



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

Directorate of Vocational Reviews

Review Report

Al Moalem Institute
Seef
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 7 -10 October 2019

VO032-C4-R012

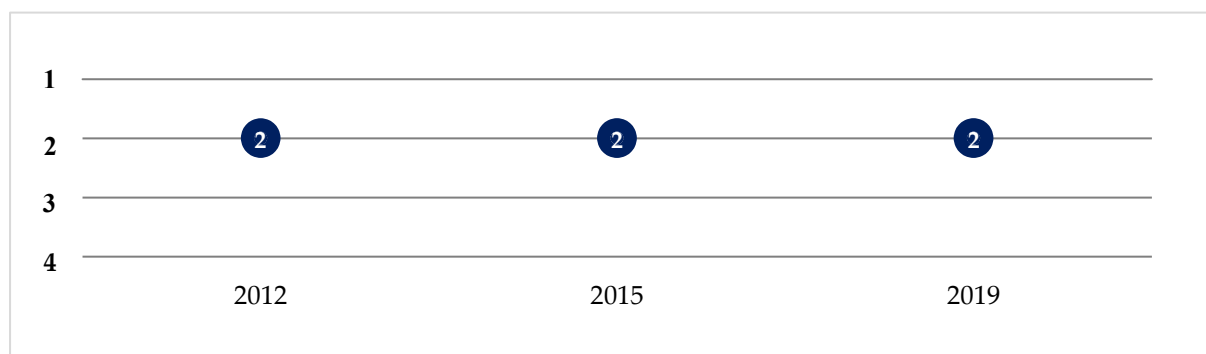
Introduction

The Directorate Vocational Reviews (DVR) of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over four days by a team of five reviewers. For this review, reviewers observed lessons and other related activities, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and materials provided by Al Moalem Institute and collected feedback from learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

This Report summarises the review team's findings and their recommendations about what the provider should do to improve.

Summary of review judgements		
	Aspect	Judgement
Outcomes	Learners' achievement	2
Programmes and processes	Effectiveness of teaching/training and assessment	3
	Quality of courses/programmes	1
	Learners' support and guidance	1
Management and governance	Effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	2
Capacity to improve		2
Overall effectiveness		2

Provider's overall effectiveness throughout the last three reviews



Outstanding	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Inadequate	4
-------------	---	------	---	--------------	---	------------	---

Overall effectiveness 'Good'

Judgement justifications

- Al Moalem's performance in the different aspects of the review varied widely, ranging from the 'Quality of courses/programmes' offered by Al Moalem Institute (AMI) and the effectiveness of 'Learners' support and guidance' being judged 'Outstanding', to the 'Learners achievement' and 'Leadership and management' being judged 'Good' and the 'Effectiveness of teaching/training and assessment' being 'Satisfactory'.
- The Institute has clear vision and mission statements that focus on raising learners' achievement and the overall performance of the provision. There is a well-developed Strategic Plan, translated to operational plans that enable the Institute to achieve its stated strategic objectives.
- The Institute offers a range of externally accredited qualifications in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Engineering and Architecture, Accounting and Finance, Project Management, occupational Health and Safety and Industrial Qualifications Functional Skills (IQFS) courses in English language.
- The majority of learners enrolled in the Autodesk, CADD and Internet Core Competency Certification (IC3) courses, representing 20% of the total enrolment, achieve high proficiency rates. Learners enrolled in the English language courses, which represent 30% of the total enrolment, develop pertinent grammar and vocabulary skills upon course completion; however, they show less development in the writing skills.
- Almost all learners achieve the course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and the qualifications they aim for in a timely manner. Nonetheless, the high success rates and assessment results in the English language courses are not consistent with the standards observed in the training sessions and learners' produced work throughout the course.
- Trainers generally utilise effective training methodologies and activities to involve learners in the majority of observed sessions, these methodologies are enhanced with different learning resources and materials to deliver the courses.
- A range of formative and summative assessments are used to evaluate learners' understanding. While marking is generally accurate, the evaluation of the writing paragraphs in the English language courses is not consistently rigorous where the approved assessment rubric is not always followed, and the verification process is not always effective in detecting cases of authenticity and subjective marking that were found in the samples of learners' assessed work.
- Learners are provided with a highly effective support and guidance that enable them to achieve their learning objectives. Trainers at AMI are supportive and approachable even outside the planned session timings

and provide learners with the extra support and further explanations

needed to achieve the qualification they aim for.

