



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

Vocational Review Unit

Repeat Review Report

**Bahrain Institute of Entrepreneurship and
Technology**

Manama

Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 10 – 12 January 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

Bahrain Institute of Entrepreneurship and Technology (BIET) was established in 2001 by the Bahrain Development Bank to provide information technology (IT) training in affiliation with global IT partners. BIET offers externally accredited, internally assessed and non-accredited IT courses which cover desktop applications, operating systems, computer applications, web designing and management, data networking, technician training, Oracle and database management.

BIET is an authorised training centre for Microsoft, CompTIA and the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL). The provider is an authorised Prometric testing centre, and a Microsoft Gold Partner. During the year 2010, the provider conducted 121 courses most of which were Microsoft courses. The number of enrolled learners reached 824, all of whom are sponsored by corporate or government agencies.

BIET has one centre located in Manama. It employs a general manager, a head of sales and marketing, a head of administration and finance, a senior IT trainer and a network administrator. The BIET has five full-time trainers and two part-timers who report to the senior IT trainer, two sales executives who report to the head of sales and marketing, two assistance administrators, one quality assurance officer and two messengers who report to the head of administration and finance.

The repeat review

BIET was first reviewed in December 2009. The provision was below satisfactory overall. Although learners' achievement, the range of programmes offered and the level of support for learners were satisfactory, the quality of training and the leadership and management of the provision were below satisfactory. BIET was therefore subject to a repeat review to ensure that these areas improved to the required standard.

The repeat review comprised two one-day monitoring visits and a final three days visit by a team of four 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 general manager, trainers, administration and support staff, learners and employers.

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

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Grade 3: Satisfactory

All aspects of BIET's provision are now satisfactory. During the year 2010, overall pass rates were satisfactory at 73 per cent and 79 per cent on the externally accredited and the internally assessed courses respectively. Retention rates are high, ranging from 89 to 99 per cent on most courses conducted, all of which are short in duration. Learners acquire suitable skills and most of them enjoy their courses. Most learners have the basic skills to function well on their courses although a few lack appropriate English skills. Attendance is well recorded; the overall attendance rate for 2010 is 93 per cent. Punctuality however is not always recorded and is an issue in a significant minority of the observed lessons. Initial assessment is not conducted for a few of the courses offered.

BIET trainers are qualified, certificated and have a theoretical and practical command of their vocational specialism. They succeed in motivating and engaging learners in the practical part of the lesson. The theory part of the lesson, however, is lengthy and more trainer-centred with insufficient engagement of learners. Lessons usually start with revision of what was previously covered and the sharing of learning objectives. However, not all lessons start on time. Lesson plans used by trainers are basic and do not contain sufficient differentiation. In most of the observed lessons, the less able are supported well enough but the more able are insufficiently challenged. The outcome of pre-course assessment is not always used to inform lesson planning for a better accommodation of the varying needs of learners. Material and resources are used appropriately to promote learning although a few learners identified some issues with computers.

BIET offers a good range of Microsoft externally accredited courses that provide learners with good progression opportunities. However, the situation is not the same for other courses; for example Oracle is offered at basic levels only and in Cisco only one level is offered which is the CCNA. Moreover, graphic and design courses offered are limited. Course content and outlines are available in advance. Most learners and employers interviewed are generally satisfied with the training, finding it relevant and meeting their needs. Recently, BIET has conducted an appropriate study to survey market needs for database administrators. Insufficient enrichment activities are provided to learners.

Trainers are supportive and provide useful career guidance and advice. Although this support is useful, it is provided on an ad hoc manner and its impact is not measured. Although BIET ensures that learners and staff are working in a healthy and safe environment, learners are not provided with guidance on health and safety aspects. BIET's

learning environment is adequate with suitable IT resources. Flyers are updated and informative and the BIET website is updated with useful information about courses and links to vendors.

BIET's vision statement is appropriately focused on learners' achievement with clear objectives. However, no action plans have yet been developed to monitor progress towards achievement of the set objectives. Learners' achievement is adequately monitored at the course level; during 2010, data on achievement and retention was kept on most conducted courses. However, this data has not yet been aggregated to enable management to monitor more effectively trends over time and to plan for further improvement. BIET management has made some recent improvements which are focused on improving resources and overall performance. Qualified and experienced trainers are recruited and their performance is appropriately monitored through learners' feedback and recently introduced peer observations. However, the recently introduced lesson observations are occasional and insufficiently critical. Learners' views are sought through an end of course evaluation form and employers' feedback is now sought lately through a client post course evaluation. Where possible both are used to improve provision.

Capacity to improve

Grade 3: Satisfactory

BIET has acted on the outcomes of its first review and made appropriate improvements in the main areas identified in the report. In 2010, pass rates and retention rates were at a satisfactory level in the externally accredited and the internally assessed courses. Although learners' achievement is appropriately monitored and data on achievement and retention is kept for most of the courses conducted in 2010, data is not aggregated to enable management to monitor trends over time and plan improvements accordingly. BIET has made some recent improvements to its provision which are focused on improving resources and quality assuring its internal procedures. Over the last year, enrolment numbers reached 824 on 121 courses, the provider maintaining its 2009 client base. BIET has appropriate resources to enable improvement to be carried out; trainers are qualified and updated with the relevant subject knowledge and most of the IT laboratories have been updated. The BIET SEF identifies areas for improvement, some of which were also highlighted by the review team. Some SEF grades were overestimated.

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? | Grade 3: Satisfactory | Grade 3: Satisfactory |
| How effective is training? | Grade 4: Below satisfactory | Grade 3: Satisfactory |
| How well do programmes meet the needs of learners and employers? | Grade 3: 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

- **Good range of Microsoft courses on offer with good progression routes.** As a gold partner of Microsoft, BIET always offers the most updated courses with good progression opportunities to enable learners to acquire internationally recognized IT qualifications.
- **Trainers are highly supportive and provide useful career guidance and advice.** Trainers provide learners with extra time and revision classes to clear areas of doubts, and use the recently introduced post-course assessment activity as a mock examination to prepare learners for the on-line examination on the externally accredited courses. As well as providing career advice and guidance, they also provide advice on work related issues.

Areas for improvement

- **Initial assessment is not always conducted, and when it is done the outcome is not used to inform lesson planning.** Although initial assessment is conducted on most courses, the outcomes are not always used to inform lesson planning for a better accommodation of learners' varying needs, for example in planning activities which stretch and challenge the more able learners.
- **The theory part of the sessions is mostly trainer centred.** In more than one third of the lessons observed the theory part of the lesson was too lengthy and too trainer-centered with limited interaction of learners and insufficient checking of understanding.
- **The recently introduced lesson observations are occasional and insufficiently critical.** Only a few trainers had been observed by the time of the review; in addition, the completed forms are insufficiently informative and critical, rarely identifying areas for improvement.
- **Achievement data are not aggregated to facilitate the monitoring of trends and planning further improvement.** From September 2010, all courses have been assessed although the resulting achievement data is not aggregated to enable management to monitor trends more effectively over time and to plan accordingly for improvement.

Recommendations

In order to improve provision, BIET should:

- ensure that initial assessment is conducted regularly and effectively in all courses and the outcome is used to inform lesson planning
- utilize effective methods to ensure learners' interaction and engagement during the theory part of the session
- ensure that internal lesson observations are regular and sufficiently critical and immediate appropriate feedback is provided to trainers
- aggregate achievement data to facilitate monitoring of trends and planning further improvement.