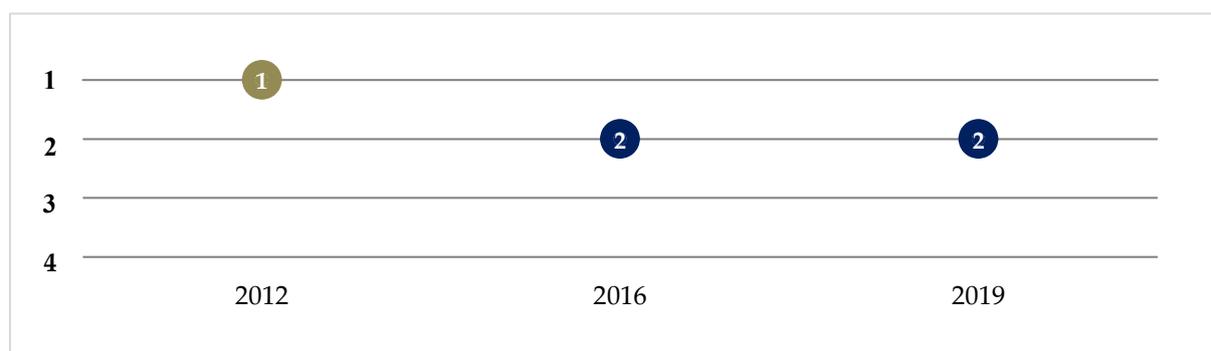
Introduction

The Directorate Vocational Reviews (DVR) of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over five days by a team of five reviewers. For this review, reviewers observed training sessions reported to be conducted within the last three months and other related activities, analysed data about the courses conducted and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and materials provided by Al Mashreq Training and collected feedback from learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

This Report summarises the review team's findings and their recommendations about what the provider should do to improve.

Summary of review judgements		
	Aspect	Judgement
Outcomes	Learners' achievement	2
Programmes and processes	Effectiveness of teaching/training and assessment	2
	Quality of courses/programmes	1
	Learners' support and guidance	1
Management and governance	Effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	2
Capacity to improve		1
Overall effectiveness		2

Provider's overall effectiveness throughout the last three reviews



Outstanding	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Good	4
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Overall effectiveness ‘Good’

Judgement justifications

- Whilst the quality of courses, and the effectiveness of support and guidance are outstanding, all other aspects are graded as good.
- The management team of Al Mashreq Training (hereafter referred to as Al Mashreq, or the Institute) has a shared vision, which is translated into a well-structured strategic plan with clear objectives. The action plans are periodically monitored based on rigorous evaluation of the practices.
- Learners acquire and develop effective knowledge and practical skills as a result of attending well-structured and purposefully planned courses that meet learners’ and stakeholders’ specific needs. Learners are mature and show high commitment towards their learning and the majority demonstrate high confidence in completing the given tasks. Moreover, most learners achieve the courses’ Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) in a timely manner.
- Al Mashreq has a safe and conducive learning environment where well-resourced courses are delivered by experienced and qualified trainers who use their professional experience to enrich learning. Also, courses are enriched with an effective and engaging range of extra-curricular activities.
- Most trainers adopt interactive practical and participative approaches that create a favourable learning environment which in the good and better sessions succeed in engaging and motivating learners. However, in the less effective sessions, a minority of learners are not fully engaged, and the challenges used to stimulate their higher order thinking skills are not sufficient.
- A variety of formative and summative assessment methods are used to effectively evaluate learners’ understanding. These methods are clearly mapped to the pre-defined ILOs and are sufficiently challenging in relevance to the course level.
- Based on a formal mechanism, effective and well-structured support and guidance are provided to learners throughout their learning journey, which help them achieve better outcomes.
- The management selects trainers carefully and monitors their performance frequently to ensure continuous quality improvement, although identified areas for development are not always explicitly documented for follow-ups.
- For the externally accredited courses, achievement data is kept and frequently analysed and used as a basis for further improvement. While the records of learners’ performance for the local courses are well maintained at course level, these are insufficiently analysed