Capacity to improve 'Good'

Judgement justifications

- Since the last BQA review conducted in 2015, the Institute's overall effectiveness has remained at 'Good'.
 - The Institute has effectively addressed the majority of the recommendations stated in the last BQA review report such as following up actions taken as a result of the outcomes of the internal lessons' observation carried out by the Institute staff. However, recommendations related to the rigorousness of the verification process still need to be fully addressed.
 - The Institute has a purposeful Strategic Plan (SP) that was developed based on a rigorous self-evaluation processes, which is implemented regularly. Outcomes of the previous SP were also utilised to inform the development of the current SP.
- Since the last review, enrolment is maintained, and the institute continuous to have effective links with stakeholders and the local community. AMI's improvement actions are highly informed by the outcomes of its stakeholders' feedback.
 - AMI has sufficient human and physical resources that enable the Institute to execute its operational plans efficiently. The learning environment is fit for purpose with essential health and safety measures in place.
 - The Institute has effectively utilised the GMetrix and Speed Test software for assessment and launched Quick Response (QR) code application for recording learners' attendance.

The provider's key strengths

- Almost all learners achieve the course Intended Learning Outcomes and the qualifications they aim for in a timely manner.
- The high proficiency rates for the majority of learners enrolled in the Autodesk, CADD and Internet Core Competency Certification (IC3).
- The in-depth understanding of stakeholders and local labour market's needs.
- The comprehensive support and guidance provided to learners that enable them to achieve better outcomes.
- The well-developed strategic and operational plans, which are focused towards improving learners' achievements and are informed by the outcomes of a regular self-evaluation.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Al Moalem Institute should:

- improve the English language courses through
 - improving learners' mastering of the intended writing skills
 - enhancing the utilization of the approved rubric for marking learners work and ensuring that grades awarded reflect the actual level of learners' work
- ensure that internal verification and moderation of assessments are implemented effectively across all courses and that learners work is authentic

Learners' achievement 'Good'

Judgement justifications

- Learners acquire knowledge and develop effective vocational skills and competences relevant to their field of learning and course level. Moreover, the majority of learners enrolled in the Autodesk, CADD and Internet Core Competency Certification (IC3) courses achieve high proficiency rates as reflected in their external examination results. These courses comprise 20% of the total enrolment. Nevertheless, in the English language courses, which constitute around one-third of AMI's provision, though learners develop pertinent grammar and vocabulary skills upon course completion, they show less development in their writing skills.
- Learners and employers expressed their satisfaction with the acquired skills and the extent to which those are utilised at the workplace. In addition, outcomes of AMI's post-training survey indicate that the attended courses have a positive impact on learners' career progression and expanding their opportunities to gain employment in their chosen profession.
- Almost all learners successfully achieve the course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and the qualifications they aim for in a timely manner, and where available, the success rates in the externally accredited courses are comparable with international pass rates. Nonetheless, the high success rates and assessment results in the English language courses are not consistent with the standards observed in the training sessions and learners' produced work throughout the course.
- While the success rates in most courses are maintained at a high level - ranging between 100% to 86.7% - the success rates in the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and Project Management Institute (PMI) courses are lower compared to other courses. The aforementioned courses together represent only 5.9% of total enrolment.
- AMI has a clear mechanism to assess learners' initial attainment at entry level and measure the progress made towards the end of a course. Relevant pre- and post-course assessments are conducted in all courses in addition to mock examinations in the majority of the courses. Analysis of learners' scored marks and scrutiny of their produced work show that the majority of them progress well throughout the course. Furthermore, where there is a progression path, learners are able to proceed successfully to the next advanced level. However, the added value for a few learners is minimal as reflected in the observed sessions and was stated in the learners' feedback.
- Learners show positive attitude and commitment towards their learning experience. A significant minority of

