



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

# **Directorate of Vocational Reviews**

## **Review Report**

**National Institute for Industrial Training**  
**Al Hidd Industrial Area**  
**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 9-12 October 2017**

VO046-C3-R070

## Table of Contents

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<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Grading scale .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Table of review judgements awarded.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Review judgements .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Overall effectiveness .....	2
Capacity to improve.....	3
Learners' achievement .....	4
The quality of provision .....	5
Leadership, management and governance .....	8
<b>The provider's key strengths .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Recommendations.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Description of the provision.....	12

## Introduction

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The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over four days by a team of five 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 Institute and met with learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

In the previous review, the overall effectiveness of the National Institute for Industrial Training (NIIT) was judged as satisfactory, as were all aspects of its provision including the capacity to improve except for quality of programmes and support and guidance which were judged as good.

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

## Grading scale

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

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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	Inadequate (4)
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Satisfactory (3)</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Satisfactory (3)</b>

## Review judgements

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### 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 National Institute for Industrial Training (NIIT) is satisfactory, as are all aspects of its provision except that of effectiveness of leadership and management which is judged as inadequate. The leadership and management fail to meet the required standards due to frequent change of the management team, full-time trainers and staff, which has a negative impact on the Institute's continuous improvement plans and the effectiveness of the quality assurance (QA) system. The current management and staff members are managing the day-to-day operations to a suitable standard. However, performance monitoring of learners and trainers remains ineffective and is insufficiently carried out. Strategic planning is adequate, but is ineffectively monitored.

Learners gain and develop vocational abilities, knowledge and competences in the fields of engineering and soft skills. The vast majority make sufficient progress considering their prior knowledge. However, in the short courses a minority do not master the required skills upon completing their courses/units and their progress is minimal. Training sessions are engaging for the majority of learners, who display a positive attitude towards their learning. The vast majority enrolled in the local completion courses achieve the course requirements and receive their certificates in a timely manner. Although the majority of learners in the externally accredited programmes achieve the qualifications they aim for, a minority do not succeed at the first attempt. Learners are provided with adequate support and guidance which helps them improve but, not necessarily to reach their full potential or achieve the best outcomes.

The Institute has a safe, fit-for-purpose and appropriately equipped learning environment, though the workshops are not very pleasant. Local market needs are adequately reviewed and the outcomes are properly used to inform the provision. The externally accredited programmes are well planned, structured and designed with specified content according to the international requirements and standards of Pearson/Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) qualifications. The majority of short courses are appropriately planned and structured to meet stakeholder and learners' requirements. However, the mechanisms for designing, updating and reviewing are not sufficiently systematic, and the relevant policies and procedures are not sufficiently detailed or holistic to cover all the courses' components. The courses are delivered by qualified trainers who use their professional experience to enrich training through providing practical real-life examples while deploying an adequate range of

training methodologies and learning resources to facilitate learning. However, in a minority of the observed sessions, trainers did not sufficiently engage learners throughout the session. Formative and summative assessment methods are used to evaluate learners' understanding and measure the achievement of course objectives, though in a few courses these are not sufficiently rigorous. Learners' final attainment is appropriately recorded, but insufficient records are kept throughout the courses regarding learners' ongoing performance. Also, these records are not aggregated or analysed to monitor trends over time.

