

Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**EMIC Training
Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 18-21 January 2016

VO091-C3-R022

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Introduction

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA), conducted this review over four days, by a team of four reviewers. For this review, reviewers observed training sessions and other related activities, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and the materials provided by the provider and met with learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

In the previous review, EMIC Training was judged as good as are all other aspects of its provision.

This Report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what the provider should do to maintain its performance.

Grading scale

Outstanding	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Inadequate	4
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Table of review judgements awarded

Main Question	Judgement
Learners' achievement	Outstanding (1)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Good (2)
Quality of programmes	Outstanding (1)
Quality of support and guidance	Outstanding (1)
Leadership, management and governance	Outstanding (1)
Capacity to improve	Outstanding (1)
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding (1)

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

The overall effectiveness of EMIC Training (EMIC) is outstanding, as are all other aspects of its provision except the effectiveness of training and assessment which is judged as good. Almost all learners gain and develop highly effective vocational skills, knowledge and competencies that are relevant to their profession and their current duties. They show high level of confidence and positive ability to carry out their course tasks and assignments, and perform well during in-class activities. This is reflected well on the results of their achievement and progress they make from their starting point. Learners benefit largely from the effective training they receive by the highly qualified and vocationally experienced trainers, who use their international know-hows to manage training sessions by applying a range of well-structured activity-based sessions to motivate and to confirm learners' participation. However, in less effective sessions, a minority of learners remain less engaged and reliant on their trainers' instructions. EMIC offers a wide range of programmes that are industry-driven and highly responsive to learners' and stakeholders' specific needs and changing requirements. Most programmes are customised based on a thorough understanding and accurate sensing of the industry trends and responding to technology and labour market changes. For this purpose, EMIC adopts a comprehensive and well-defined business immersion process to precisely respond to these needs while developing programmes. Learners receive highly effective support and guidance during their training journey, which include detailed information about programmes and an effective induction as they commence their programme. In order to promote continuous support to learners, EMIC maintains an effective access to e-Learning platform, interactive website, newsletters and very useful social media networks. The management at EMIC is guided by well-articulated 5-year strategic and operational plans which focus on sustainable and continuous improvement with major emphases on promptly responding to the views and requirements of learners and clients.

Capacity to improve

How strong is the provider's capacity to improve the quality of learning?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

EMIC has outstanding capacity to improve its provision. The leadership and management has taken significant improvement initiatives to address the previous review recommendations such as improving record keeping arrangements about learners' progress and achievement and further improved the effectiveness of assessment for most courses. Success rate for learners across most courses and enrolment over the past three years is maintained at high level and is steady. Also, the Centre managed to retain business with their major clients within the same period. For this purpose, EMIC has developed a comprehensive Learning Management System (LMS) and a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) for monitoring and tracking learners' achievement, as well as keeping track of their major client's requirements.

To ensure sustainable and continuous improvement, EMIC has developed highly effective strategic, business and action plans with challenging targets that are monitored closely by the management staff. These plans are based on systematic and critical self-assessments and focused towards responding to industry requirements. Similarly, EMIC maintains highly developed quality assurance procedures, very well organised documentation and informative records about learners and clients. Furthermore, the management ensures the quality of the training by recruiting and deploying highly qualified trainers that have plenty of international vocational experiences. Likewise, the current human and physical resources are sufficient to drive the Centre's improvement plans.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

Learners' achievement at EMIC is outstanding overall. Most learners gain and develop highly effective vocational skills, knowledge and competencies which are very relevant to their profession and can confidently apply these skills at their workplace. Employers and learners

expressed their high level of satisfaction with the outcomes of the programmes. From the observed sessions and scrutiny of learners' work, learners show a high level of confidence and ability to work well collaboratively and independently when given opportunities. They perform well above average during the in-class activities where the vast majority are highly competent during their presentation and show a high level of enthusiasm towards their learning. This is also reflected well in their achievement results and the progress they make from their starting points. Learners' prior attainment is well-defined by a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and written pre-course assessment; these are used to establish a starting point from which the impact of learning could be measured. The vast majority of learners progress well towards achieving the course outcomes considering their prior attainment and background; only a few learners do not reach the passing criteria. Learners' performance is accurately measured against the pre-defined course outcomes through relevant formative and summative assessments which are accurately verified. The Learners' Performance Data (LPD) provided for the last three years shows that the achievement rates for all courses is high where almost all learners achieve their course outcomes and qualifications they aim for in a timely manner. This is also well reflected in learners' assessment results, active participation during the in class-activities, and their high level of interaction with their trainers and colleagues.