Capacity to improve 'Outstanding'

Judgement justifications

- The Institute has improved its performance in the 'quality of course/programmes' and 'learners' support and guidance' aspects, while maintaining its grades in all other aspects of the review.
- Al Mashreq is led by a competent management team and capable human resources with access to a pool of qualified and experienced trainers. The Institute has taken considerable steps towards improving learners' achievement particularly those enrolled in the externally accredited courses.
- The Institute has upgraded and expanded its learning resources to meet the industrial and market needs. These are effectively utilised to enrich the learning experience. Moreover, Al Mashreq is currently in the process of building new premises that will form a technical training institute that caters for practical training such as confined spaces, scaffoldings, lifting and rigging courses.
- Other significant developments include the expansion of the Institute's affiliation with a number of awarding bodies such as Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS), Highfield and Institute of Environmental Management (IEMA). The Institute has also broadened the range of its offerings by adding new specialised externally accredited courses such as the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Leading Safely and Managing Safely courses. The range of its local courses has also been broadened by introducing new courses such as Arc Flash Electrical Safety.
- The enrolment numbers have increased between 2016 and 2019 with a high repeat business that is maintained with major employers.
- The Institute has appropriately addressed the key recommendations of the previous review such as the utilisation of the prior and continuous assessment in lesson planning. Al Mashreq has also revised its internal Quality Assurance manual to be more detailed and cover a wider range of the Institute's activities. This has triggered continuous enhancement ethos to spread within the Institute, and as a result, most of the processes are more streamlined and consistent across the various courses.

The provider's key strengths

- Most learners achieve the courses' learning outcomes and develop effective skills and competences that improve their level.
- Capable trainers who use an effective range of training methods and learning resources that succeed in engaging most learners.
- The range of formative and summative assessment methods used to evaluate learners' understanding.
- The extremely structured, planned and regularly reviewed courses that are enriched with vocationally-related examples and real-life cases.
- The implementation of an effective formal mechanism that supports and guides learners throughout their learning journey to achieve better outcomes.
- The highly effective strategic planning and the well-structured action plans that are informed by the outcomes of a continuous and critical self-evaluation process.
- The effective links maintained with stakeholders and external awarding bodies.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Al Mashreq Training should:

- enhance learners' progress to better master the relevant vocational skills and competences.
- further enrich the training strategies and ensure that good practices are spread across the trainers.
- strengthen the management system by implementing a more rigorous internal quality assurance system to:
 - ensure that the verification and moderation processes are implemented thoroughly and consistently across all courses
 - ensure the continuous and effective monitoring of trainers' performance.

Learners' achievement 'Good'

Judgement justifications

- Learners gain and develop effective knowledge and practical skills through the hands-on training that is relevant to their chosen courses, where a number of learners score high marks, especially in the Highfield courses and 'NEBOSH International Technical Certificate in Oil and Gas Operational Safety' programme. On the other hand, a minority of learners have difficulties in mastering the required practical skills and completing the given tasks.
 - Learners and stakeholders acknowledged that the offered courses are pertinent to what they do at their workplace and attending them has enhanced their understanding of the job requirements. The follow-up and online surveys conducted by the Institute reveal that a number of unemployed learners managed to secure the employment they aspire for, and other working learners got promoted.
 - Overall, most learners show good progress relevant to their prior attainments and are able to proceed successfully towards achieving the qualification they aim for.
 - The externally accredited courses comprise more than two thirds of the total enrolment. Most learners who chose to sit for their external examinations achieve the qualification they aim for in a timely manner considering the awarding body's regulations. The overall pass rates have clearly improved over the past three years. For example, the pass rates for
- the majority of NEBOSH International General Certificate (IGC) and CIPS are higher than or comparable to the average global rates. However, a minority of learners do not achieve the minimum requirements to pass the course or do so after several attempts, particularly when attempting International Computer Driving License (ICDL) examinations and those for NEBOSH units IGC1 and IGC2.
- In the local achievement courses, most learners receive their certificates upon completing the course assessment successfully and attending 75% of the sessions. Moreover, the provided learners' records indicate that learners in the local achievement and attendance courses progress well, as indicated by their scores in the pre- and post-course assessments.
 - Learners are able to respond to the variety of formative and summative assessment methods used. These are accompanied by practical activities that are administrated throughout the course to measure learners' individual progress against the course's ILOs.
 - Learners show commitment towards their learning experience. They extend their knowledge by participating in effective discussions, questioning their trainers, practicing various activities and reflecting on each other's performance. Learners pursuing the longer courses are requested to fill a useful document titled 'Learners' Personal Development Journal Report'

