



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

# Directorate of Vocational Reviews

## Review Report

**Bahrain Institute of Hospitality & Retail (BIHR)**

**Barbar**

**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 8-10 May 2017**

VO030-C3-R064

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## Introduction

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The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over three days by a team of four reviewers. For this review, reviewers observed training sessions and other related activities, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and the materials provided by the provider and met with learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

In the previous review, Bahrain Institute of Hospitality & Retail (BIHR) overall effectiveness was judged as Good as were all other aspects of its provision.

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

## Grading scale

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Outstanding	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Inadequate	4
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## Table of review judgements awarded

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Main Question	Judgement
Learners' achievement	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of programmes	Good (2)
Quality of support and guidance	Good (2)
Leadership, management and governance	Satisfactory (3)
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Satisfactory (3)</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Satisfactory (3)</b>

## Review judgements

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### Overall effectiveness

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

##### **Grade: Satisfactory (3)**

While quality of programmes and the support and guidance provided to learners are evaluated as good, learners' achievement, quality of training and assessment, and effectiveness of leadership and management are evaluated as satisfactory.

Learners acquire and develop useful knowledge, competencies and employability skills relevant to their learning in the field of tourism and hospitality, along with related soft skills. However, a minority show only limited skills development upon semester completion compared to the programme level and industry requirements. In the local attendance and completion courses most learners complete their course requirements and receive their certificate. In the Hotel & Tourism Management Institute (HTMi) Switzerland Diploma in International Hotel and Tourism Management – Operational Level, six batches of learners were enrolled, retention rates are relatively low particularly in batch one and batch four. The vast majority of learners make sufficient progress compared to their prior attainment at the start of each subject. The majority of BIHR trainers are qualified. They use relevant vocational examples to link theory with practice and use different training methods to engage learners, though in a few of the observed sessions trainers did not always involve learners effectively in sessions. A range of relevant formative and summative assessment are implemented effectively in the HTMi programmes. Programmes are offered based on effective understanding of the hospitality market. BIHR currently offers HTMi externally accredited Diploma and craft Certificate programmes which meet the local sector needs. These are well-planned and structured with clear Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and assessment methods, though the verification of assessment is only recently introduced and its effectiveness is not clear yet. Learners at BIHR are well supported and guided throughout their learning to achieve better outcomes, particularly in HTMi programmes. Learners who fail their examinations are provided with extra-sessions and support in re-sitting the examination. The learning environment is equipped with the essential learning aids and facilities.

A five-year development plan has recently been formulated which focuses on the quality of the provision, although actions and time scales are not always specific. An adequate SWOT analysis was carried out in 2014 and partially utilised in developing the plan, though the self-evaluation process is not carried out regularly. Achievement data is kept and regularly

updated but trends are insufficiently monitored. Informal class visits are carried out by BIHR management to monitor trainers' performance however these class observations are not formalised to ensure continuous quality improvement.

## **Capacity to improve**

### **How strong is the provider's capacity to improve the quality of learning?**

#### **Grade: Satisfactory (3)**

BIHR management has expanded its services since the last review, including introducing HTMi Switzerland qualifications; these are the Certificate in International Hotel and Tourism Operations – Craft Level and the Diploma in International Hotel and Tourism Management – Operational Level. So far, six batches have been enrolled in the Diploma level, two being completed, two in the internship phase and two are currently ongoing. One batch is currently ongoing in the certificate craft level. In addition, BIHR has recently been granted the accreditation of the Confederation of Tourism & Hospitality (CTH) with the purpose of expanding the range of the programmes offered.

Improvement also include construction of a bigger and well equipped kitchen, development of some quality assurance forms, the use of a new data management system (Fedena – though it is not yet fully utilised), improving the training and learning resources such as the installation of the smart boards in all classrooms, and upgrading of the library with more reference books, a browsing area and e-library. The Institute has sufficient and appropriate human and physical resources to enable improvements to be carried out. Repeat business within the corporate training is reasonable at 29.4%. However, pass rates fluctuate between HTMi Diploma intakes, the self-evaluation process is not regularly carried out or used sufficiently as a tool for continuous quality improvement, and the actions and timescales of the recently developed operational plan, though focusing on improving the provision, are not always specific. Though quality assurance arrangements are adequate, a few of the available policies and procedure are insufficiently detailed and some areas are not covered, such as class observations. The internal verification, recently introduced, does not always assure the coverage of the course ILOs. Hence, the previous review recommendations have not been sufficiently addressed.