Learners are highly attentive and self-motivated; they show positive attitude towards their learning and display interest to demonstrate their understanding and present their work. The vast majority of them reflect critically on their learning and expand on what they have been taught. This is well evident during the observed sessions; through sharing of work-related experience, answering probing questions and the accurate explanations they provide. Moreover, EMIC uses a comprehensive 'Personal Development Journal PDJ' report, which is completed by the learners throughout the journey of their programmes. These reports are very detailed, critical and highly focused on what learners have learnt, set themselves targets to improve further and state how to optimally utilise the gained skills at their daily duties.

Learners show high commitment to their learning which is reflected in attending their sessions regularly and punctually and return to their sessions promptly. EMIC has a clear attendance and punctuality policy which is communicated in advance with learners. Attendance and punctuality are regularly and accurately recorded and monitored in all courses. Besides that, the Centre takes the necessary follow-up actions in case of absenteeism or frequent lateness. Attendance and punctuality rates are maintained at high level above 95% for the past three years in most of the courses.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching/training and assessment in promoting learning?

Grade: Good (2)

Trainers are highly qualified and have vast international experiences that are very well reflected in their explanation of real-life cases and vocational examples relevant to learners' workplace. Most sessions are timely managed, with useful recapitulation to link topics with effective summary at the end. Several examples were cited where trainers succeed to link topics well and attract the attentions of learners. Sufficient time is allocated for discussions and for participative group activities for learners to interact and reflect on their understanding. However, in the less effective sessions, a minority of learners are less engaged and do not participate actively. Most sessions are activity-based, trainers use a variety of effective learners-centered approach to engage and motivate the vast majority of learners such as presentations, discussion role-play, and practical real-life scenarios that are related to their profession. Trainers use the available learning resources and aids such as PowerPoint presentations, relevant pictures and videos effectively to deliver and facilitate learning. Trainer's use well-structured lesson plans to deliver their sessions that are regularly updated based on learners' and employer's needs. Learners' different needs are well addressed within the delivery of sessions, type of questions used and group activities. Trainers challenge more-able learners and give them leadership roles to assist other learners during activities, and the less-able are supported with more explanation and support. In the majority of observed sessions, trainers promote learners higher order thinking through provoking critical discussion of work related topics such as feedback and dealing with employees, as well as use of problems solving skills to resolve work situations that learners present, analyse and conclude a practical solution that suit their work place and company's work environment.

Learners are effectively assessed by a range of formative and summative assessment; which are well structured to measure the course outcomes such as group activities and individual presentation. Accurate records are kept on learners' performance with clear rubric implemented. However, the records on formative assessment throughout the courses are insufficiently kept to monitor learners' progress. From the observed sessions, learners are given instant and constructive verbal feedback on how to improve their work and develop more awareness. Learners are encouraged to individually complete their Personal Development Journal 'PDJ', analyse, and reflect critically on their performance, as to what they want to do to develop further. However, trainers' written feedback on individual learners' work is mostly general and insufficiently constructive.

How well programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

The effectiveness of programmes in meeting the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders is outstanding overall. EMIC Training offers a range of highly customised modular programmes and courses in the fields of leadership and management, business strategy development, high performance team development, customer orientation and executive coaching. In addition, the Centre offers externally-accredited programmes in affiliation with the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM). Programmes on offer are based on an ample understanding and precise sensing of market needs and new trends in the local and global context. The Centre undertakes a comprehensive business immersion process to thoroughly understand its clients' organisations, their goals and aspirations and design programmes that expertly match their specific needs and requirements. This process involves a specialised Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to identify the required competencies and the relevant training and development goals at individual and organisational levels. The requirements for access and entry to programmes including the target participants and their characteristics are effectively specified and adjusted in collaboration with clients at the analysis stage of programmes development. Moreover, the Centre has conducted an exploratory survey to identify the areas that require further development from clients' perspective. It was found that staff retention and customer satisfaction were the two main areas of challenge to stakeholders. The Centre responded in an exemplary way to address these identified areas by developing an on-line tool to assist clients in the recruitment process and inviting a reputed guest speaker to stimulate clients' thinking in the customer service excellence.

