



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

Directorate of Vocational Reviews

Review Report

The Nine Training Centre
Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 17-19 September 2017

VO119-C3-R067

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Introduction

The Directorate Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over three 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.

It is worth mentioning that this is the first review for this Centre. This Report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what the provider should do to improve.

Grading scale

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

Main Question	Judgement
Learners' achievement	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of programmes	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of support and guidance	Satisfactory (3)
Leadership, management and governance	Satisfactory (3)
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory (3)
Overall effectiveness	Satisfactory (3)

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The overall effectiveness of The Nine Training Centre (The9TC) is satisfactory, as are all aspects of its provision including the capacity to improve. Courses are offered based on an effective understanding of learners' and stakeholders' needs and the local market vocational training. A range of internally designed and externally accredited courses are offered in the fields of soft skills, management, accounting, sales and marketing, English language and health and safety. The internally developed courses are adequately planned and structured, though the assessment methods used are not sufficiently rigorous and, in a few courses, the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and/or objectives are not measured.

Courses are delivered by knowledgeable trainers who use a variety of relevant training methods and utilise learning resources to engage and motivate learners adequately. An appropriate range of assessment methods are used by trainers, including pre- and post-course assessments and a sufficient range of formative assessments. However, in a few of the observed sessions the approach used is not effective in engaging and motivating learners, such as being trainer-centred.

The majority of learners develop useful knowledge and vocational skills that are relevant to their workplaces and professions. They progress sufficiently throughout the courses from their starting point. However, the skills development of a few learners is minimal, as is the added value. The majority of learners show positive attitudes towards their learning. The few learners who continue in the general English courses progress well throughout the programme.

Since the establishment of the Centre the management has developed a range of quality assurance policies and procedures, though the implementation of these is not streamlined. The Centre lacks a comprehensive support mechanism, including for learners with special needs. The management, trainers and staff are approachable and provide learners and employers with appropriate support and guidance. The arrangements to monitor learners' achievements are adequate, and suitable records are kept on learners' performance and attendance, but the verification and moderation processes are insufficiently integrated to monitor and ensure the quality of training and learners' achievements.

Capacity to improve

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The9TC capacity to improve is satisfactory. Since the establishment of the Centre the management has focused mainly on programme development and diversifying the range of the courses offered, several initiatives were taken towards achieving this objective. The9TC has developed and periodically reviews an appropriate strategic plan that focuses on the quality of the programmes offered and targeting individual learners' rather than corporate. However, the plan does not focus sufficiently on learners' achievements. The Centre effectively gathered and utilised the outcomes of a market survey conducted to shape their offering, and maintains effective relationships with the external awarding bodies. The management plans to offer courses from an awarding body relevant to the insurance area.

The9TC has recently signed a contract with an external body to digitalise the training programme and materials. The Centre has a fit-for-purpose organisation structure that accommodates the needs of day-to-day activities with appropriate physical and human resources. There is access to qualified part-time trainers, who are deployed effectively. A range of adequate quality assurance policies and procedures are in place, though these practices are not utilised effectively. The Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) provided for the review is sufficiently detailed, but the grades overestimate the provision. Since the inception total enrolment has remained steady.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

Learners' achievement at The9TC is satisfactory overall. The majority of learners develop useful vocational skills and knowledge relevant to their professions and workplace. The majority of employers and the learners interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the learning experience, acknowledging that attending courses at The9TC positively enhanced their skills and productivity and they have applied what they learn at the workplace. Since the inception of the Centre, the Learners' Performance Data (LPD) sheet provided for the review indicates that the overall retention rate is 95%, as expected in such very short and short courses. The majority of learners in the externally accredited courses, which constitute 24% of the total enrolment, achieve the qualifications they aim for successfully.

The overall achievement in the internally designed courses is calculated based on 40% post-assessment and 60% distributed on continuous assessment throughout the course. However, in a few courses these marks do not clearly reflect learners' final attainment as there is no clear rubric for grading some aspects, particularly in the learner's action plan which is allocated 10%. Learners understating and achievement of the course ILOs and/or objectives are assessed appropriately. However, in a few cases, the assessment questions are not effective due to the absence of comprehensive, challenging and higher-order questions. Moreover, the assessment structure in a few courses does not always cover the course ILOs and/or objectives, particularly in general English. The observed sessions, structure of the assessments and scrutiny of learners work standards reveals that the majority of learners achieve the course objectives adequately and they are awarded with a certificate of completion upon completing at least 70% of the scheduled hours and scoring a minimum attainment of 60% in the formative and summative assessments. The majority of learners progress sufficiently throughout the courses from their starting point. Learners who continue in the general English courses, of which there are a few, progress well throughout the programme.