them are able to reflect on their learning, particularly during the practical activities. Learners are eager to demonstrate their understanding, present their work confidently and challenge what they have been taught. Most learners attend the training sessions regularly and punctually. As a facilitation for record-keeping and monitoring processes, AMI has recently started applying an automated system to record attendance and punctuality

using QR code smartphone application.

- The majority of learners exhibit confidence and are highly able when working independently and collaboratively during the in-class activities. However, in a number of sessions observed, a few learners remain over-dependent on trainers' directions and require further support to complete the assigned tasks independently.

Areas for improvement

- The added value for learners to be further improved.
- Learners' mastering of the intended writing skills in the English language courses and the assessment results to accurately reflect their actual level of achievement.

Effectiveness of teaching/training and assessment 'Satisfactory'

Judgement justifications

- Trainers generally utilise their knowledge and experience while sharing purposeful, practical examples and illustrations with learners. They implemented effective training methodologies and activities, such as demonstration, role play, and discussion, to involve learners in the majority of the observed sessions.
- Training methods are enhanced with different learning resources and materials to ensure effective delivery of the courses and facilitate learning. These resources include smartboards, related videos, and updated software.
- A range of formative and summative assessments are used to evaluate learners' understanding; including pre- and post-course assessments, quizzes, practical exercises, discussions, direct questions and IT projects. Learners are also self-assessed through different computerised based assessment such as GMetrix and Speed Test.
- While marking is generally accurate, the evaluation of learners' writing paragraphs in the English language courses is not consistently rigorous, and the stated rubric is not always followed. Moreover, marking criteria are not shared with learners. AMI implements

internal verification of assessment to control the quality of assessment. However, the provided samples of learners' assessed work included some cases of inauthentic work and subjective marking that were not detected by the verification process.

- AMI has recently developed a detailed session plan guidebook that provides useful guide to trainers in their daily session planning. Trainers use fit-for-purpose session plans, covering the essential elements of a training session. Most trainers maintain useful links between the previous knowledge of learners and the current session and manage their lessons in a manner that accommodates for progression and smooth transition between tasks. However, in the less effective training sessions, the class activities and time are not prudently managed.
- Sessions observed indicate that learners' different needs are suitably addressed and the planned activities in most of the IT sessions are adjusted to meet learners'

different levels, particularly in using the GMetrix website. Learners' higher level and critical thinking are enhanced *via* further questioning techniques and providing challenging tasks; particularly in the IT courses

- Records on learners' performance are kept for the majority of courses. However, records on the distribution of the formative assessment throughout a number of the English language courses are not sufficiently maintained. Moreover, there was evidence of a training course conducted by the Institute that was not included in the learners' performance records submitted for this review.
- Instant and specific feedback is provided to learners in the IT courses when utilising the GMetrix website and, in general, trainers provide useful verbal feedback to learners during sessions. However, the provided written feedback is not specific in cases of formative assessment.

Areas for improvement

- The rigor of the assessments used and marking of learners works
- The authentication of learners' work and subjectivity of marking
- The evaluation of the writing paragraphs in the English language courses
- Accommodation of learners' different needs across training sessions.