The Centre has an extremely rigorous mechanism implemented to design, update and periodically review programmes on offer. This mechanism clearly describes the process followed at the key stages of programme development, and states the roles and responsibilities of members involved. The different components of programmes are meticulously planned, structured and resourced to closely match learners' and clients' needs. Programmes are planned in a sequence that encourages progressive acquisition of knowledge and skills and to enhance the practical and theoretical learning. Programmes' syllabus, content and plans clearly indicate the corresponding objectives, learning outcomes and assessment tools. Wide-ranging supporting materials and highly relevant learning resources are available

to deliver programmes. The Centre use high industry standard guidebooks and workbooks that is well-written and reinforced with extensive illustrations and activities to cover the set learning objectives of programmes. Furthermore, the learning experience at EMIC Training is enriched with relevant seminars delivered by expert speakers in the fields of leadership and management.

Programmes are continuously reviewed and regularly updated in response to learners' and trainers' feedback. Trainers are required to reflect on how the programme was delivered using a highly effective tool called 'Trainer's Diary'. Trainers record their observations at the end of each training day and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in addition to the achievement, standards and progression of learners. The trainers' diaries, learners' end of programme evaluation and trend analysis reports are proficiently utilised while reviewing programmes and addressing any minor issues with the delivery materials or methods. Moreover, a major review to determine the validity of training objectives and evaluate all elements of training is conducted after three complete iterations of a programme.

How well learners are supported and guided?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

EMIC Training has a comprehensive and systematic mechanism to support and guide learners throughout their learning experience to achieve better outcomes. Prior to the commencement of a programme, learners receive an inclusive training itinerary and programme overview documents that provide them with holistic information about key aspects of the training. These include for instance programme structure, programme outcomes and outline content, assessment methods, attendance and punctuality policy, health and safety arrangements, support and guidance procedures and relevant contact details. In addition, learners are provided with a thorough induction on the first day of the programme to familiarise them with aspects related to their learning. Moreover, clients and learners have access to well-informed advice and highly effective guidance about programmes through the Centre's well-constructed and interactive website, newsletter and very useful social media networks.

Learners have access to an e-Learning platform that allows them to attend catch-up sessions for the modules they have missed and complete the required learning hours. Furthermore, the e-Learning platform is managed by a Learning Management System (LMS) that enables the Centre to keep track of learners' activities. In the event that learners need further support,

they are offered with face-to-face catch-up sessions and access to additional relevant material. Furthermore, learners enrolled in the ILM programmes are provided with specialised tutorial 'clinics' to aid them with their assignments if required. Additionally, they are provided with English language support through tailor-made bi-lingual glossary of terms that supplement all guidebooks and electronic tablets that have instant translation facility. Learners are encouraged to set individual career development goals using the Personal Development Journal (PDJ). Upon clients' request, the Centre offers coaching sessions and follows-up on learners' Individual Development Plan (ILP) to identify opportunities for career progression and potential training pathways.

EMIC Training's environment and chosen venues for training are fit-for-purpose in which learners have good access to sufficient learning facilities. Almost all programmes are carried out in hospitality venues or at clients' work premises. The training coordinators ensure that these venues are well equipped and resourced prior to the start of the training. The Centre maintains very close communication with clients to inform them on learners' performance upon programme completion. Clients receive a highly customised executive summary report that highlights the main observations of programme performance and key development areas derived from learners' end of programme evaluation. The report also includes learners' individual attendance records and summative assessment scores. In addition, clients receive a detailed individual learner's performance and trend analysis reports. The arrangements for the delivery and scheduling of programmes are highly flexible and always negotiated with clients to suits their needs. Learners with special needs that require particular arrangements are always discussed at the early stages of programme development and prior to their enrolment. Very recently, the Centre has developed a useful policy on supporting and accommodating this category of learners.

