



الهيئة الوطنية
للمؤهلات وضمان جودة التعليم والتدريب
National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**Prestige Training Human Resources
Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 7-9 October 2013

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The Directorate of Vocational Reviews

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. Established to raise standards in vocational education and training, the DVR 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 DVR'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 four-point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
1: Outstanding	This describes provision or an outcome that is/are at least good in all aspects and outstanding in the majority.
2: Good	This describes provision or an outcome that is/are at least satisfactory in all aspects and good in the majority. There may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
3: Satisfactory	This describes a basic level of adequacy. There are no major areas of weakness which substantially affect what learners, or significant groups of learners, achieve. There may be some features which are good.
4: Inadequate	This describes situations where major weaknesses in some areas affect the outcomes for learners and outweigh any strength in the provision.

Introduction

Description of the provision

Prestige Training Human resources Institute (Prestige Institute) was established in 2002 and is licensed by the Ministry of Labour. It offers short non-accredited courses in human resources, career development, personal development, sales & marketing and supervision & management. The institute enrolled 33 and 15 learners in 2011 and 2012, respectively and 26 learners up to the time of review in 2013.

Prestige Institute has one centre, currently based in Manama and is operated by a team consisting of a managing director, a quality manager, a training coordinator, a marketing officer, an administrator and an executive secretary. The institute has a pool of trainers consisting of one full-time and five part-time trainers.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over a three-day period, by a team of three reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed sessions, analysed data about the courses, examined learners' written and other work, studied documents and materials provided by the institute and met with staff, learners, employers and trainers. Sessions were also observed prior to the review days.

In the previous review, the overall effectiveness was judged as inadequate as were the quality of programmes, the support and guidance and leadership and management, whereas, the quality of training was judged as satisfactory. The institute did not have sufficient evidence to be used for judging learners' achievement.

This report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what the provider should do to improve.

Table of review judgements awarded

Overall Effectiveness	
How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the full range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Learners' Achievement	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Quality of Provision	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all students?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The overall effectiveness of Prestige Institute is satisfactory, as are all aspects of its provision, with the majority of learners gaining appropriate skills and knowledge. The provided training improves learners' attitude and awareness towards their work. This is a result of using an effective range of training techniques and activities to engage and motivate learners through open discussion and questioning techniques. Learners are trained by experienced trainers, as well as being adequately supported by the management and trainers before and during the course. Most trainers use suitable forms of assessment, such as pre- and post-course tests, direct and open questioning and short quizzes to check learners' understanding and progress. The institute offers an appropriate range of business and management and soft skills courses. The offered courses are appropriately planned, structured and sufficiently resourced to meet the needs of stakeholders. The institute's learning environment is fit for purpose and proper health and safety policy and procedure are in place. Arrangements for the delivery of courses are flexible to suit the needs of learners and stakeholders.

The strategic and operational plans and the quality assurance manual are recently developed by the institute and the effect of their implementation is yet to be seen. The institute has a system to assess learners' prior attainment, and monitor and analyse learners' achievement. Adequate arrangements for collecting, analysing and acting on the views of learners and employers are in place. The quality of training is evaluated occasionally through session observation; however the feedback provided to trainers is neither detailed nor critical.

The institute has a satisfactory capacity to improve. The management has taken a number of improvement initiatives including the implementation of an internal quality assurance as to ensure the quality of the provision and is working with a consultant firm on developing and implementing a total quality management system for the institute. The institute worked on improving the available learning resources by introducing smart boards in classrooms with the support of the Labour Fund (Tamkeen). The institute maintains good relationships with stakeholders and appropriately addresses concerns raised by the learners and their employers.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The majority of the learners at Prestige Institute are gaining appropriate skills and knowledge, improving their attitude and gaining more awareness of issues relevant to their work as a result of attending courses at the institute. The observed sessions, learners and employers feedbacks and the available progress records show that the majority of learners are making at least satisfactory progress through pre- and post-course tests, class activity and interacting with trainers and class-mates. However, few learners are not always accomplishing the course objectives. All learners receive attendance certificate after attending a minimum of 70% of the total course hours. Records show that all learners satisfied attendance requirements and hence, received their certificate.

