



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

Vocational Review Unit Review Report

**Arabian East Training Center
Tubli
Kingdom of Bahrain**

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The Vocational Review Unit

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 four-point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
1: Outstanding	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all aspects and outstanding in the majority.
2: Good	This describes provision or outcomes 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 strengths in the provision.

Introduction

Description of the provision

Arabian East Training Centre (AETC) was established in 2000. The centre is licenced by the Ministry of Labour (MOL) to offer vocationally related courses in the area of health and safety. Most of the courses on offer are externally accredited by international awarding bodies such as the National Examination Board on Occupational Health and Safety (NEBOSH), the National Safety Council (NSC), the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), MEDIC First Aid and have recently started offering International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) courses. The centre also offers a range of non-accredited courses. During 2011, the centre had 1802 learners enrolled on various courses. All learners are either employed and are sponsored by their corporate or job seekers who are sponsored by Tamkeen.

The centre operates from one location in Tubli, where the majority of courses are conducted. The centre is managed by a team that includes a managing director who is also the owner, a marketing manager, five administration staff, five full-time trainers and a number of part-time trainers utilised as required.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over four days, by a team of four reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed training sessions, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and the materials provided by the centre and talked with staff, learners, employers and trainers.

In the previous review, overall effectiveness was judged as satisfactory as was learners' achievement, the quality of training, support provided to learners, leadership and management and capacity to improve. The quality of the programmes offered was judged as good.

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

Table of review judgments awarded

Overall Effectiveness	
How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the full range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?	Grade 1: Outstanding
Learners' Achievement	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade 1 :Outstanding
Quality of Provision	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	Grade 2: Good
How well do courses meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	Grade 1: Outstanding
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	Grade 1: Outstanding
Leadership and Management	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all students?	Grade 1: Outstanding

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 1 outstanding

The overall effectiveness of Arabian East Training Centre (AETC) is outstanding, as are the learners' achievement, quality of programmes, support and guidance and leadership and management. The effectiveness of training was judged as good. Almost all learners gain the relevant qualifications that they are aiming for in the health and safety field. Their attainment and progress is well above average on most courses. Virtually all learners develop a broad range of vocationally-related skills and knowledge that are suitable to their level and most use them effectively at their workplace. Learners benefit significantly from the very effective training they receive from the highly qualified and experienced trainers, who use highly stimulating teaching methodologies and a wide range of enrichment activities during sessions. Learners select from an impressive range of well-structured externally accredited programmes with highly reputable international partners. Programmes closely match the needs and aspirations of learners and the local market. The centre provides a highly effective and inspiring learning environment that is complemented by well-structured, effective and readily available support and guidance. The management has detailed strategic and operational plans in place which focus on continuous improvement and are based on the views of local stakeholders. Learners' performance and progress is continually and systematically monitored.

AETC has outstanding capacity to improve further. The management has undergone significant improvements since the last review and has addressed all the recommendations very well. Enrollment during 2011 has significantly increased over the previous year, mainly on the externally accredited courses, which have increased in number over this period to continue to meet learners' and local market needs. The centre has also increased their affiliation with international accreditation bodies to provide this wider range of externally accredited courses. The centre has moved to larger premises in Tubli with a better learning environment and the centre has employed more highly qualified full-time trainers and administration staff. These initiatives have resulted in significant improvements in learners' achievements and success rates over the past three years.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 1 outstanding

Overall, learners' achievement at AETC is outstanding. Learners achieve extremely well as almost all learners achieve the qualifications they aim for and successfully meet the learning objectives of their programmes. During 2011, learners' attainment on all externally accredited courses was very high, ranging from 90 to 96 per cent which is above international pass rates. This represents approximately 80 per cent of courses on offer at AETC. On the NEBOSH international general certificate in occupational health and safety courses, some unit results are well above international pass rates. Likewise, pass rates during 2011 on the non-accredited courses was exceptionally high at almost 100 per cent.