Quality of courses /programmes 'Outstanding'

Judgement justifications

- AMI annually conducts an extensive survey of its stakeholders' training needs. The Institute also monitors the trends in Bahrain's labour market utilising studies conducted by international and regional authorities on training needs and skills required in the different employment sectors. The outcomes of these reports are analysed thoroughly to seek international training solutions. As a result, the offered courses effectively meet the needs of the Institute's stakeholders who comprise of job seekers, in addition to employees of the corporate and private sector.
 - The Institute partners with several international training providers to offer a range of externally accredited qualifications in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Engineering and Architecture, Accounting, Project Management, Health and Safety and Industrial Qualifications Functional Skills (IQFS) courses in English language. In addition, the Institute offers one local achievement course titled 'MS-Office Applications'.
 - Course outlines for the different specializations are well detailed. The course ILOs, training methodologies, assessment methods and, where applicable, the progression pathways are all clearly specified in the course specification.
 - The design, approval, review and updates of the courses offered at AMI conform to the standards and requirements of the awarding body and
- AMI ensures that learners are provided with the latest versions of these courses.
- Formative and summative assessments for the different courses are clearly mapped to the course ILOs and implemented as per the guidelines of the awarding body. Course activities, such as reflecting on case studies, completing assigned projects and conducting presentations, are utilized well to assess learners' acquisition of skills and knowledge throughout the course. Nevertheless, the course activities and formative assessments used to monitor the development of learners' English language skills in the IQFS courses are not always mapped to the course ILOs.
 - Courses are effectively resourced with authentic and up-to-date training materials, reference books, software and online resources which meet the training and learning needs.
 - The Institute has developed entry and access procedures that are systematically implemented to place learners in the different courses or in levels within a given course. Target learners' profiles and minimum entry requirements are clearly stated, which vary depending on the field and level of study. For example, the entry prerequisites for ACCA courses include an online knowledge-based test and for IQFS, AAT and IT courses, an online Skills Checklist is utilised.

Areas for improvement

- The mapping of the formative assessment used in the IQFS courses in English language to the course intended learning outcomes.

Learners' support and guidance 'Outstanding'

Judgement justifications

- AMI has a comprehensive and highly effective support and guidance mechanism that positively influences learner's achievement. Support is provided *via* a number of means such as remedial, revision and makeup sessions, mock examinations and access to question banks. Learners acknowledged that trainers are supportive both in and outside the planned session timings and provide extra support and further explanations that enable them to achieve the qualification they aim for.
- The Institute support and guidance services are not limited to the less able learners, it also conducts annual celebration events where high achievers are recognised and honouring certificates are awarded. In addition, AMI supports its graduates by nominating them for work opportunities upon stakeholders' request.
- Informative compliant and appeal policies and procedures are in place. Moreover, there is a dedicated email address where learners may convey their issues and suggestions.
- The Institute effectively enhances learners' educational experience with highly relevant extra-curricular activities in the majority of the conducted courses. These include attending site visits, participating in art exhibitions, inviting guest speakers, and conducting employment mock interviews.
- Learners and stakeholders have access to well-informed advice and guidance about the offered courses prior to and during the course *via* different channels such as the Institute's website, social media accounts and course outlines and brochures. Information provided includes an overview about the provider, the offered courses and the Institute's activities and events.
- AMI provides learners with two informative induction sessions; a general one which focuses on the Institute's rules and regulations and a specific induction that highlights information related to the course itself. The Institute ensures that learners receive induction by signing feedback forms, which are aggregated to inform improvement actions.
- Stakeholders are provided with an informative pack related to the conducted training course. Learners' performance and attendance are communicated regularly to learners and stakeholders. Learners are regularly aware about their formative and final examinations' grades and their strength and areas for improvement.

- Effective follow-up practices to monitor and act on learners attendance are in place. These include follow-up phone calls, in addition to sending SMS, emails, and attendance notification.
- The Institute regulates support services provided to learners with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) by adopting an informative policy and procedure. In addition, a dedicated section related to SEND

learners is included in the 'Trainee Induction Guide'. However, these mainly focus on support in relation to assessment and do not clearly stipulate the arrangements related to access and entry requirements, facilities and learning resources. Notwithstanding the above, the limited cases of learners suffering from physical disabilities that were encountered by the Institute were dealt with sufficiently.

