



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

Vocational Review Unit

Repeat Review Report

Al-Meer Training Centre

Isa Town

Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 27 – 29 December 2010

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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 five-point scale:

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

Introduction

Description of the provision

Al Meer Training Centre (MTC) is part of the Al Meer group of companies. Established in December 2007, it offers training in management and soft skills. The programmes offered are all short and non-accredited and cover topics such as customer services, team building, training needs analyses and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP).

MTC is located in Isa Town, Manama. The company has a full-time centre manager, two full-time trainers, a marketing officer, three office assistants and a part-time quality assurance coordinator. In addition, a pool of part-time trainers is available, although only a few of them have actually conducted training courses for MTC.

The repeat review

MTC was first reviewed in March 2009. There was insufficient evidence available to judge how well learners achieved. Although the quality of teaching and training, and the support provided to learners were satisfactory, the institute was judged below satisfactory in all other areas. It was, therefore, subject to a repeat review to seek to ensure that these areas improved to the required standard.

The repeat review comprised two one-day monitoring visits and a final three-day visit by a team of three reviewers. During the repeat review, reviewers observed training sessions, analysed data about the qualifications learners achieve and the courses they complete, and talked with the managing director, trainers, administration and support staff, learners and employers.

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

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Grade 3: Satisfactory

The effectiveness of MTC is now satisfactory overall. The leadership and management have taken the necessary measures to bring all aspects of the provision to satisfactory levels throughout.

Learners' achievements data show that most learners achieve appropriate knowledge and skills, but a minority of them do not make sufficient progress from their starting points. Learners at MTC generally enjoy the courses, attend regularly and fairly punctually. Although learners' achievements are now assessed in all courses by various means, the assessment still lacks a robust moderation and verification process to ensure the rigour of the assessment and marking activities.

Trainers have relevant qualifications and experience, and use adequate training techniques to engage and motivate learners in most of the sessions. Although pre-course assessment is not done early enough to inform the trainers about the specific training needs of all learners, the lessons are appropriately planned, and in a few cases modified to cater for their varying needs. Trainers make sufficient use of learning resources, and check learners' progress during a course by various assessed written and practical works; however, in a few cases these are not directly linked to the course objectives. The written and verbal feedback is not always sufficiently critical.

MTC offers a number of short courses in management and soft skills, which are in many cases further adjusted as per employers' requests. Of these programmes, the Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) courses are well structured and delivered effectively. The courses are prepared with basic course materials, but not sufficiently enriched with additional activities that give learners more relevant vocational exposure.

MTC trainers are accessible and provide sufficient support to learners. They use the internet facility well to share information and knowledge with learners even after classes. The centre provides basic information and guidance on the offered courses. Some of the venues however, are dull and some of the safety measures are not sufficiently maintained.

Since the last review, the leadership and management have put in place the required measures to analyse and aggregate learners' achievement data, gather and analyse learners' and employers' views; and to monitor staff and trainers' performance. The management team, however does not yet make full use of these analyses and information to fully stretch

the performance of learners and trainers or to bring about more effective improvement actions. The newly developed strategic plans are elaborate and detailed but lack sufficient focus on raising learners' achievements and the quality of training.

Capacity to improve

Grade 3: Satisfactory

Since the first review in March 2009, MTC has taken effective improvement measures and employs more staff in various roles. The centre has implemented a better system to assess learners' achievements on all courses. The system still needs a robust moderation and verification process to ensure the rigour of assessment and marking. MTC enjoys a strong financial and administrative support from the mother company, which helps in driving the set plans.

The centre has recently conducted a comprehensive market survey of the training needs of the retail sector. The outcomes identify general areas of training required. The outcomes will be used to shape the centre's training calendar for 2011.

During the recent months, the centre has been active in developing internal policies and procedures, in preparation for ISO-9000 certification. A few of the procedures however, still need to be further developed and adjusted to better suit the operations of MTC. The centre has put in place a proper system for monitoring staff and trainers' performance. The system is used to highlight some areas for improvement and training needs of individuals, but not yet fully utilised to stretch the potential of employees to improve their performance further by setting them challenging targets.

MTC has a suitable system to gather and analyse learners' and employers' views. The outcomes of these analyses are always reported to the management team, but it is too early to judge the full impact of these.

Summary of grades awarded

Overall judgement	Original grade	Repeat review grade
Effectiveness of provision	Grade 4: Below satisfactory	Grade 3: Satisfactory
Capacity to improve	Grade 4: Below satisfactory	Grade 3: Satisfactory
Review findings		
How well do learners achieve?	Insufficient evidence to grade	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How effective is training?	Grade 3: Satisfactory	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How well do programmes meet the needs of learners and employers?	Grade 4: Below satisfactory	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How well are learners guided and supported?	Grade 3: Satisfactory	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade 4: Below satisfactory	Grade 3: Satisfactory

Main judgements and recommendations

Strengths

- **Well-structured and designed Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) courses.**MTC offers Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) courses which provide learners with progression levels, appropriate assessment methods and in-depth, structured course materials, the latter prepared in accordance to the guidelines of the International NLP Trainers Association (INLPTA).
- **MTC's effective use of the internet facility to share information and knowledge with learners even after classes.** In order to make themselves accessible, trainers use the internet facility well to support learners.
- **Well devised system to capture, analyse and aggregate performance data of courses.** This system is based on learners' and employers' satisfaction, value added as measured by pre- and post-course assessment results, attendance, and other learners' achievements data.

Areas for improvement

- **A minority of learners who do not make sufficient progress and assessment which is not sufficiently rigorous.** Although the majority of learners at MTC achieve appropriate skills, a minority do not make sufficient progress from their starting points. In addition, the assessment activities introduced to measure learner progress are not yet sufficiently rigorous or accurate enough.
- **Insufficient vocationally relevant enrichment activities.** Although MTC offers some vocationally relevant enrichment activities, these are often variable in range and appropriateness.
- **The venues that have some dull classrooms and a lack of some safety measures.** Some classrooms that the institute uses at its premises or outside in hotels are dull or uncomfortable for learners; the centre's lack of safety measures includes having fire

extinguishers which are not maintained, a lack of fire detectors and first aid which is not available at all times.

- **The newly developed strategic plans lack a clear focus on raising learners' achievements and the quality of training.** Although the plans are elaborate and detailed, they would benefit from having key performance indicators which focus more explicitly on these two key areas.

Recommendations

In order to improve, MTC should:

- revise more rigorous assessment to improve the achievements of all learners
- enrich courses with more vocationally related activities which engage and motivate all learners
- carry out a risk assessment to ensure that all venues are safe and stimulating for learners to learn
- redefine the strategic and operational plans to make them more focused on the improvement of learners' achievement and the quality of provision.