



# **Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report**

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

**Barbar**

**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 24-26 June 2013**

VO030-C2-R051

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## The Directorate of Vocational Reviews

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The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. Established to raise standards in vocational education and training, the DVR 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 DVR'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 four-point scale:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1: Outstanding	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all aspects and outstanding in the majority.
2: Good	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least satisfactory in all aspects and good in the majority. There may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
3: Satisfactory	This describes a basic level of adequacy. There are no major areas of weakness which substantially affect what learners, or significant groups of learners, achieve. There may be some features which are good.
4: Inadequate	This describes situations where major weaknesses in some areas affect the outcomes for learners and outweigh any strengths in the provision.

## **Introduction**

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### **Description of the provision**

Bahrain Institute of Hospitality and Retail (BIHR) was founded in 1999, and licensed by the Ministry of Labour. BIHR offers a range of vocational training in the field of hospitality and tourism industry. The institute is authorized to run externally-accredited programmes from the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI), USA and from the Australian Retailers Association (ARA), Australia. Additionally BIHR offers a range of internally-designed courses for corporate clients such as accounts and finance management, business English language courses, business management and human resource management. The institute enrolled 133 learners in the year 2012, of which 118 have accomplished their studies and the rest are working towards achieving their certificate. Most of these learners are sponsored by their employers.

BIHR operates from one centre located in Barbar. The institute employs a full-time director, a facility manger, an academic coordinator, a business development manager and four trainers. It also utilises a pool of part-time trainers from overseas as required.

### **Scope of the review**

This review was conducted over a three days period, by a team of three reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons, analysed data about the courses, examined learners' written and other work, studied documents and materials provided by the institute and met with staff, learners, employers and trainers.

In the previous review, the overall effectiveness and all other aspects of the provision were judged as good except for the quality of teaching and training and leadership and management which were judged as satisfactory.

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

## Table of review judgements awarded

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<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	
How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the full range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?	Grade: 2 Good
<b>Learners' Achievement</b>	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 2 Good
<b>Quality of Provision</b>	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	Grade: 2 Good
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	Grade: 2 Good
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade: 2 Good

## 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 2: Good**

The overall effectiveness of BIHR is good, as are the other aspects except for the quality of teaching and training which is judged as satisfactory. Most learners enjoy their learning experience and develop very useful vocational skills that enhance their career progression within their fields. They maintain a positive attitude towards their learning which enables them to enjoy their learning and progress well from their starting point. Trainers are qualified and knowledgeable in their vocational subjects and use a range of practical and relevant examples to enrich learning. However, trainers do not use sufficiently the outcome of the pre-courses assessments to fully plan lessons and meet the varying needs of all learners. Most trainers maintain suitable records about learners' attainment and progress and learners receive good written feedback in the majority of courses. BIHR offers a wide range of externally-accredited retail and hospitality programmes that highly meets the needs of learners and local stakeholders. These programmes are regularly updated and enriched with highly useful extra-curricular activities such as trips to outlets, exhibitions and trips to reputed retail and hospitality colleges abroad. Whilst most resources are of a good industrial standard, some are not updated regularly, such as the kitchen. Moreover some classrooms need to be refurbished. Learners receive effective support, guidance and counselling that help them achieve their courses objectives. Learners are inducted well before the start of their programmes and provided with access to useful extra guided hours to support them further during their studies. BIHR campus is pleasant and fit for purpose and has sufficient facilities. The institute has clear vision and mission statements and a detailed strategic plan with defined key milestones with a focus on improving learning experience. The institute's management employs rigorous procedures to recruit qualified trainers who are effectively deployed in their specialisation, the quality of their training is assured through an internal lesson observation scheme which is not sufficiently critical and trainers are not always informed of how to improve further.