where they reflect on their learning and set plans on how to improve further.

- Learners perform well independently in the individual activities and collaboratively while working on group tasks such as role-plays, simulations and practical activities. However, in a few cases a number of learners remain dependent on their trainers' support to move forward.

- The Institute has a relevant policy on attendance and punctuality that is communicated to learners. Reliable records of attendance are kept and managed where almost all learners attend regularly; though, punctuality is an issue in a few cases, where learners come late to their sessions or after break.

Areas for improvement

- Learners' mastering of the intended knowledge and skills.

Effectiveness of teaching/training and assessment 'Good'

Judgement justifications

- Trainers' vocational experience and subject knowledge are reflected in their accurate and clear explanations, and responses to learners' questions. They enrich their delivery by using useful vocational examples and related real-life cases with a focus on hands-on practices that depict workplace scenarios.
- Most trainers use a variety of effective training approaches that stimulate learners' interests and attract and engage them productively during the session. These include lecturing, presentations, questioning techniques, discussions, demonstrations and role-plays, in addition to a range of individual, pair and group activities that effectively engage learners. Teaching and learning methods used widen learners' knowledge, skills and understanding. However, in a minority

- of the observed sessions, the training methods used were not successful in motivating learners to participate well.
- Trainers utilise the available learning resources and materials effectively to facilitate learning and promote learners' understanding. These include videos, smart and whiteboards, data shows, flipcharts, health and safety tools and equipment, and other relevant course materials.
- Trainers use proper lesson plans that cover all the necessary elements such as learning outcomes, timing and training methods. These plans are appropriately informed by the outcomes of assessments. Lessons are better planned in the health and safety courses through adjusting training pedagogies and time allocation, and utilising resources that support the effective delivery of the session.

- Most sessions are effectively managed and delivered; they are focused on pre-defined clear ILOs which are shared with learners. Sessions usually start with useful recapitulation. Trainers accommodate well learners' individual needs and capabilities, by directing challenging follow-up questions to the more able learners and simplifying the language used in the delivery of the courses when needed.
- Considering the nature of courses and the enrolment profile, the majority of trainers use different strategies that effectively promote learners' self- and life-long learning. These take into consideration the different contexts of learners' professional and personal interests, particularly in the health and safety courses. Trainers usually use effective follow-up questioning techniques and relevant activities to build learners' self-confidence and stimulate their critical thinking. Also, courses are enriched with further readings and exposure to websites that advance learners' knowledge and promote self-learning.
- A variety of effective summative and formative assessment methods are used to evaluate learners' understanding and measure their achievement of the course's ILOs. These include relevant questions and answers that are introduced during

training sessions, assignments, homework, mock examinations, post-course tests and final examination by the international awarding body, where applicable. In addition, practical assessments and a variety of well-structured in-class and simulation activities are administrated throughout the course. However, in a few of the observed sessions, trainers insufficiently checked learners' individual understanding.