## **Capacity to improve**

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

#### **Grade: Satisfactory (3)**

NIIT's capacity to improve is satisfactory. The current management team and staff members are qualified and have a vision focused on improving the provision further. The new management team has carried out a range of development initiatives, including getting Pearson/BTEC approved status after it was withdrawn from the Institute in 2015. Although, a number of specialised courses discontinued since the last review, the institute's offerings have been re-developed in 2017 by introducing new courses and programmes such as 'Callan Method English Course' and 'Pearson/BTEC International Level 2 Extended Certificate in Construction/Carpentry', which have been conducted several times. There are plans to establish partnerships with additional international awarding bodies in order to offer further accredited courses and services, mainly in engineering. There is also a proposal to introduce a bridging course to raise the level of learners' attainment in the externally accredited programmes, though the impact cannot yet be measured. The number of enrolments has dramatically dropped in 2016 compared to 2015, but has increased back to its normal level in 2017. Overall, adequate repeat business has been maintained over the past five years. The organisational structure based on the current enrolment is fit for purpose, although it has been downsized. Moreover, the Institute has access to a pool of experienced and qualified trainers and has suitable physical resources. A basic SWOT analysis was conducted and resulted in the development of a suitable recovery plan in 2015 to address the identified key areas for improvement; this has been suitably implemented. Overall, the self-evaluation process is proper, though it is not comprehensive and is not regularly carried out to trigger continuous improvement. The Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) submitted for this review is fairly informative, but grades are overestimated. Moreover, the previous BQA review recommendations have not been fully addressed.

## **Learners' achievement**

### **How well do learners achieve?**

#### **Grade: Satisfactory (3)**

Learners gain adequate knowledge and develop relevant vocational abilities and competences in the fields of engineering and soft skills. This is evident from learners' assessment results and their contributions and level of understanding in the observed sessions. However, a minority of learners have difficulty in completing the tasks required by the programme and course levels, and thereby of reaching the expected standards in their chosen course. Learners' performance and skills development are appropriately measured using a range of formative and summative assessment tools.

According to the analysis of the Learners' Performance Data (LPD), the overall success rate across the provision is 87%. The long externally accredited programmes, which constitute around 84% of the total enrolment, include different engineering specialisations within the Pearson/BTEC qualifications. These programmes comprise several units in which clear grading criteria are used to evaluate learners' attainment. The lowest passing grade is 'Pass', while the 'Merit' and 'Distinction' grades indicate higher levels of performance in the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills. Learners have to pass all the units in order to get the qualifications. The standard of learners' work in these programmes indicates an adequate level of performance. Learners mostly achieve the minimum pass grade across the units and within the programme level. Though the vast majority of learners make sufficient progress throughout their studies and successfully achieve the units' requirements, a minority do not achieve the qualifications they aim for. The vast majority of learners enrolled in the local short courses complete the course requirements and achieve the course objectives. Comparison between the pre- and post-course assessments in these courses reveals that the vast majority of learners make sufficient progress from their prior attainment. However, a minority gain only minimal added value from the courses.

The vast majority of learners are attentive and demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. On the other hand, learners are not always self-motivated and only a minority adequately demonstrate their level of understanding through questioning their trainers and sharing relevant examples. Although the Assessment Feedback Form provides learners with an opportunity to reflect on their learning, the learners' comments section is rarely filled in. Moreover, in the few completed forms, learners do not critically assess their strengths, weaknesses or set out their own plans for improvement. While the majority of learners are able to work independently and collaboratively during the in-class and practical activities, a minority remain dependent on trainers' directions and support to move forward and complete the given tasks. NIIT has a written policy on attendance and punctuality, which is

suitably implemented. Attendance is always recorded and the vast majority of learners attend on a regular basis. Nonetheless, punctuality is inconsistently recorded and was an issue during the observed sessions.