BIHR has good capacity to improve. The institute gained ISO 9001-2800 standards in 2011 and has improved its internal quality assurance procedures and its monitoring mechanism. BIHR has widened its affiliation with external bodies and have signed recently an articulation agreement with Les Roches International School of Hotel Management. Since last QQA visit, the institute has undertaken some improvement actions such as the

refurbishment of some parts of the facility. The retail and the computer laboratories was upgraded and a new hospitality laboratory was built. Additionally learners are now provided with Wi Fi services throughout the campus. BIHR has recently appointed a health and safety inspector.

The institute maintains and monitors closely relevant learners' achievement records and takes improvement actions based on their trend analysis. Effective repeat business is maintained with major clients locally and regionally. The institute responds well to learners' concerns and takes corrective action, but does not systematically seek employers' views.

## **Learners' achievement**

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

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

Learners' achievement at BIHR is good overall. Most learners who attend programmes at the institute are highly enjoying their learning experience and develop very useful skills and knowledge and progress well from their starting point. Most learners are highly motivated and have positive attitude towards the courses they are enrolled on. Learners testimonies are that learning at the institute have contributed towards enhancing their career progression. Scrutinising learners pre- and post-assessment grades, their work and class activities shows that on the Retail Operations programme most learners gain effective vocationally relevant skills and make good progress. Examples were cited where a group of mobility learners have designed a well-structured mall model for their course project. Almost all learners are able to successfully complete the requirements for obtaining the qualifications they aim for.

On the soft skill courses an effective pre- and post-courses assessments are applied to measure learners' achievement and distant travelled. The assessment tools are relevant to the nature of the courses and well linked to the learning outcomes. The vast majority of learners on the soft skills courses make good progress and gain useful relevant vocational skills and knowledge that are beneficial to their workplace and duties. Employers' feedback stated that attending training programmes at BIHR has a positive impact in changing their employees' attitude and behaviour at the work place. However, a few learners are not progressing as expected.

From video clips and scrutiny of learners' work, most of learners are able to work individually and collaboratively through class activities and projects. Most learners are

highly self-motivated and participate effectively during the class as it is shown in the lessons observed. In some cases learners reflect critically on how well they are progressing.

According to the lessons observed and the records kept, learners attend regularly with an average overall attendance rate of 92% for both 2012 and 2013. Whilst records of learners' punctuality is not always maintained, there is evidence that the institute follows up on some lateness cases.

## **The quality of provision**

### **How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?**

#### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

BIHR training is satisfactory overall. Trainers have good vocational experience and are knowledgeable in their fields. This provides an opportunity for learners to build on their knowledge and understanding through real-life work-related examples. Lessons are adequately planned and trainers use a range of questioning techniques to engage learners during lessons. Most trainers use presentations and work books to evaluate learners understanding. However, trainers do not always focus on the individual learners' needs and lessons often become centred on learners with the most experience and abilities. All trainers start and end their lessons on time and learners know the importance of punctuality. Although BIHR is good at identifying learners starting point, trainers do not always use the outcome of the pre-course assessment to fully plan lessons around learners' levels of ability and learning styles. Assessments tools are well structured and learners receive good oral and written feedback throughout their course; in particular on the Retail Operations certificate. On this programme learners produce good standards of written work, assessed by trainers, then sent to the awarding body in Australia (ARA) to sample and moderate learners work and assessment practices. Trainers maintain suitable and regular records about learners' progress; in particular on the accredited retail programmes where written feedback is good and learners understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.

Learning resources are adequate in all laboratories and classrooms, however they are not always used effectively to support learners in the classroom. For example, trainers often use work books strictly and in a limited way resulting in the trainers just talking through the activities. This practice fails to challenge learners and lessons become dull and uninspiring. Trainers questioning of learners is good, however they do not always direct their questions to all learners which results in the less able learners not being fully included in discussions.



Generally, trainers encourage learners to engage in their experience of marketing which develops learners debating skills, however not all learners are fully engaged. In the practical parts of the courses, learners produce good standards of practical work, particularly for the mobility learners, which improves their confidence and team work.