Learners develop a high standard in the relevant vocational skills in the field of health and safety and can confidently apply the skills gained at their workplace. Most learners make considerable progress from their starting points and gain employability skills that prepare them very well for the next stage of their career. Some learners secured a job suitable to their profession while doing On the Job Training (OJT) at the institute. Employers interviewed have commended the progress made by their employees while taking up courses at AETC.

During the lessons observed, learners were effectively engaged and were able to work independently and confidently. Virtually all learners enjoy their learning experience at the centre and remain self-motivated. Learners are provided with opportunities for collaborative activities with their peers through effective and timely-managed group work; learners are able to complete their practical tasks in a timely manner and reflect positively on their own progress with little supervision from trainers.

Attendance on all courses at AETC is high at around 99 per cent during 2011. Records are kept and analysed on a regular basis. The centre keeps a comprehensive attendance and punctuality policy that is pursued thoroughly by trainers, however lateness is not always sufficiently challenged by trainers.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: 2 good

The effectiveness of training at AETC is good overall. All trainers are highly qualified and very experienced in the specialisations they teach. Most of the observed lessons were graded good or better. Almost all trainers use an enthusiastic training approach to engage and motivate all learners through a wide range of real and relevant vocational examples which produce good learning outcomes. During the observed lessons most trainers used a participative approach to link theory to practical life by the use of technical discussions, group work and practical activities that relate to their workplace. The methodology used focuses on the learner, continuously challenging and encouraging them and ensuring they are continuously engaged. Learners are given opportunities to reflect critically on issues, eventually enabling them to solve problems for themselves and make progress. The lessons observed were well planned, with effective class management and linkages to previous sessions.

All lessons start with clear objectives that are shared with learners and trainers maintain an effective focus on meeting individual needs throughout the session making appropriate reference to, and use of, individual prior attainment. The most successful lessons are supported by the effective deployment of attractive learning aids such as a smart-board, useful PowerPoint presentations, flip-charts, relevant pictures, videos and relevant vocational case studies. Learners' progress is assessed rigorously and their work is corrected with constructive verbal feedback either individually or as a group although insufficient feedback is provided on some learners' written work. AETC provides various types of assessment including mock examinations that help learners to prepare and achieve better in their final external examinations. This was reflected positively in the improvement in pass rates during 2011. AETC maintain and update comprehensive records of learners' progress for the long courses.

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

Grade: 1 outstanding

AETC have an excellent selection of health and safety courses which are mainly externally accredited supplemented with a few non-accredited courses provided to meet the specific needs of learners. The accredited programmes provide qualifications which are recognised internationally and meet the needs of learners and the local market. The majority of courses are designed to offer progression from basic to higher levels. In addition, the provider plans

a wide range of extra-curricular activities and their managing of work placement activities is exceptionally good. The management and academic committees review the courses and update them as required. The marketing department collects a varied range of data about local markets and this is analysed and used as an aid to planning courses.

There are a small number of non-accredited courses on offer which fulfills the need for specific, customised courses for individual clients. One such course was the “Electrical Hazards and Arc Flash” course which was designed from scratch based on recognised international standards. AETC also provide a range of extra-curricular activities to enhance learners’ experience. In the case of a “Heavy Lifting Safety” crane course, the centre actually hired and used a crane to supplement what was basically a theory course. Learners were thus able to gain firsthand practical knowledge and experience around a live crane.

The marketing department uses surveys, industrial visits, direct contact with employers and holds highly effective focus group meetings with employer’s representatives to determine precisely market needs. These are managed very effectively and are used to make changes, update programmes and scheduling. For example, in 2011 three new additional courses resulted from the surveys and an existing course was changed from one to three days to better match client’s needs. The centre provides high quality publications, PowerPoint presentations and examination materials. In addition the centre makes available extra learning materials such as DVDs and a library of publication, books and magazines for learners.