- The assessment in the externally accredited courses are highly structured and effectively implemented, these present 72% of the total enrolment. While the assessment in the local courses are sufficiently developed and appropriately implemented with clear rubrics.
- Trainers in most courses maintain and regularly update records on learners' attendance and their scored marks in the summative assessments. However, learners' formative assessment results are not always recorded.
- Throughout the learning experience, trainers constantly provide effective verbal feedback to help learners improve, which is highly appreciated by the learners. On the other hand, the provided written feedback varies in its quality among trainers as it does not always indicate precisely where learners need to improve further.

Areas for improvement

- The training strategies used to better motivate learners.
- Assessment of individual learners' understanding.

Quality of course/programmes 'Outstanding'

Judgement justifications

- Al Mashreq offers a wide range of externally accredited, local achievement and local attendance courses and programmes. Most of the externally accredited courses/programmes and almost all of the local courses are in the field of health and safety. In addition, the Institute offers externally accredited professional programmes in the field of procurement and supply, information technology (IT), and English language.
- The Institute has a clear understanding and appreciation of the local market, and a sense of the regional market needs. Al Mashreq utilises a number of approaches to gauge the viability of its offerings. This includes conducting regular surveys of its stakeholders and learners - which are aggregated in the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system - conducting client visits, and through participation in the Labour Fund's (Tamkeen) strategic meetings. The management also relays on its extensive professional experiences in the health and safety field, and the in-depth knowledge of the requirements of the local market when determining the courses on offer.
- As a result of the comprehensive understanding of the stakeholders' needs, the Institute gradually increased its offerings to include a wider range of local achievement courses, and externally accredited specialised programmes; such as NEBOSH HSE Certificate in Process Safety Management, which are on-demand certificates that have been conducted several times for major companies.
- Most learners, and the vast majority of stakeholders, express high level of satisfaction with the offered courses that match their specific needs. Evidence exist of an effective customisation in the local courses; as the course content is revised to meet clients' specific needs. Moreover, some externally accredited courses are contextualised to reflect local legal norms and content.
- A clear and formal procedure on course design, approval, review, and periodical updates is implemented effectively. The criteria used for the check-and-formally-approve process is clearly defined and support the effective development and updates of the courses to respond to emerging needs in a timely manner. Moreover, Al Mashreq ensures that it is informed by the awarding bodies of the latest updates introduced to the externally accredited courses and adjust its offering accordingly.
- Courses are well-structured and rigorously planned. They have clear ILOs with identified assessment schemes. Evidently, the design of the courses ensures that the flow of information is well sequenced and that course materials are progressively imparted towards knowledge acquisition and gradual skills development. The course specification also includes clear assessment methods

and rubrics used to evaluate learners' achievement.

- Course content is reinforced with a range of extensive and effective learning resources and teaching aids that reflect the current industrial and commercial standards. Learning materials are up to date and of high-quality. Course delivery is well-supported by a pre-defined set of illustrations, examples, and practical exercises and activities. However, in a minority of cases within the local courses, learning materials, though pertinent, are not of reference-centric quality.
- Fit-for-purpose course outlines are available for learners and the target

audience are clearly specified. Where needed, the course content and language are adjusted to meet the specific needs of learners and stakeholders.

- There is a formal procedure that clearly sets the access and entry level requirements for almost all courses. Depending on the type of the course, different techniques, such as the use of Training Needs Analysis (TNA), interviews and/or admission tests, are used to assess potential learners' abilities. The mechanisms in place are effective in placing the accepted learners at a right level, or highlighting alternative path (horizontally, or vertically), if necessary.

Areas for improvement

- The learning materials in the local courses.