The institute has a policy that requires all provided courses to have pre- and post-course tests. The pre- and post-course tests used during the period of this review covers, varied in content and level; however, these were sufficient to measure individual learner's attainment against the course objectives. For the courses offered in 2011 and 2012 courses, the pre-course test was simple with emphases on questioning related to personal issues and previous knowledge while the post- course test was shorter and focused on the course objectives. In 2013 courses, the pre- and post-course tests were exactly the same with ample focus on course objectives which enabled the institute to measure better learners' attainment and the progress they made from their starting point which revealed overall satisfactory progress. Also, from the good observed sessions, learners are making good level of progress.

Interviews with learners and observations of sessions indicate that most learners take pride in their work. They are self-motivated and enjoy their courses. In addition to working in groups, learners are provided sometimes with opportunities to work independently especially on class activities. However, only few learners were able to reflect critically on how well they are progressing and plan for improvement without the aid of the trainers.

The institute has a clear policy on attendance and punctuality and keeps records of learners' attendance and punctuality. According to the sessions observed and the attendance records of the last three years, attendance and retention rates are high at around 100% for almost all courses. The vast majority of learners attended on time. However, from the sessions observed, there were few cases of learners arriving 10 to 30 minutes late. The institute's punctuality policy states that if learners are late by one hour in any session, they will not be permitted to attend that session, whereas, no such cases were recorded by the institute.

The quality of provision

How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Trainers have significant years of experience relevant to the field they train in. From the observed sessions, trainers deploy their experiences through an effective range of training techniques and activities such as open discussions, videos, and questioning techniques; which succeeds in engaging and motivating most of the learners. Learners have expressed their satisfaction with trainers' knowledge of their subject matter. The training methods used in the sessions observed rely on learners-centred approach in which learners are encouraged to take an active role in the open discussions and group activities. Learners are also encouraged to ask as well as answer questions. Furthermore, most trainers use sufficient forms of assessment, such as pre- and post- course tests, in addition to direct and open questioning or short quizzes conducted during the sessions to check learners' understanding and progress. Trainers provide adequate oral feedback, whereas, an appropriate written feedback is given on classwork activities. From the sessions' observed and the learners feedback, most sessions start on time with an effective recap of the previous session and sharing of current session's objectives. Whilst the session plan documentations are not detailed sufficiently, the observed sessions were timely and efficiently managed. This was confirmed by the outcomes of learners' feedback. Learners' different needs are accommodated and catered sufficiently during the lessons. However, sessions are insufficiently based on the outcomes of the assessment of learners' prior attainments.

In some courses, trainers maintain appropriate records of learners' progress, which includes the grades of the pre- and post-course tests. However, the institute does not enforce a systematic method requiring trainers to evaluate and monitor learners' achievement. However, in some cases learners' progress are shared with them and communicated to their employers on a regular basis through adequately detailed progress report. Appropriate ranges of learning resources are used in the classrooms such as data show, whiteboard, flip-charts and relevant hand-outs and materials.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Prestige Institute offers a range of business and management, as well as soft skills courses which meet the needs of both employers and learners adequately. All these courses are internally designed non-accredited courses and of short and very short duration extending between three to five days. The institute is authorised by the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) to offer courses related to leadership and management, however, this authorisation has not been utilised until the time of this review. The current courses provided by institute are appropriately planned, structured and sufficiently resourced to meet the needs of stakeholders. Most learners interviewed are satisfied with the variety and range of courses offered. Course structure and material are modified and updated according to learners and employer's needs. An example of that is the Stress Management course, which was customised to meet the requirements of the public health. Courses are supplied appropriately with the relevant resources to support the learners; such as PowerPoint presentations, hand-out and relevant materials. However, courses offered by the institute are not adequately supported by extra-curriculum activities.

The majority of courses offered by the institute are based on data collected through a simple form used to conduct Training Need Analysis (TNA) of local companies. The TNA form consists of a list of courses offered by the institute which employers are invited to select from. Tamkeen Market Gap Analysis reports and their findings are another source the institute utilises to offer courses required by the market, such as SHRM course.

How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The institute's management, trainers and staff members are approachable, cooperative and supportive before and during the courses and whenever approached by prospective learners. Learners' feedback indicates that they are satisfied with support provided by the institute's management and trainers. On the first day of any course, learners are provided with appropriate induction programme which includes initial information about the institute, the venue facilities, health and safety procedure, the course outline and its daily agenda. An adequate course outlines, contents and plans are shared with stakeholders in advance. However, these are not provided always in-advance to the self-supported learners. The institute has a proper system for tracking learners' progress and attendance. For learners supported by employers, individual learner's report is produced and shared with learners and employers efficiently and timely. These reports include individual learning plan which is customised for each learner, based on the outcomes of the pre- and post-course tests and a one-to-one personal interview customized to each learner, with negotiated learning plan, which highlights the progress made by each learner on a daily basis and their attendance. However, for self-supported learner's only verbal feedback on their progress are provided during the classes.