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

Grade: 1 outstanding

Outstanding and exemplary support and guidance is provided to learners to help them achieve better including additional tutorial classes, OJT and highly effective bridging courses. AETC provide excellent support to learners for their studies and on personal matters. Newly enrolled learners are effectively inducted by conducting a tour with them around the centre and providing them with a very informative learners’ booklet. For low achievers, extremely useful tutorial sessions are planned every Saturday as well as bridging courses offered for those with English language difficulties and to support newcomers to the health and safety field. These impact positively on learners’ performance. In addition, high quality mock examinations are provided free of charge to help learners prepare better for their external examinations. Employers receive details of course content and plans prior to the start of courses. Additionally, the centre also provides courses with flexible timings for learners who are in full-time employment.

AETC manages work placements very well with very useful “On the Job” log books and Standard Operating Procedures for OJT provided to all learners. Trainers review and judge

the work the learners show in their OJT books and provide informative and useful feedback. Distinguished learners are awarded with an honouring ceremony, for example one learner was given a special award for his exemplary work when completing the OJT logbook. Some learners are also sponsored to attend conferences and highly effective support is provided for those with special needs. AETC communicate very well with stakeholders and always keeps them informed on the progress of their employees. Learners and employers have good access to well-informed guidance about the programmes on offer such as updated brochures, a well-constructed and effective website and very useful connections to social media networks and a library. The centre's premises are safe, secure, very well maintained and provide an inspiring environment for learners. Additionally, the learner's resource centre is well equipped with a large LCD and a range of relevant DVDs and CDs.

Leadership and management

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

Grade: 1 outstanding

AETC's leadership and management use highly effective strategies based on a thorough SWOT analysis to run their centre. Plans are detailed with clear objectives focused on improving the quality of the provision further. Regular management, staff and academic committee meetings are held with discussion focusing on the improvement of learning outcomes. AETC have a systematic approach to recruit well-qualified trainers in the health and safety field. They are provided with a formal induction programme after they join the centre and their performance is closely monitored and provided with constructive feedback on a frequent basis. The centre's annual appraisal system is directly linked to a trainer's individual objectives. During the past two years almost all trainers were provided with ample development opportunities related to their specialization. As part of their internal quality assurance review process, the centre developed a range of appropriate quality indicators to continually assess and maintain the quality of their provision.

Records of learners' achievement are maintained and aggregated for each group, followed by a trend analysis that is shared by the management and vetted by the academic team. AETC test prior attainment of learners before accepting them on a particular course. Based on the results of the admission test AETC provide advice to the learner/employer if they fail the test, how to make the grade or to begin on a lower level course that is more suitable to their abilities. Evidence was provided that the centre rejected some learners based on poor assessment results. The views of employers are collected systematically, aggregated and analyzed thoroughly and identified issues are addressed swiftly and followed up. As part of their link with the relevant community, the centre has signed up to a memorandum of

understanding to help promote the “FIRST AIDER in every house” awareness campaign, with AETC’s role is to coordinate the programme. The centre’s health and safety policy and procedures are in place but, the centre does not conduct a risk assessment on a regular basis. The self-evaluation form (SEF) is highly critical, informative and well supported by relevant data and analysis identifying closely most areas for improvement. In addition, the grades are very accurate. AETC seeks learners’ views after the end of each course; through learners’ surveys and telephonic discussion, the outcome being summarised and a detailed report shared with employers.

The provider's key strengths

- Almost all learners develop very good standards of vocational skills in the health and safety specialisations and confidently use these skills at their workplace
- Most learners progress very well and become competent and ready for the next stage of their career
- Trainers are highly qualified, have a very good command of their specialism and use a wide range of relevant vocational examples to enrich learning
- Most trainers succeed very well in engaging and motivating learners through practical and group work activities
- Health and safety programmes on offer meet the needs and aspirations of stakeholders and learners well, with most courses on offer internationally accredited
- Programmes are regularly reviewed and updated accordingly by the marketing and management teams
- Exemplary support and guidance is provided to all learners to help them achieve better including tutorials, induction, OJT and bridging courses
- The systematic approach to the collection, aggregation and analysis of learners views through surveys and group discussions
- The system for assessing learners' prior attainment is accurate, putting learners at a level suitable to their abilities.

Recommendations

In order to improve, AETC should:

- Ensure that sufficient feedback is provided on all learners' written work
- Ensure that risk assessment is carried out on a more regular basis.