Learners' support and guidance 'Outstanding'

Judgement justifications

- Al Mashreq has a clear policy that is translated to a procedure which is implemented in a fair and transparent manner to provide learners with comprehensive support and guidance throughout their learning process.
- The support provided significantly influences the level of learners' achievement and improves their competency level. There are exemplary cases where the support provided impacted learners' performance positively and helped them to successfully achieve their certificates with higher marks.
- Individualised support is provided to learners with lower abilities to enable them to achieve better outcomes. They are provided with counselling sessions, and 'tutor feedback forms' are used to record the detailed feedback provided to individual learners and precisely indicate where learners can improve further.
- A significant number of revision sessions for groups of learners are conducted. Learners are also provided, based on their request, with extra sessions to prepare them for the examinations.

- An effective mechanism is in place to identify at-risk learners and provide them with the support needed through relevant mock examinations where learners are ensured of their level of performance before sitting for their final examination. Learners also have access to relevant e-learning materials and extra readings. Moreover, a number of learning materials have been translated into Arabic to meet learners' specific needs.
- Learners are provided with opportunities to enhance their skills through a range of highly relevant extra-curricular activities. These include site visits and supplementary resources such as news articles, blogs and videos. Also, some of learners enrolled in ICDL courses were provided by a 'Cyber Security course' to further enlighten their learning experience.
- Learners and stakeholders have access to well-informed advice and guidance about courses/programmes through different means. Initial guidance is provided to learners on course selection and what is expected from them to successfully complete the course they choose. The information provided is very useful and of high quality.
- Detailed course outlines and brochures are available in advance for learners' and are shared with the stakeholders. In addition, there is evidence of a purposeful utilisation of social media accounts through relevant advertisements.
- The Institute's website is updated regularly and comprises accurate information that reflects its status. The website has relevant course materials,

such as course ILOs, target audience, entry requirements and links on social media. Although the website does not post trainers' CVs or state possible career prospects for learners, learners are made aware of opportunities for progression and learning pathways during course selection and on the first day of the course. This is also indicated in the learners' guidance document and the shared PowerPoint Presentation on the training employment sessions.

- Learners receive a thorough induction session before the beginning of each course to familiarise them with aspects related to their learning and help them to settle in quickly and confidently. This includes holistic information about the course regulations, particulars of assessment procedures, and health and safety arrangements.
- Al Mashreq has explicit and relevant policy and procedures to identify and support learners with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). Fit-for-purpose arrangements and practices are in place to support these learners which include ease of access to venues with suitable facilities such as seating plans for those who are visually impaired and those with mobility disability. In addition, course delivery and assessment arrangements are considered to meet the special needs of learners. However, these cases are not always clearly documented.
- Highly flexible arrangements are in place for the scheduling and delivery of courses to suit learners' needs and stakeholders' requirements which gained their satisfaction.
- Al Mashreq has a formal and explicit procedure in place for keeping

stakeholders informed about learners' performance which is implemented consistently and effectively throughout the course. Issues related to attendance, and/or any emerging requirements or concerns on learners' performance are

discussed promptly. In addition, detailed written reports on learners' overall performance and overview of the course delivery and outcomes are shared with stakeholders.

Areas for improvement

- The documentation of cases of learners with SEND.

Effectiveness of leadership, management and governance 'Good'

Judgement justifications

- Al Mashreq has a well-defined vision and mission statements that has guided the Institution in setting a clear direction for enhancing the quality of the provision and developing a well-structured two-year Strategic Plan. The Plan comprises relevant strategic objectives that focus on continuous improvement of learners' achievement.
- The Strategic Plan is translated into yearly detailed action plans with challenging targets, specific key areas for improvement with clear responsibilities and timelines. The implementation of the operation plans is thoroughly monitored on a regular basis and targets' achievement is closely followed up during meetings.
- The Strategic Plan has been formulated using the outcomes of a realistic SWOT analysis and it incorporates feedback from the Institute's staff, stakeholders and learners as well as outcomes of the external verifiers' reports. The continuous self-evaluation process carried out by the Institute is critical and systematic. The top management is always involved and is well aware of the Institute's progress through regular meetings.
- The outcomes of the end-of-course review are carefully considered in planning for the next time the course is offered. This is evidenced in the Self-evaluation Form (SEF) provided for the purpose of this review, which comprises detailed information about the Institute's operations with relevant evidence and identified range of improvement actions. However, some of the awarded grades overestimate the provision's performance by one point.
- The Institute has a central system that contains all information related to learners. The achievement data for the local courses are regularly analysed by the management for each batch. Nevertheless, the current system hinders the management's ability to easily monitor trends over time. For the externally accredited courses, Al Mashreq monitors and analyses the pass rates. Trend analysis is sufficiently carried out to inform decision making

and formulate improvement action plans.