Areas for improvement

- The policy and procedure on supporting learners of Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to detail arrangements related to access and entry requirements, facilities and learning resources.

Effectiveness of leadership, management and governance 'Good'

Judgement justifications

- AMI has a well-developed strategic planning mechanism that is based on a regular and rigorous self-evaluation practice. The Institute has developed a Strategic Plan (SP) for the period 2019-2023 with challenging targets. Most targets of the previous five years SP were met successfully, and outcomes were effectively utilised to shape the current plan by defining more challenging targets for the upcoming five years.
- The SP includes clearly stated strategic objectives that enable the Institute to achieve its mission and vision statements. The SP is focused mainly on improving learners and trainers' performance, expanding the range of

programmes offered and raising the quality of the provision.

- AMI management closely monitors and thoroughly analyses learners' achievement. Outcomes of the analysis are discussed during the quarterly management and staff meetings to inform the Institute's strategic direction, its action planning and the self-evaluation process. However, with the concerns raised with regard to the authenticity of a few assessment cases, the reported level of learners' achievement is not strongly reliable.
- AMI has a highly effective staff performance management in place. Relevant and formal human resources employee performance evaluation procedure is well implemented.

Performance of staff and trainers is regularly monitored and identified areas for improvement guide improvement actions. Outcomes of monitoring trainers' performance are used to set deliverable targets to be achieved within the AMI SP. Professional development needs of the staff and trainers are clearly identified and supported.

- Considering the number of enrolled learners and the nature of the Institute's operations, the organisational structure is effectively supported with sufficient number of qualified staff and full-time trainers. Roles and responsibilities of staff members are clearly defined. Staff are properly selected and recruited, and formal induction procedures are effectively implemented. New staff are inducted with the Institute human resources policies and procedures.
- Formal arrangements are in place to quality assure the overall performance of the provision. AMI has an internal quality assurance system that meets the requirements of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) Institutional Listing Standards. Whilst most of the procedures are implemented effectively, the monitoring of the effectiveness and rigor implementation of the

verification and moderation of learners' assessed work is not developed sufficiently.

- AMI's learning environment is fit -for-purpose. The Institute's premises is equipped with sufficient number of learning facilities including laboratories and classrooms. The premises is safe and free from any obvious hazard and certified first aiders are available for most of the time. Regular risk assessment is carried out by the responsible staff and formal detailed records of these assessments are available. There is evidence that actions are taken for the observed hazard.
- AMI has well established links with the local community and relevant stakeholders. Links with international awarding bodies are maintained. Stakeholders' views are continuously collected and analysed. Outcomes of these analyses are effectively utilised to shape the offerings of the provision and inform strategic planning.
- The governance arrangements are suitable in holding the leadership accountable for the Institute's performance in terms of shaping the offerings and setting the strategic directions.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the assessment verification and moderation processes.

Appendix (1): Provider information

Name of the provider (English)	Al Moalem Institute					
Name of the provider (Arabic)	معهد المعلم					
Licensing body	Ministry of Labour and Social Development					
Year of establishment	1992					
Age range of learners	+18					
Number of learners (January 2016-March 2019)	Male	1,483	Female	2,523	Total	4,006
Learning areas	Externally accredited		<p>Information and Communication Technology (ICT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autodesk - CADD - Internet Core Competency Certification (IC3) <p>Finance and Accounting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) - UK - Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) - UK <p>Occupational Health and Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) - UK - The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) - Institution of Occupational Safety and Health. (IOSH) - UK 			

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medic First Aid - US <p>English Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Industrial Qualifications Functional Skills (IQFS) courses in English language. - London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Pearson - UK <p>Business and Commerce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital Marketing Institute (DMI) <p>Leadership, Management and Human Resource Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Management Institute (PMI) Project Management - The Professional Evaluation and Certification Board (PECB)- International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001.
	Local achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS-Office Applications
	Local attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Institution's listing status	Listed on the National Qualification Framework (NQF)	