



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

Vocational Review Unit

Review Report

Bahrain Society of Engineers Training Centre
Juffair
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 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

Bahrain Society of Engineers Training Centre (BSETC) was established by the Bahrain Society of Engineers with a key function to serve the engineering community and promote professional practice. The centre was licensed by the Ministry of Labour in 2003. It offers a range of training courses in engineering and related management and information technology topics. The centre has affiliations with a number of regional training providers such as the Engineers Training Centre in Jordan. Since 2008, 896 learners have attended 34 different courses conducted by BSETC. Most of the courses are short, non-accredited courses. Learners are mostly employed engineers and technical staff sponsored by public or private organisations.

BSETC operates from one centre located in Juffair and is staffed by a part-time voluntary Centre Director, a full-time Training Coordinator, on-call Administrative Assistant and a pool of more than 15 part-time trainers from the region and other part of the world. The centre also has a voluntary training committee of six BSE members to offer advice and assistance on training issues.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over three days by a team of four reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed training sessions, analysed data about the qualifications learners achieve and the courses they complete, and talked with staff, learners and employers.

This report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what Bahrain Society of Engineers Training Centre should do to improve.

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Grade 4: Below satisfactory

Overall, Bahrain Society of Engineers Training Centre (BSETC) offers below satisfactory provision. The range of courses, and support and guidance are both satisfactory. Learners' achievement, quality of teaching, and leadership and management are all below satisfactory.

Learners gain varying levels of knowledge and skills in the majority of courses. However, in a significant minority of cases the level of skills gained are not up to the expected standard, as defined in the programme learning objectives. Furthermore, most learners are awarded certificates upon course completion whether or not they have demonstrated the required skills or met the learning objectives. An attendance register is not well controlled and punctuality is an issue. However, BSETC has maintained an overall retention rate of 97 percent over the last three years, a level expected given the nature of the courses.

BSETC trainers are knowledgeable, with good vocational skills and experience. They often make use of their experience by providing relevant work-related examples in training sessions. However, the majority of trainers use too narrow a range of training strategies. They interact insufficiently with learners, do too much trainer-centred lecturing and do not use questioning techniques well to engage all learners. Whilst they provide appropriate feedback to groups they do not effectively check individual learners' understanding after each part of the session.

BSETC has a suitable range of short non-accredited courses mainly offered in general engineering and related management topics. Generally, the range of courses available meets the needs of most learners and employers. However, a few of the learners and employers highlighted the need for more advanced levels or specialised engineering courses. Only two courses have progression levels. Enrichment activities provided are insufficient.

The provider's administrative staff are friendly and helpful and usually available to ensure the smooth start to courses. Most trainers are usually accessible during and after their courses. Employers and learners receive updated training programme schedules and informative course outlines before the start of the course. BSETC premises' are fit for purpose for the small number of courses currently conducted at the centre. However, the premises lack a dedicated prayer room. Learners work in a healthy and safe environment at BSECT premises but an assembly area is not clearly identified for learners in case of emergency. Essential fire measures are in place, however learners are not provided with guidance on health and safety prior to the starting of courses.

The centre enjoys strong links with the engineering community as it forms an integral part of the Bahrain Society of Engineers and maintains ties with a number of related institutions. BSETC has an appropriate vision and mission that are focused on providing quality training. However, the centre currently lacks a formalised and documented strategic plan.

BSETC management select highly qualified trainers. However, it does not have effective measures in place for monitoring their performance. The management lacks a robust management information system to collect and analyse information on various feedback data, trainers' performance, labour market needs and learners' achievement to monitor quality and inform planning for improvement. The provider's SEF provides basic information and identifies a number of appropriate areas for improvement. However, all grades are overestimated with at least one grade above the ratings reached by the review team.

Capacity to improve

Grade 4: Below satisfactory

The centre has a number of features that it can build on, however, with its current organisation structure and mode of operation, and lack of essential performance data it has inadequate capacity and resources to expand and improve the quality of the provision. BSETC has in the past maintained good repeat business from the majority of employers including ministries and major companies who have repeatedly taken courses during the last three years. Its client base is in excess of 50 employers. However, the number of learners declined in 2009 and 2010 compared to 2008. The number was just more than 400 in 2008 but dropped to 286 in 2009 and to 206 in December 2010.