- A fit for purpose organisational structure is in place - with internal Quality Assurance (QA) functions - that suites the nature of the operation and meets its aims. Roles and responsibilities are clearly identified in detailed job descriptions.
- Al Mashreq has a well-defined recruitment procedure, where trainers and staff with relevant qualifications and experience are recruited and deployed as per their specialty. They are well inducted on the required conduct. The Institute also has useful handbooks for staff and trainers.
- Trainers' performance is effectively monitored through different means such as classroom observations that are carried out by the management or *via* peer observation conducted by another trainer using a suitable form, which has been revised recently. Records indicate that these visits take place once or twice a year as per the policy; however, the filled forms vary in quality.
- Staff performance is monitored effectively through a yearly performance appraisal and regular meetings with managers. Areas of improvement are clearly defined, and recommended training opportunities are provided as per the staff role or as an upscaling for future roles. A relevant range of development opportunities are provided to trainers including internal knowledge sharing sessions.
- Detailed internal QA manual is maintained and regularly updated. The

document comprises relevant policies, procedures, and useful processes and forms, which cover well the various aspects of the provision. Most of the forms are in use where practices are effectively implemented.

- A number of the externally accredited courses are regularly audited by the relevant awarding bodies. They provide useful written reports, which Al Mashreq uses effectively to improve the provision. Although the Institute has a relevant policy on moderation and verification, the implementation of this policy in the local courses is not consistent. A new QA committee has been recently created to ensure consistency of practices and its impact is yet to be seen.
- The Institute fosters professional links with awarding bodies and major local and regional stakeholders including a number of societies. Learners' and employers' feedback are systematically collected after each course and outcomes are utilised to improve the provision.
- The management has effective arrangements in place to ensure the well-being of learners and staff, with a healthy, safe, and well-resourced learning environment being maintained. Explicit health and safety policies and procedures are in place. Safety measures with trained first aiders are available. Staff and learners receive relevant health and safety guidance and evacuation drills are normally conducted. A useful risk assessment is undertaken occasionally.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring of trainers' performance.
- The implementation of the internal quality assurance system to cover all aspects of learning and training; particularly the verification and moderation of the local courses.

Appendix (1): Provider information

Name of the provider (English)	Al Mashreq Training					
Name of the provider (Arabic)	المشرق للتدريب					
Licensing body	Ministry of Labour and Social Development					
Year of establishment	2000					
Age range of learners	18 to 60					
Number of learners	Male	10122	Female	809	Total	10931
Learning areas	Externally accredited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety Courses/programmes by different awarding bodies such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a number of courses and programmes by National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) - a number of courses and programmes by Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) - a number of courses by National Safety Council (NSC) - a number of courses by Highfield - MEDIC and/or American Heart Association first aid course - Lifting, Rigging and Slings courses by Lloyds • A Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations by Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) • English Languages courses by Industry Qualification (IQ) • Information Technology programme by International Computer Driving License (ICDL). 				

	Local achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of courses in health and safety such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confined Space Entry and Rescue - Forklift Safety Training - Scaffold User - Permit to work - Environmental Awareness at work • Soft skills for workplace
	Local attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of Health and Safety courses such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confined Space Entry and Rescue - Risk Assessment - Permit to work • Business Management • Soft skills for workplace
Institution's listing status	Recently listed on the National Qualification Framework (NQF)	