From the observed sessions, learners are attentive and the majority of them show positive attitudes towards their learning. In a few cases they are able to reflect on their learning, for instance applying what they have learned to real life examples and directing relevant questions to the trainer. The majority of learners are able to work independently and collaboratively during class activities. A clear attendance and punctuality policy is in place and regular records are kept. It is evident from these and the observed sessions that, although most learners attend regularly, punctuality is an issue.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The effectiveness of training and assessment is satisfactory overall. The majority of trainers are knowledgeable and qualified in the area they teach. They share relevant examples and support their explanation with useful real life cases. Training sessions are appropriately structured, usually starting on time with appropriate recapitulation of the previous session. However, in a few cases, sessions do not start on time and the ILOs and/or objectives are not clearly shared with learners. Trainers use suitable training methods such as lecturing, questioning, discussions and practical demonstrations that help learners to build their knowledge and skills in the training subject. However, in a few of the observed sessions the

training methods used were trainer-centred, using lecturing most of the time with learners not being involved or engaged effectively.

Generally, trainers use detailed session plans with clear ILOs and/or objectives, assessment criteria, training activities, training methods, resources and time allocated for each activity. Lesson planning for the majority of courses is updated with learners' expectations and their levels, indicated through the registration form and the outcomes of the pre-assessment. However, in the externally accredited and general English courses only a scheme of work is used by the trainers. The different needs of learners are properly addressed. Similar tasks are mostly provided to all learners, with more support to the less able learners while the training activities do not always challenge the higher achievers. Trainers correctly use the available learning resources and materials to deliver the courses and facilitate learning.

Trainers apply appropriate assessment methods to gauge learners' understanding, through pre- and post-course assessment, and class activities. However, in a few courses the assessment does not always cover the course ILOs and/or objectives and the action plan is not properly completed by the learners. Furthermore, the formative assessments are subjective and are not sufficiently maintained. Records on learners' performance of pre- and post-course assessment, attendance and punctuality, participation and activity are kept for all courses. Trainers provide suitable verbal feedback to learners during sessions, though written feedback on learners' work is not provided. An assessment policy is in place, however, it does not include guide for trainers.

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The effectiveness of programmes at The9TC in meeting the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders is satisfactory overall. The Centre offers a range of internally designed and externally accredited courses in the fields of soft skills, management, accounting, sales and marketing, English and health and safety. The externally accredited courses offered include those by Highfield Awarding Body of Compliance (HABC), Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), Institute of Sales and Marketing Management (ISMM), Digital Marketing Institute (DMI), Professional Evaluation and Certification Board (PECB), and Customer Service Institute of America (CSIA). All courses offered are based on an effective understanding of the local market needs. The outcomes of the frequent sales and marketing meetings and conversations with stakeholders are effectively utilised to shape The9TC offerings. Learners and stakeholders acknowledge that courses on offer meet their needs, either by accommodating their requests or after a thorough TNA conducted by the Centre. Few courses are enriched with extra-curricular activities such as site visits, video clips,

as well as, extra recommended books and readings provided at the end of course to enrich learners' experience.

The9TC has a model termed 'ADDIE' which stands for the process of a course 'Analyse, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation'. It is applied to all courses once every three years. This model has been partially implemented in a number of courses, though no course has yet reached its ADDIE cycle. The externally accredited courses follow the vendor updates, reviews and design course materials. Most of the internally developed courses are adequately planned with useful course outlines that indicate the course summary, objectives, and assessment methods. However, in a few of these courses the assessment does not always cover the course ILOs and/or objectives, while assessments in the general English courses do not test all the English language basic skills and do not always cover the learning objectives. Courses on offer are sufficiently resourced to meet the needs of stakeholders. The Centre has a clear access and entry level policy which is fairly implemented. For the English courses, a placement test is conducted to place learners at the right level, while the externally accredited courses follow the vendors' requirements.

How well are learners supported and guided?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

Learners at The9TC are provided with suitable support and guidance that enables them to achieve better outcomes. Learners and stakeholders have access to informative advice about the courses on offer before the start of the course. A useful verbal induction is provided at the start of each course covering course details and explanations are given to the learners in the 'Trainee Manual'. Learners and stakeholders have access to general information about the courses on offer, through different means such as brochures, the Centre's website and social media channels. For the externally accredited courses, learners are provided with the vendors' handbooks, workbooks, all relevant rules and regulations and, if available, mock examinations and website access. The Centre has a specific written evacuation procedure for learners with special needs, though the Centre lacks a full written policy to deal with such cases on a daily basis. Although the Quality Manual contains different parts of the support and guidance relevant policies, the Centre lacks a formal comprehensive support mechanism, including for learners with special needs.