The current facility is very limited; it has only one classroom and one IT laboratory. However, the provider carried out a few improvements on the facility during the last three years. These include upgrading facilities and furniture of the information technology laboratory and the classroom. BSE also has a future plan to expand the training centre by moving to a new separate building subject to full management approval. BSETC expanded the range of courses offered with eight new courses added during 2009 and an additional 11 courses in 2010. The provider has also finalised an agreement with an international provider to deliver a special externally accredited course to a major employer by March 2011. To run these courses BSETC has access to an adequate pool of experienced and specialised trainers as well as services of a voluntary professional committee who advise on training matters and course selection. However, the current organisation structure is insufficient to carry out

key major improvements as all of the staff except the training officer work on a voluntary basis or on call. The centre has inadequate human resources to collect essential achievement and performance data or if collected to aggregate, analyse and make effective use of it to inform improvement decisions.

The provider's Self Evaluation Form (SEF) was not thoroughly discussed among the relevant parties at BSETC; it is not sufficiently informative and is overgenerous in grades throughout. Nevertheless, it has identified a number of relevant key areas for improvement.

Summary of grades awarded

Overall Judgement	Grade
Effectiveness of provision	Grade 4: Below satisfactory
Capacity to Improve	Grade 4: Below satisfactory
Review Findings	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade 4: Below satisfactory
How effective is training?	Grade 4: Below satisfactory
How well do programmes meet the needs of learners and employers?	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How well are learners guided and supported?	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade 4: Below satisfactory

Main judgements and recommendations

Strengths

- **Trainers are highly qualified and experienced in their areas of specialism.** BSETC trainers are knowledgeable, with good vocational skills and experience. They often make use of their experience by providing relevant work-related examples in training sessions.
- **Clear and informative brochures are sent in advance to all employers and learners.** Detailed and useful course outlines with clear objectives are available in advance for all courses.
- **The centre has close links with the engineering community and a number of related institutions.** The centre enjoys close links with the engineering community, forming an integral part of the Bahrain Society of Engineers and maintaining ties with a number of related institutions such as the Institution of Engineers Pakistan-Bahrain Chapter and the Engineers Training Centre in Jordan.

Areas for improvement

- **A lack of initial assessment to inform lesson planning and accommodate learners' varying needs.** Although some trainers gather general background information about learners during the early part of the courses, the absence of proper initial assessment means that trainers' lesson planning does not take into account learners' individual needs or identify how these might be met.
- **Ineffective use of appropriate training techniques to engage all learners and to rigorously assess their understanding and monitor their progress.** Trainers at BSETC are suitably qualified but use limited training techniques and strategies and do not routinely check learners' understanding.
- **Insufficient aggregation and analysis of learners' and employers' feedback on the quality of the provision and acting on outcomes.** Although the provider regularly collects learners' feedback, such information is not aggregated nor analysed to identify issues for improvement and to take appropriate follow-up actions. Similarly, BSETC does not have an effective mechanism to collect the views of employers on the quality of their provision.
- **Insufficient measurement and analysis of learners' achievement.** The measurement of progress and achievement is insufficient. For most non-accredited courses,

learners are awarded attendance certificates upon course completion whether or not they have demonstrated the required skills or have met the learning objectives.

- **Ineffective measures for monitoring trainers' performance.** BSETC management and leadership select highly qualified and experienced trainers but do not have effective measures in place for monitoring their performance.
- **The current organisation structure is insufficient to carry out the necessary improvements.** BSETC's leadership and management ensure the smooth day to day running of the courses offered through the appropriate supervision and monitoring of the administrative tasks. However, many key strategic aspects, particularly those that impact on raising learners' achievement, are lacking.

Recommendations

In order to improve provision, Bahrain Society of Engineers Training Centre should:

- implement effective initial assessment and use its outcome in lesson planning and for accommodating learners' varying needs
- ensure the use of effective training techniques to engage all learners and to rigorously assess their understanding and monitor their progress
- undertake appropriate aggregation and analysis of learners' and employers' feedback on the quality of the provision and act on the outcomes of this
- implement systematic measurement and analysis of learners' achievement
- introduce effective measures for monitoring trainers' performance
- expand and develop the current organisation structure to carry out the necessary improvements.