



هيئة ضمان جودة التعليم و التدريب  
Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training

# **Vocational Review Unit**

## **Repeat Review Report**

**Al Hayat Institute for Human Resources Development  
Manama  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date reviewed: 25 – 27 April 2011**

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## The Vocational Review Unit

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The Vocational Review Unit (VRU) is part of the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET), an independent body set up under Royal Decree No.32 of 2008 amended by Royal Decree No. 6 of 2009. Established to raise standards in vocational education and training, the VRU is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the quality of vocational provision, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, establishing success measures, spreading best practice and offering policy advice to key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education.

Reviews are based on the VRU's *Review Framework*, and carried out on providers' premises by teams of carefully selected and highly trained reviewers. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the planning of the review, and to represent them during review team meetings. Reviewers examine a range of evidence before arriving at a series of judgements and awarding grades for the quality of the provision.

Review grades are awarded on a five-point scale:

| Grade description     | Interpretation                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1: Outstanding        | This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all or nearly all aspects and is/are exemplary or exceptional in many.                                            |
| 2: Good               | This describes provision or outcomes that is/are better than the basic level. Practice will be at least sound and there may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes. |
| 3: Satisfactory       | This describes a basic level of adequacy. No major areas of weakness substantially affect what learners, or significant groups of learners, achieve. Some features may be good.     |
| 4: Below satisfactory | This describes situations where major weaknesses in some areas affect the outcomes for learners and outweigh any strengths in the provision.                                        |
| 5: Very weak          | This describes situations where there are major weaknesses in all, or almost all, areas and where, as a result, learners are very poorly served.                                    |

## Introduction

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### Description of the provision

Al Hayat Institute for Human Resources Development (Al Hayat) was established in December 1999. The institute is licensed by the Ministry of Education to offer English language and Information Technology (IT) programmes, tutorial courses for English and mathematics and other remedial courses. All the provision is non-accredited, and most courses are of short duration. A ten-modules IT certificate lasting 120 hours is on offer. Similar to 2009, in 2010 and the first quarter of 2011, one third of students were enrolled on General English and IT courses while the other two thirds attended tutorials. Most tutorial students are aged below 19, whilst those on IT courses tend to be older.

Al Hayat operates from one centre in Manama. It enrolled 989 students in 2008, 1,384 in 2009 and 1250 in 2010. The institute is run by a team comprising an operational manager, three secretaries, eight teachers, a transport coordinator, eight drivers and one cleaner. Teachers and staff, including the operational manager, work at the centre on a part-time basis. The owner attends the centre only occasionally.

### The repeat review

Al Hayat was first reviewed in March 2010. Although the quality of teaching was satisfactory, students' achievement and the courses offered were below satisfactory and the support and guidance, and leadership and management of the provision were very weak. Al Hayat was therefore subject to a repeat review to seek to ensure that these areas improved to the required standard.

The repeat review comprised two one-day monitoring visits and a final three-day visit. During the repeat review, reviewers observed teaching sessions, analysed data about the qualifications students achieve and the courses they complete, and talked with the management, teachers, support staff, students and stakeholders.

This report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what Al Hayat should do to improve further.

## Overall judgement

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### Effectiveness of provision

#### Grade 4: Below satisfactory

Al Hayat's overall provision was judged very weak on the first review and is now judged below satisfactory, reflecting the fact that some improvements have been made. Students now make satisfactory progress, this as a result of the generally appropriate teaching given in most lessons by suitably qualified and experienced teachers and the mainly relevant courses offered. Hence achievement is now judged to be satisfactory, where previously it was judged as below satisfactory. However, the effectiveness of leadership and management, support and guidance and the institute's capacity to improve remain inadequate. Essential health and safety issues remain and little has been done to provide a more stimulating environment for students, or to develop strategic and action plans which focus on improvements. What little that has been done has been recent and has not yet had a significant impact on the institute's provision.

The success rate on IT and General English language courses has improved slightly since the last review. Most students attending mathematics tutorials appear to gain skills and knowledge matching their school levels. However, most students face difficulty in communicating in basic English to make effective progress on the English tutorials. The institute has only recently started measuring students' progress on tutorials. The provider has also recently conducted diagnostic tests for these tutorials. However, the results of these tests are not used for strategic or lesson planning or for any form of analysis. The attendance rate is satisfactory but there is an issue with the punctuality of students.

Al Hayat's teachers have suitable qualifications and experience. Teachers of mathematics tutorials, in particular, use effective methods to engage and motivate all students. However, in a minority of lessons observed, especially in English tutorials, learning was inadequate as most parts of the lessons were too teacher-centred. In general, appropriate lesson plans are now in place for most courses. Most teachers assess students' work during classes, and provide useful feedback. Generally, the less able students are suitably supported in most classes but the more able are not normally provided with additional activities. Teaching resources are insufficient to promote effective learning.

Al Hayat offers adequate school tutorial courses in English and mathematics in addition to basic IT, General English and Arabic courses for children. While the tutorials cover the two subjects from primary to secondary school levels, the IT courses lack appropriate progression routes. Appropriate written materials are provided for most IT courses but students use their own schools' books for tutorials. All courses conducted lack appropriate

enrichment activities. Analysis of local needs is not conducted. However, the reception staff call parents to gauge their tutorial needs for mathematics and English.

Al Hayat's reception staff are cooperative and provide useful information on class schedules to students and parents when requested. They also contact parents during the period of registration and when their children are absent, late or behave inappropriately. The institute offers parents free of charge transportation for their children. Al Hayat has started tackling some aspects of the health, safety and general conditions but the premises still lack some essential health and safety measures and is failing to provide an inspiring learning environment for students. The classrooms are still dull and lack motivating educational posters. There is no prayer room, canteen or learning resources room.