The institute is flexible enough in arranging the courses to accommodate the stakeholders' training needs in terms of the structure of the course and its timing. Since 2010, the institute has maintained a fit for purpose Facebook account which is used as a communication media with learners and employers. At the time of the review visit, the institute finalised and launched an informative, user-friendly and well-structured website giving access to relevant information and course-related materials and learners' data, as well as Moodle facility. Also, it recently launched institute's accounts in social media such as Twitter and Instagram to reach out to its stakeholders.

The institute's learning environment is fit for purpose and arrangements for the delivery of course are flexible to suit the needs of learners and stakeholders. Training is carried out either at the institute's premises or in different hospitality venues. However, the institute's learning environment is not inspiring, whereas, the study rooms are small, with uncomfortable tables.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The institute has developed recently adequate strategic and operational plans in addition to a quality assurance manual. However, the effects of these are yet to be seen. The institute's vision and mission statements are detailed and focused on learners' achievements. These statements are shared amongst almost all staff members and trainers and are displayed in the institute. The institute has a defined roles and responsibilities for each position within the structure and the current management structure is adequate considering the number of enrolled learners and the type of courses offered. However, the limited number of courses offered by the institute and the institute's human resources are not supporting the institution in achieving its mission. Moreover, there are a number of key positions within the current management structure, such as the academic teaching and training manager and quality manager, populated temporarily by the quality consultant team.

The institute recruits from a pool of experienced local part-time trainers. Trainers are inducted and deployed according to their area of expertise. An appropriate induction programme is carried out for new staff members and trainers. Occasional meetings, attended by both management and trainers, are conducted to reflect on improvements needed. Trainers' performance in class was monitored occasionally in 2011 and 2012. However, no session observation was carried out in 2013. Moreover, the outcomes of those session observation and the feedback to trainers were neither detailed nor significant. Yearly performance appraisals are carried out for the administrative staff only, and are subsequently provided with opportunities for in-house training.

The institute has an adequate policy stating that all courses should have a pre-course test. Arrangements used to assess prior attainment are documented, and in most cases the structure of the pre- assessment exercises is relevant to the course content. However, the pre-assessment policy does not clearly specify how the outcomes of these assessments are used in session planning. Records of learners' achievement for most courses are maintained, aggregated, verified and analysed by the management. The management act on the analysis, nevertheless, these actions are neither detailed nor critical. Recently the institute implemented a verification process for some courses; however the impact of these activities is yet to be seen on the quality of course delivery and the assessments.

The institute has formal and useful links with local stakeholder and the relevant sectors of the community, in addition to some international institutions. Prestige Institute uses

appropriate questionnaires, which are completed by the learners and employers at the end of each course. Learners' feedback about the institute indicates that they are generally satisfied with the attended courses and their achievements. Notwithstanding the above, learners stated in their feedback, that to improve the provision, the institute needs to expand the time of courses, renovate the place with bigger classes and have more parking facilities. The outcomes of these questionnaires are analysed by the management and used adequately to improve the provision.

The institute's premises are safe; proper health and safety policy and procedure are in place, and adequate risk assessment is carried out on periodic basis. Two staff members are trained to handle health and safety issues, however, these staff members not always available in the institute. The provider's self-evaluation form submitted for this review is prepared through a group work and contains the relevant evidence to support its judgement. However, the grades provided by institute overestimates its real status.

The provider's key strengths

- Most learners are self-motivated and enjoying their learning experience
- Most sessions start on time with sharing session objectives with learners and are managed effectively
- The institute has useful formal links with local stakeholder and the relevant sectors of the community, in addition to some international institutions.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Prestige Institute should:

- develop a clear criteria to evaluate learners' achievement and ensure that these are utilized by the trainers
- improve effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that session observations are carried out consistently for all courses
 - ensure that the outcome of pre-course assessment are utilised effectively
 - recruit specialised staff to fill the current temporary occupied positions within the organisation structure.
- enrich the programmes with extracurricular activities.