Detailed communication with stakeholders regarding learners' attendance and performance is maintained through a comprehensive 'Course Final Report' after course completion. This includes an analysis of overall learners' performance and their course evaluation. The Center has highly flexible arrangements for course delivery to suit the needs of learners and stakeholders. Course timings, days and venues are always discussed with stakeholders and learners. For any attendance issues or dealing with matters raised during the course, the Centre communicates verbally with the clients by phone in most cases. The Center has a fit-

for-purpose learning environment, with a sufficient number of classrooms equipped with the necessary learning resources such as whiteboards and data show. Learners are also provided with internet access and there is a small library with books that are relevant to their studies and training.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The effectiveness of leadership, management and governance is satisfactory overall. The Centre has clear mission and vision statements that focus on human resources and programme development, bridging the gap between education and skills outcomes and the labour market needs. The current strategic plan is appropriate and links well to an operational plan. However, both plans are insufficiently focused on learners' achievement. The strategic plan mainly focuses on programme development and widening the range of courses offered. Planning is based on a clear SWOT analysis and issues are tackled by the management. Accountability is defined and deadlines and completion dates are clearly indicated for all targets. The Centre deploys sufficient human and physical resources that accommodate the nature of the provision and meet its aims. There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each function, with most staff having relevant experience. The management maintains a healthy and fit-for-purpose learning environment, with essential health and safety procedures and practices being monitored.

The9TC has a useful range of quality assurance policies and procedures that include training and assessment strategy, customer satisfaction, marketing and advertising, appeal procedure, and clients' feedback. However, the implementation of these practices is not streamlined appropriately and systematically. The managing director closely monitors the operation of the provision and is well informed on the Centre's plans and their development. A detailed yearly report is shared and discussed with the management, useful recommendations are followed-up. An internal management audit report is completed for 2016, with useful comments and updates related to the policies and procedures being highlighted and considered. The SEF provided for the review is detailed and provides sufficient information about the assessment and the Centre's operation, though the grades overestimate the provision. The management arrangements to monitor learners' achievement, progress and trends is sufficient, with data being aggregated and analysed and the outcomes used to trigger improvements such as widening the range of the courses offered to meet the demands of

learners. Learners' prior attainment is adequately utilised to modified the course materials and lesson plans and place learners in the appropriate level.

The9TC has a clear mechanism in place for employing trainers, with selection steps being undertaken. Qualified staff are recruited and trainers are inducted and deployed effectively. However, few staff are provided with development opportunities and professional certification in their areas of specialisation. Trainers' performance is occasionally monitored through classroom observations, though these are only shared with a few trainers and areas to be improved are not acted upon. Staff performance is adequately evaluated. The Centre maintains highly effective links with awarding bodies and relevant stakeholders in the community. Views of learners and employers collected by the end of each course, and relevant improvement actions are taken based on these. However, the views of employers are not systemically ascertained.

The provider's key strengths

- The useful development of related vocational skills and knowledge by the majority of learners.
- The effective gathering and utilisation of researched information from various sources to shape the programmes offered.
- The effective links maintained with stakeholders.

Recommendations

In order to improve, The Nine Training Centre should:

- ensure that learners develop the required skills and knowledge in all courses
- further improve training methods to ensure more interactive learning
- improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that class observations are regularly and effectively conducted and followed up in a timely manner
 - devising and implementing comprehensive quality assurance policies and procedures to improve the provision, including internal verification and moderation processes.

Appendix

Description of the provision

The Nine Training Centre (The9TC) was established in May 2015. The Centre is licensed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development (MoLSD) to offer a range of internally designed and externally accredited courses in the fields of soft skills, management, accounting, sales and marketing, English language and health and safety. The externally accredited courses offered include those of the Highfield Awarding Body of Compliance (HABC), Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), Institute of Sales and Marketing Management (ISMM), Digital Marketing Institute (DMI), Professional Evaluation and Certification Board (PECB), and Customer Service Institute of America (CSIA). The externally accredited courses represent 24% of the total enrolment, with the remaining 76% being the internally designed courses.

Since its inception and up to the review date the Centre has enrolled 656 learners, broken down as 124 in 2015, 295 in 2016 and 237 in 2017. The learners are adults employed by private and government organisations. The9TC is managed by a managing director. The Centre employs a head of training and quality, a business development manager, a human resources manager, an administration manager, a full-time trainer, an accountant, and a media executive. A pool of part-time trainers is available as needed. The Centre operates from one location in Manama.