## **The quality of provision**

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

#### **Grade: Satisfactory (3)**

Trainers are knowledgeable and have relevant theoretical and practical command of their specialisms. This shows in their accurate explanations, responses to learners' questions and enrichment of the course delivery with a range of vocationally-related examples and real-life cases to link theory with practice. Trainers use a clear scheme of work for each unit, along with daily basic lesson plans. Standardised formats are used in lesson planning, which are suitably structured; however these plans are insufficiently informed by the outcomes of prior attainment or continuous assessment of learners. The vast majority of the observed sessions were appropriately managed; they mostly started on time with useful recapitulation of the previously covered material and sharing the current session's objectives. An adequate range of training methods and activities are used which are suitable in engaging and motivating the majority of learners. These include lectures, PowerPoint presentations, open discussions, in-class activities, practical exercises and role-play. Yet, in some instances a minority of learners were not sufficiently engaged throughout the session. Trainers accommodate learners' varying needs appropriately, particularly for the less able learners who need support, by providing more explanations, clarifications and simplifying the language used in delivery. However, the more able learners are not always sufficiently challenged. Trainers occasionally use approaches that enhance learners' critical thinking by further questioning techniques and the effective use of case studies. They also encourage self-learning, specifically in the engineering programmes, by giving learners the opportunity to search the Internet for more information relevant to their studies. The available learning resources and materials are used appropriately to ensure a smooth delivery of training.

Learners' levels of understanding and their abilities to complete the in-class activities are suitably assessed through a variety of formative assessments such as targeted and open questioning techniques, practical activities and exercises. A range of summative assessment methods is used to measure learners' individual attainment, such as the post-course tests in the local completion courses. For the externally accredited programmes, appropriate practical and theoretical assessment methods are used which link well to the specified learning objectives; these are verified by both internal and external verifiers. However, the review team found a few cases where the marking of assessments for both the local courses and the

externally accredited units were not rigorous, and the Institute lacks a clear written rubric for some courses. On the other hand, NIIT recently developed a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS), though it is still not implemented so its effectiveness cannot yet be measured. Although trainers maintain records of learners' final attainment, including the scored marks in their pre- and post-course assessments for the majority of the short courses and the achieved grade for units within the programme, the Institute has limited records of formative assessment carried throughout the course/unit. Trainers regularly provide instant and useful verbal feedback to help learners improve. However, the written feedback provided on learners' assignments or on their performance reports is not always constructive enough and does not precisely focus on where learners can improve further.

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

#### **Grade: Satisfactory (3)**

NIIT provides training in engineering and a variety of soft skills for the workplace. Most programmes (84%) are externally accredited, with a suitable range of local completion short courses which meet the requirements of learners and employers. The Institute is also approved to deliver short externally accredited English courses following the Callan Method system. The customised externally accredited programmes in Engineering and soft skills offered by the Institute are relevant, based on an understanding of learners' needs and employers' requirements and are identified through a fit-for-purpose Training Needs Analysis (TNA). However, the Institute lacks a holistic approach for analysing the labour market needs. NIIT has a basic policy and procedure for admission of learners to the different programmes. For the externally accredited programmes it has a screening process to ensure that candidates have the required basic knowledge and experience to be admitted to the various programmes. Learners in these programmes are supported with additional units to support them in their learning journey, such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and English. However, the admission criteria for the local completion courses are not always specified clearly.

The externally accredited programmes in engineering are well planned and structured, with specified content and the expected learning outcomes according to the awarding bodies' requirements. The internally designed materials used for these programmes are appropriate, being reviewed and updated frequently by the trainers and checked by the head of trainers and/or the internal verifier. The local completion short courses, which represent 16% of the total number of courses, are adequately planned and structured with detailed course outlines. These are suitably designed and are reviewed and updated occasionally or upon the request of stakeholders. However, the structure of assessments in a few courses is not always mapped to properly cover the course objectives. The Institute has a basic procedure for curriculum



development of new local completion short courses and for updating the current ones. There is a brief policy and procedure for training and unit evaluations with descriptions of responsibilities of the staff involved in the evaluation process. However, the relevant mechanism to design, approve and update the programmes and courses within the Institute is not sufficiently systematic or comprehensive.

The courses/programmes are suitably resourced to meet the learners' and stakeholders' needs. However, the learning materials are not always provided to learners. The computer laboratory is suitably equipped, but the resources particularly within the workshops are limited and the recently established workshop is lacking some main machines and the allocated area doesn't cater for the enrolled number of learners. As a supporting activity, NIIT offers On the Job Training (OJT) for all learners enrolled in the externally accredited programmes in Engineering, which is considered as adequate extra curricula activities to enrich learners' experience. The short courses are only supported with limited but relevant extra curricula activities.