## **Learners' achievement**

### **How well do learners achieve?**

#### **Grade: Satisfactory (3)**

Learners' achievement at BIHR is satisfactory overall. Most learners are enrolled in the Hotel & Tourism Management Institute (HMTi) Switzerland programme, which is a long externally accredited programme offered at two levels. The two years' Diploma consists of two concurrent academic semesters, followed by a work placement internship of 12 months, while the newly offered Craft level comprises six months of academic study. Since October 2014 six batches of learners have been enrolled in the Diploma level, in addition to a recent batch in the Craft level. The remaining learners are enrolled in the local short completion and attendance-based courses, which are mainly soft skills courses related to the retail and hospitality sectors. Learners develop adequate employability skills and hands-on experience, blended with useful knowledge and competencies relevant to their learning experience in the field of hospitality and tourism. Nevertheless, a minority of learners show limited skills development upon semester completion compared to the programme level and industry requirements specifically in the Diploma level. Learners' acquisition of knowledge and development of skills is measured effectively using a range of summative and formative assessments. Whilst most learners in the local courses complete the course requirements and receive their certificates, the retention rates in the Diploma level, particularly in the first and fourth intakes, have been relatively low at an average of 54%. The vast majority of learners enrolled in the first and second batches achieved the qualifications they aimed for and have been employed in the industry, while the achievement rate in the first batch was better. There are a few cases of learners who have proceeded to advanced level study after completing the programme. Regarding the third and fourth batches, the vast majority of learners have successfully fulfilled their academic study requirements and commenced the internship, while learners enrolled in the remaining intakes have recently started the programme. Considering learners' background and level of entry, the vast majority make sufficient progress compared to their prior attainment at the start of each course.

From the observed sessions and scrutiny of learners' work, the majority of learners are able to work independently and collaboratively, especially during the hands-on activities in the simulation laboratories. The majority of learners show a positive attitude towards their learning, however they are not always self-motivated to participate actively and demonstrate their understanding. Learners are required to submit an internship report in which they evaluate their learning experience in the real workplace environment, in which a minority of learners show an ability to reflect critically on assessing the skills that they have gained and what they need to improve further. Attendance is always recorded and necessary actions are taken against frequent absenteeism and lateness, though punctuality is not recorded. From

the records of attendance and the observed sessions, it is evident that the vast majority of learners attend on a regular basis.

## **The quality of provision**

### **How effective are teaching/training and assessment in promoting learning?**

#### **Grade: Satisfactory (3)**

The majority of BIHR trainers are qualified and have theoretical and practical command of their specialisms. They provide accurate explanations and respond to learners' questions knowledgeably. In the observed sessions, trainers share suitable vocational examples to link theory with practice.

Sessions are suitably structured, usually starting with sufficient recapitulation of the previous session and sharing the topics to be covered. However, in a minority of the observed sessions there were issues with class and time management where the old and new batches are merged together and not managed well, with activities taking more than the required time. Trainers follow a clear weekly scheme of work that identifies the topics to be covered, the general training methods to be used and the necessary resources. However, trainers do not use a daily session plan that considers learners' prior and continuous assessment.

Appropriate training methods and activities are implemented by the trainers, including role play, questioning techniques, debates, group discussion and practical demonstrations. In the less effective sessions trainers do not always involve learners effectively in class participation, where a number of learners dominate the discussion.

Learners' varying needs are adequately accommodated. In a number of the observed sessions the most able were suitably challenged by further questioning and the less able were sufficiently supported by further explanations and providing them with extra time. However, in few sessions the lower ability learners needed further attention and engagement. Trainers occasionally implemented further questioning techniques to promote learners' higher order and critical thinking skills.

A range of formative and summative assessments are implemented effectively to evaluate learners' understanding and measure their achievement of the course's ILOs, particularly in the HTMi programmes. During the observed sessions, learners' understanding was sufficiently checked and they were provided with verbal feedback on their answers. Assignments and written examinations are suitably marked. Recently, a clear rubric has been developed to evaluate short and essay questions. Records of learners' performance are

maintained and regularly updated. Though verbal feedback is provided during sessions, written feedback on learners' work is minimal.

The available learning resources are suitably utilised. These include the textbooks, PowerPoint presentations, white boards and simulation laboratories. Although classrooms are equipped with smart boards, they were not used in the observed sessions.