Leadership, management and governance

How effective are leadership, management and governance in raising achievement and improving the quality of the provision?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

Management at EMIC is guided by coherent 5-year strategic and operational plans with well-defined vision, mission and objectives statements that are aligned towards continuous improvement of learners' achievements and the quality of programmes that fulfills most clients' specific needs locally and within the region. These plans are based on in-depth understanding of the local market changing needs, the outcome of Political, Economic, Social and Technological 'PEST', SWOT analysis and the critical self-evaluation review reports. The operation plan is comprehensive and comprises of all of EMIC training activities and business. The Centre organisational structure is fit-for-purpose and suites the nature of the provision operation and meets its aims; there are very clear roles, responsibilities and accountability for each staff. Self-evaluation process is detailed and systematic; the Centre has carried out several highly constructive self-evaluation reviews and used an external body to review and evaluate its operation further. This is reflected well on the self-evaluation form (SEF) submitted for the review, which provides comprehensive information about its operation, and suggested grades mostly match those of the review team.

The management has effective arrangements to ensure the well-being of learners and staff; healthy and conducive learning environment is maintained through periodic and fit-for-purpose risk assessment. These are supported by clear health and safety procedures and practices. Additionally, for external training venues where most of the EMIC's courses are conducted, the Centre maintains an effective checklist to ensure that the venues are suitable and risk free.

EMIC's internal quality assurance review process is overarching and it includes informative quality management system and well-defined evaluation and audit process to assess and maintain the quality of its provision. A detailed training manual is in place that outlines the training and learning approach. Equally, EMIC has a well-defined System Approach to Training 'SAT' manual that describes the complete core process of analysing, designing, conducting and validating a training programme. Furthermore, a clear internal verification

process is applied for assessment and learners' marked work; however, the moderation process is inconsistent across the courses and its better in the ILM courses. For the purpose of understanding the background of learners' and ensuring that courses are designed based on their abilities, the Centre carries out a comprehensive TNA to decide learners' starting point, as well as lesson planning and delivery approach. Once enrolled, EMIC maintains effective arrangement to monitor data about learners' achievement, progress, and consequently highly effective trends are produced; the outcome of this is used to initiate improvement actions.

Management at EMIC has a consistent approach for selecting and monitoring trainers. Qualified trainers with international vocational experience are recruited, inducted and are deployed according to their specialisation. Beside that trainers are provided with suitable development opportunities including internal workshops on quality assurance and training methodologies. The effectiveness of their performance is assured and monitored through random class observation visits; that accurately identify areas for further improvement and shared with trainers and followed up promptly.

Highly productive links are established and maintained with relevant stakeholder and industry locally and within the region. Systematic approach to collect and aggregate learners' and employers' feedback after each courses and the outcome is thoroughly analysed with trend clearly identified, improvement actions are triggered on these views. Governance policy and procedure are in place, the Board is aware of the strategic plan and contributes well to its development.

The provider's key strengths

- Most learners effectively develop highly relevant vocational skills and competencies, and achieve the intended learning outcomes
- The highly qualified trainers who use their vast international industry experiences to reflect well on their explanation of real-life cases and vocational examples
- The effective and rigorous mechanism to design, update and regularly review programmes
- The comprehensive and systematic support and guidance provided to learners throughout their learning experience
- The well-established links maintained with employers and external awarding bodies and relevant industry that are utilized well to inform their improvement decisions
- The effective strategic, business and action planning with challenging targets that are monitored very closely
- The effective and critical self-assessment processes conducted on a regular basis to inform improvement decisions.

Recommendations

In order to maintain its outstanding performance, EMIC should:

- ensure that moderation processes are consistent across all local courses
- ensure records on learners formative assessment are sufficiently kept throughout the course.

Appendix

Overview of the provision

EMIC Training (EMIC) was established in 2010. The Centre is licensed by the Ministry of Labour (MOL) to offer vocationally training programmes in the areas of leadership and management, employee relations, personal development and strategy development. Most programmes on offer are designed and customized according to the clients' needs, and run as non-accredited. However, the clients have the option to receive external endorsement for these courses from the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) and the Centre is also accredited by Edexcel. Since last review the Centre has enrolled 1194 learners on 84 programmes. They are all employed adults who are sponsored by their companies or Tamkeen. EMIC operates from one location in Manama. However, most courses are conducted in the clients' premises or hospitality venues. The Centre is managed by a full-time team that includes a managing director, a general manager who is also a trainer, a training manager who is also a course designer and a trainer, a business development manager, a business improvement manager, an administration manager and has access to a pool of local and international part-time trainers.