Al Hayat's management has made little impact on the quality of the provision since the last review. Almost all actions taken are very recent. A number of issues related to health and safety have not been tackled adequately. Whilst management continues to recruit qualified teachers, their performance is insufficiently monitored. Attempts to collect and aggregate feedback from stakeholders and progress data have only just started. The approach Al Hayat takes to strategic planning continues to be verbal, *ad hoc* and not based on a thorough analysis of various performance data and feedback. The provider does not carry out regular collaborative self-assessment. Communication with parents remains limited especially related to their children's progress.

## **Capacity to improve**

### **Grade 4: Below satisfactory**

While Al Hayat retained a relatively high enrolment rate and good repeat business, it however has made slow progress particularly in addressing the recommendations of the last review. After the last review, the institute implemented a basic registration system mainly for tracing payments. Only in the weeks just prior to the review, has the provider started to tackle part of the recommendations related to some aspects of health and safety measures and the collection of performance data and feedback. It is too early to judge the impact of these moves. Al Hayat still suffers from its cramped physical facilities and very limited learning aids. Attempts to improve course filing systems are only recent and do not, so far, constitute part of a comprehensive quality system to standardise processes and documentation.

As noted in the previous review, the provision's leadership and management lack the necessary capacity and educational experience to bring about meaningful and timely change. They continue to lack detailed and thorough strategic planning that focuses on

improving the quality of what they do. Monitoring of teachers' performance, students' progress and stakeholders' feedback have not yet yielded useful and critical information to inform improvement. Al Hayat's self-evaluation form (SEF) remains uninformative, unsupported by evidence or analysed data and it overestimated the grades of a number of questions. It however, highlighted some areas for improvement which were also identified by the review team.

### Summary of grades awarded

| Overall judgement                                                                               | Original grade              | Repeat review grade         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Effectiveness of provision                                                                      | Grade 5: Very weak          | Grade 4: Below satisfactory |
| Capacity to improve                                                                             | Grade 5: Very weak          | Grade 4: Below satisfactory |
| <b>Review findings</b>                                                                          |                             |                             |
| How well do students achieve?                                                                   | Grade 4: Below satisfactory | Grade 3: Satisfactory       |
| How effective is teaching?                                                                      | Grade 3: Satisfactory       | Grade 3: Satisfactory       |
| How well do courses meet the needs of students and stakeholders?                                | Grade 4: Below satisfactory | Grade 3: Satisfactory       |
| How well are students guided and supported?                                                     | Grade 5: Very weak          | Grade 4: Below satisfactory |
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all students? | Grade 5: Very weak          | Grade 4: Below satisfactory |

## Main judgements and recommendations

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### Strengths

- **Most students are enjoying attending courses and are self-motivated.** This is particularly true for the tutorial courses, as revealed from lessons observed and discussions with students.
- **Effective teaching methods used in mathematics tutorials.** Teachers of mathematics tutorials use a range of different activities which engage and motivate students.

### Areas for improvement

- **Essential health and safety aspects identified in the previous review have not been met fully or not tackled at all and health and safety guidance is not provided to students.** For example, there are no explicit procedures or designated staff to supervise students being dropped off or picked up at the institute's entrance area, which is on a busy main road. Items in two storerooms are not safely stored and some parts of the ceiling's decor in two classrooms are not firmly secured. The designated emergency exit door does not lead to an assembly point and there are insufficient signs leading to the exit door. Classrooms remain without any guidance notices on emergency evacuation.
- **Varying needs of students are insufficiently accommodated.** Although, generally, the less able students are suitably supported in most classes, the more able are not normally challenged or provided with additional activities.
- **Insufficient development of students' English communication skills.** The majority of students are not developing appropriate communication skills in the English tutorial lessons although the weakest students make sufficient progress generally to enable them to pass their school English language examinations
- **Dilapidated, cramped and uninspiring environment with insufficient facilities and teaching resources.** Many parents and students find the general condition of the premises and facilities in need of maintenance and upgrading



although since the last review, classrooms have been painted, extra lighting added and some carpets and curtains replaced. However, the classrooms are still dull, uninspiring and lack motivating and educational posters. Bathrooms and some walls are dilapidated.

- **Lack of effective self-evaluation and strategic planning.** While the provider, this time, has succeeded in identifying a number of areas for improvement as listed in the SEF, the self-assessment process remains uncritical and has very limited input from staff and teachers. The approach Al Hayat takes to strategic planning is not based on a thorough analysis of various performance data and feedback. A basic plan for 2011 was produced on the last day of the review but it lacks essential details.
- **Management has limited communication with parents especially related to students' progress.** Although Al Hayat continues to maintain an appropriate relationship with charities within the local community, the institute's communication with parents remains limited as far as students' progress is concerned.
- **Performance data related to students' progress, observation of teachers and various feedback are not analysed or actioned.** The provider only just started collecting students' progress data on tutorial courses and generally, records are not yet adequate to carry out any useful analysis. While feedback from students has recently been collected in a more representative way, parents' feedback remains insufficient and nothing has been done with the recently aggregated data of this feedback. Similarly, the observation of teachers and the use of the associated feedback is limited.

## Recommendations

In order to improve, Al Hayat should:

- as a matter of urgency, tackle the missing health and safety aspects and provide effective health and safety guidance to all students
- ensure the varying needs of students are accommodated
- ensure that all students progress well in English language courses
- improve the physical and learning resources to promote effective learning

- carry out critical self-evaluation and detailed strategic planning
- devise a system to report to parents their children's progress
- collect, aggregate and analyse various performance data and make effective use of it to improve the provision.