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

### **Grade: Good (2)**

The BIHR programmes offered are based on an effective understanding of the niche market served. Through frequent meetings the Institute maintains close and highly effective links with different stakeholders and clients in the hospitality sector. It also keeps the most recent statistics about job vacancies in this sector. The institute currently offers (HTMi) Switzerland externally accredited programmes which are customised to meet the specific needs of the local hospitality and tourism industry. These programmes include the Certificate in International Hotel and Tourism Operations – Craft Level, and the Diploma in International Hotel and Tourism Management – Operational Level. The Craft Level Certificate programme was recently introduced to meet the national initiatives of Bahrainisation in the tourism sector. It is worth mentioning that almost all learners who graduated from batch one and batch two HTMi Diploma level have been recruited in the sector.

The HTMi Diploma programme is well structured and planned, with course outlines and learning outcomes and is modified and updated as per the awarding body's recommendations. The assessments of all the modules within this programme are appropriately structured and mapped to the learning outcomes. The recently introduced unique Arabic Craft Level Certificate Programme has been fully designed and developed locally by BIHR and is approved by the external awarding body. BIHR uses a third party courseware developer (VELSOFT) for corporate training courses, which are suitably structured, planned and customised to meet specific stakeholder's requirements. However, the mechanism of verification and moderation of assessments in the different programmes has been only very recently introduced and its impact is not yet clear.

Learners and trainers have access to very relevant industry-specific resources such as awarding bodies course textbooks, tools and online learning resources. The on-campus simulation laboratories allow learners to enhance practical skills to advance their career prospects and meet stakeholders' requirements. The externally accredited programmes are supported with a range of highly purposeful and innovative extracurricular activities which



have a positive impact on the overall learning experience. The Institute periodically organises focused fieldtrips to allow learners to observe and learn from real-work contexts. In addition, there are several on-campus activities such as career days, visits from international and regional chefs and industry specialists and events to mark international cultural celebrations. Access and entry requirement to the HTMi Diploma and Certificate programmes are clearly specified and the Institute utilises effective mechanisms such as a placement test, general skills test and personal interviews to identify learners' prior attainment, language ability and willingness to work in the industry; however, its implementation is not always rigorous.

## **How well are learners supported and guided?**

### **Grade: Good (2)**

Learners at BIHR are well supported and guided throughout their learning experience in order to achieve better outcomes, particularly in the externally accredited programmes. Prior to the commencement of the programme learners are provided with a thorough induction to familiarise them with key aspects related to their learning. These include for instance the programme structure, assessment methods and passing requirements, attendance policy, support and guidance procedures and relevant academic issues. Learners are also provided with a very detailed student's handbook that complements the induction. In addition, they have access to their trainers and nominated staff members if they have difficulties in their studies or other personal matters which may affect their learning. In cases where learners need further support, specifically those who fail the final examination at the first attempt, they are offered consultation hours and extra training sessions along with relevant supplementary materials.

Learners and stakeholders have access to well-informed advice and initial guidance on course selection through the Institute's informative website, brochures and dedicated social media networks. The Institute organises career fairs to provide the Diploma level learners with exposure to various potential employers for internships, which correspondingly aim to secure permanent employment opportunities for learners. Moreover, learners are provided with guidance about further studies and career progression after their programme's completion. The Institute arranges field visits to the campus for high school learners, to promote the hospitality and tourism sector and raise awareness amongst youth about the prospective career paths.

The arrangements for the delivery and scheduling of local courses are highly flexible and always negotiated with clients to suits their needs. The externally accredited programme is delivered in a full-time basis following a structured schedule as per the awarding body's requirements. Effective communications are maintained with clients about individual each learner's performance and a detailed report is provided upon course completion. In the

externally accredited programme, sponsors are frequently updated on learners' attendance throughout the programme period. The learning environment is fit for purpose and equipped with essential learning aids and facilities. The institute has 18 classrooms with four simulation laboratories that include a training kitchen, training coffee shop and restaurant, front office and housekeeping laboratories. There are two prayer rooms and a resource centre in which learners have access to a range of highly relevant books, journals, magazines, references and online learning resources.