### **How well are learners supported and guided?**

#### **Grade: Satisfactory (3)**

Through a fit-for-purpose support and guidance mechanism, the Institute has adequate arrangements to support learners in overcoming any learning difficulties. However, the support provided is not sufficiently systematic and is not derived from a comprehensive support policy. There are basic procedures to support learners, including those with special needs, to achieve better outcomes. Learners and stakeholders have access to information about the courses/programmes on offer, through various means such as the Institute's website, promotional brochures and posts on social media applications such as Instagram. However, the website is not frequently updated. Staff respond to stakeholders' enquiries through telephone calls and emails. Occasional visits are carried out to technical schools where an introductory presentation about the Institute is shared with learners. Prior to the start of a course, initial interviews with potential learners are conducted during which they are advised and guided on programme selection to best suit their interests and abilities. Learners are provided with an induction session at the start of their training to familiarise them with aspects relevant to their learning. This includes general information about the programme on which they are enrolled, assessments' methods, the institute's rules and regulations, and health and safety arrangements; all these are included in the learners' handbook, which is shared with learners. During the training, learners have access to approachable and supportive administrative staff and trainers who provide appropriate academic support and guidance. Planned tutorial sessions are provided within the structure of the programmes for learners who needed extra support. Upon completion of the programmes, appropriate guidance on Curriculum Vitae (CV) preparation and job interviews are provided, as well as

offering available employment opportunities with different stakeholders. The Institute has suitable arrangements to support learners with physical disabilities.

Generally, NIIT has flexible arrangements for the delivery of courses to suit the convenience of learners and stakeholders. These include the choice of venues, timings, dates and delivery language. NIIT maintains communication with stakeholders by informing them on learners' attendance and attainment upon course completion. Individual performance reports are shared upon request. The Institute has a fit-for-purpose learning environment with suitable facilities which are adequately equipped with the necessary learning aids and resources to deliver the courses. However, the workshops are not well ventilated and air-conditioned.

## **Leadership, management and governance**

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

#### **Grade: Inadequate (4)**

The Institute has shared vision and mission statements which are focused on business positioning and improving the quality of the training. A business plan was developed for the period from 2012 to 2015, which is focused on the growth of the business financially, with no explicit focus on raising learners' achievement. Since 2015, the new management team has carried out a strategic planning process based on a basic SWOT analysis. This has resulted in developing a useful business recovery plan. Also, an institutional plan covering 2017-2020 is available which has a set of relevant aims. Although, the yearly operational plan for 2017 has a number of actions to which clear ownerships are assigned, it is not well-structured or properly linked to the institutional plan. Moreover, a number of the stated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are neither well defined nor clearly mapped to ensure the rigorousness of performance monitoring and achievement of these plans. The self-evaluation process is adequate. Academic meetings are regularly conducted to discuss only the relevant issues in the Pearson/BTEC programmes, with the outcomes generally being used to inform the provision. However, an inclusive self-evaluation process is not regularly carried out to trigger continuous improvement. The SEF submitted for the review is fairly informative, though the judgments overestimate the performance of the Institute.

NIIT has inadequate systems to quality assure the provision. While a set of QA policies and procedures are in place, these are not sufficiently detailed and there are none for monitoring trainers' performance and learners' achievement. Moreover, those available are not well implemented. The Institute lacks holistic moderation and verification processes; the current processes, although implemented effectively, only cover the summative assessments for the

Pearson/BTEC units as a requirement of the awarding body. Programmes have no clear mechanisms in place to measure learners' prior attainment in each unit. Furthermore, learners' achievement is insufficiently monitored; though adequate records on learners' final attainment are kept for various courses and programmes, these are not aggregated nor further analysed for future improvement.