## **Leadership, management and governance**

### **How effective are leadership, management and governance in raising achievement and improving the quality of the provision?**

#### **Grade: Satisfactory (3)**

BIHR has clear vision and mission statements which are shared with staff and learners. The mission statement is suitably focused on learners' advantage. A five-year development plan has recently been formulated, with operational objectives that are relevant and focus on improving the quality of the provision. However, the actions and timescale are not always specific. The Institute carried out an adequate SWOT analysis which is partially utilised in formulating the operational plan, though the self-evaluation process is not regularly carried out or effectively utilised. BIHR's current organisation structure is fit for purpose considering the courses offered and enrolment numbers. Roles and responsibilities are clearly identified.

The Institute has a detailed students' handbook and faculty handbooks that cover most of the processes relevant to assessment and the support and guidance provided to learners. However, few areas are insufficiently detailed and others are not included. The recently introduced internal verification does not always ensure the coverage of the courses ILOs. In the HTMi programmes, learners' prior attainment is sufficiently assessed to ensure their eligibility to access programmes. In the soft skills, local attendance and completion courses, learners' prior attainment is assessed through pre-course assessment which is used as a starting point from which learners' progress is measured.

Learners' achievement is sufficiently monitored. Relevant records are kept and regularly updated, though trends of achievement are not monitored over subjects or over batches to trigger improvements and inform decision making. In addition, learners' performance monitoring during the internship period of the programme is not sufficiently systematic.

The majority of trainers recruited are qualified, inducted effectively and sufficiently deployed. Their performance is adequately monitored through informal visits conducted by the Institute

director and learners' feedback. However, class observations are not formalised to promote accountability and ensure continuous quality improvement. There are a few cases where trainers have been dismissed based on learners' feedback. Performance appraisal was introduced at the end of 2016, and staff are provided with adequate opportunities for training and development.

Links are well-established with the industry and relevant sections of the community such as feeder schools. This facilitates the internship phase of the HTMi Diploma programme. In addition, events and visits are organised to feeder schools to introduce students to BIHR programmes.

Meetings are held with the owners to monitor the overall performance of the institute. The owners also utilise their memberships in industry-relevant committees to update BIHR management on the sector's requirements and various statistics such as job vacancies.

Adequate health and safety measures are in place to ensure a healthy and safe environment for learners and staff. Learners are provided with relevant instructions within their informative induction programme.

## The provider's key strengths

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- A range of relevant formative and summative assessments are implemented effectively, particularly in HTMi programmes.
- BIHR programmes are offered based on an effective understanding of the niche market. The externally accredited HTMi programmes are well-structured, planned, and resourced.
- Learners are well supported and guided to achieve better outcomes throughout their learning experience, especially in the externally accredited HTMi programme.
- The Institute has well-established links with the industry and relevant section of the community.

## Recommendations

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### In order to improve, BIHR should:

- ensure that learners in the HTMi programmes develop appropriate skills compared to the programme level and industry requirements
- improve the quality of training by:
  - further improving training methods to engage learners effectively
  - ensuring that trainers utilise lesson plans that are continuously informed by learners' prior and continuous assessment
- improve leadership and management by:
  - enhancing the current quality assurance system to include more comprehensive policies and procedures, regular self-evaluation processes, effective internal verification processes, and achievement trends monitoring
  - formalising class observations and ensuring that they are conducted regularly and critically to promote continuous quality improvement.

## Appendix

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### Description of the provision

Bahrain Institute of Hospitality & Retail (BIHR) was established in 1999 and is licensed by the Ministry of Labour. It offers a range of vocational training in the field of hospitality and tourism. In 2014 BIHR signed an academic partnership with the Hotel and Tourism Management Institute (HTMi) Switzerland which includes the Certificate in International Hotel and Tourism Operations – Craft Level, and the Diploma in International Hotel and Tourism Management – Operational Level. In 2017 the Institute signed a partnership with the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality (CTH).

BIHR operates from one centre located in Barbar. It is managed by a director and employs an academic programme leader, an IT manager, a finance manager, a business development senior manager who supervises a business development manager, a branding manager, and two admissions staff. The academic programme leader supervises a student affairs administrator, an academic administrator, a student facilities manager, and a group of six trainers. She is also a trainer for the HTMi Diploma programme. All staff work on a full-time basis.

BIHR enrolled 350 learners since the last review, with the local attendance courses constituting 42.8%, local completion courses 10.57% and HTMi externally accredited courses 46.57%. Local attendance and completion courses are generally soft skills courses.