The current organisational structure is fit-for-purpose and meets the Institute's aims considering the size of the Institute and the range of courses/programmes offered. Clear roles and allocated responsibilities for staff are in place. Senior management and staff members are qualified and have relevant experience. The Institute has a Board of Directors where the governance arrangements are adequately involved in setting NIIT's strategic directions and decision making. Qualified trainers are recruited and suitably inducted and deployed. However, trainers' performance is ineffectively monitored, with only full-time trainers being occasionally monitored through an internal lesson observation process. Even then some of the completed internal observation forms are neither critical nor informative. Staff performance appraisals are in place and a range of development opportunities are provided. Learners' and employers' feedback about the provision is regularly gathered, aggregated, analysed and sometimes acted upon. NIIT maintains links with stakeholders and relevant part of the community, and has a number of partnerships with international awarding bodies and memorandums of understanding (MOU) with local and international partners.

The premises are free from obvious hazards and essential health and safety measures are in place. The relevant policies and documentation are sufficiently detailed, with regular risk assessment and periodic fire drills being carried out.

## The provider's key strengths

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- The qualified trainers who use their professional experience to enrich learning.
- The well-structured and planned externally accredited programmes which are internally designed, updated and reviewed to match the specific needs of learners and employers in line with the awarding bodies' requirements.

## Recommendations

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### **In order to improve, NIIT should:**

- ensure that learners further develop relevant knowledge, vocational skills and competences, and achieve their course objectives and the qualifications they aim for in a timely manner
- ensure that records of learners' performance are fully maintained throughout the courses/programmes, being closely monitored and analysed to inform decision making for improvement
- improve the internal quality assurance systems to include more comprehensive policies and procedures, ensuring continuous monitoring of the overall performance of trainers and the provision
- enhance the learning environment, particularly the workshops, to be more inspiring and extend the range of resources and equipment to match industrial standards.

## Appendix

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### Description of the provision

The National Institute for Industrial Training (NIIT) was established in 2006 as a joint venture between 53 shareholders. It is licensed by the Ministry of Labour & Social Development (MoLSD). The Institute caters for adult learners, most of them being graduates from technical secondary schools while some are employed or unemployed job-seekers. The Institute operates as an approved Pearson/BTEC Centre to offer training in vocational programmes, most of these currently being at Level 2 in engineering including electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, motor vehicle engineering and construction carpentry. The Institute is also approved to deliver short external accredited English courses following the Callan Method system. Other local short completion courses are on offer including corporate training in soft skills and engineering courses. These are usually customised, based on clients' specific needs and requirements. Most of these courses are of short or very short duration. NIIT is also an authorised training institute for a number of awarding bodies such as The Welding Institute (TWI), Institute of Motor Industry (IMI), Agora Training Services and Vocational Skills Academy (VSA).

The Institute operates from a single branch in Al Hidd Industrial Area in the Bahrain International Investment Park (BIIP) where it mainly delivers its courses/programmes, with only a few being held at employers' premises. The organisational structure consists of a chief executive officer, an executive secretary, a registrar who reports to a head of operations, a sales coordinator who reports to a business development manager, a finance manager, and an information technology coordinator who is also in charge of the maintenance and support staff. All staff are employed on a full-time basis. The Institute employs a head of trainers and five full-time trainers and has access to a pool of part-time trainers who are used as and when needed.

The Institute has enrolled a total of 9,600 learners in different courses and units since BQA's last review. These comprise 1,991 in 2013, 2,821 in 2014, 1,990 in 2015, 761 in 2016 and 2,037 in 2017 up to the date of this review. Most learners enrolled are sponsored by their employers or Tamkeen. The externally accredited programmes constitute 84% of the total enrolment number for the past five years, most of them being in the field of engineering. The remaining 16% are enrolled in the local completion courses in various areas of soft skills and engineering.