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

### **Grade: 2 Good**

BIHR offers a wide range of externally-accredited and internally-designed programmes in the area of retail, hospitality and soft skills that meets the needs of learners and stakeholders. The externally-accredited programmes and short courses are customised to meet stakeholders and learners' needs, and learners' prior attainments are taken into consideration when planning for a course. The institute has selected its programmes and courses carefully from reputable external bodies in the field of retail and hospitalities such as the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI), USA, and the Australian Retailers Association (ARA), Australia. BIHR updates its programmes and courses regularly. It conducts detailed market research that enables the institute to identify the market needs for new and/or existing programmes. Learners are offered a wide range of vocationally relevant extra-curricular activities such as trips to other outlets, exhibitions and trips abroad to widen learners exposure and experiences and enhance their skills. BIHR also offers seminars conducted by well-known guest speakers from around the world where free admission is offered to past and present learners to build on their existing skills. Programmes are customised to meet learners' specific needs; particularly for the mobility learners with physical and learning disabilities. This has been beneficial in improving learners' employability skills and confidence. BIHR takes fully into considerations stakeholders needs and work and plan around their business and brand requirements. Courses are planned effectively with clear guidance on their content. Assessment is broken down to each module and learners and stakeholders have a clear understanding of the programme and course content. The course leaflets and brochures are of a high quality. BIHR has been proactive in reviewing and updating courses to meet changing employer and learner needs and have a clear understanding of the future market requirements.

Soft skills modules are offered and delivered for learners in employment to build on their existing skills and understanding of retail and hospitality sector. Whilst resources are fit for purpose and meet the industry standards, some vocational areas need updating such as the kitchen, and classrooms. The institute has recently added a new hotel room with a fully functional bathroom.

## **How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?**

### **Grade: 2 Good**

Support and guidance are good overall. Learners receive effective support and guidance which help them in their achievement. A well detailed and informative learners' handbook is provided to learners studying retail. At the start of the course an effective induction session is conducted to provide learners enrolled on the ARA programmes with information and guidance on rules, regulations and available services. Additionally, learners have access to an effective individual counselling on how to improve their studies and issues with lateness which is utilised well. BIHR follows up with learners after they complete their programme to check on their progress, and provide them with useful advice on how to improve further. A number of retail learners found good job opportunity and improved their career progression as a result of their study in the institute.

BIHR trainers provide useful guided hours to all learners to help them with their course studies and support them to accomplish their projects. Trainers are approachable and supportive during and after courses, they encourage learners to attend the guided hours and offer them the option of extra hours after session, if needed. On the externally-accredited programmes, learners are invited to attend international seminars. BIHR has arrangements in place for learners to access online resources to download extra references and find extra activities which support them with their studies. Whilst in the externally-accredited retail programmes learners are made aware of their progress through effective reports after the completion of each unit, on the non-accredited courses learners are only updated informally or through their employer.

Updated and informative course outlines are provided in advance to stakeholders. Learners and employers can access course information through informative brochures and the institute's website. Effective communication is kept with the employers by updating them with their employees' attendance and performance reports in the non-accredited courses. In the externally-accredited programmes employers are provided with individual performance reports. BIHR is highly flexible in scheduling programmes that match employers' specific needs.

The BIHR campus is pleasant, fit for purpose and has sufficient facilities such as a front office, housekeeping, hospitality and retail laboratories, in addition to training kitchens, restaurants, a resource centre and a computer laboratory. However, the kitchen is not up-to-date. All classrooms are equipped with overhead projectors, speakers, laptops, and learners can have access to Wi Fi. However, some classrooms need to be refurbished.

## Leadership and management

### How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

#### Grade: 2 Good

The institute's vision and mission statements are clear and focus on learners' development of competent skills suitable to the industry. BIHR has a strategic plan that clearly identifies key milestones and challenges, and some key performance indicators (KPIs). The institute has an effective quality assurance system, based on ISO9001-2800 requirements and procedures. Detailed employees handbook that stipulates well all the internal procedures and jobs descriptions is provided to staff members. Effective standardization and internal assessment procedures are in place. The current organizational structure meets the aims and objectives of the institute, considering the type of programmes and enrolment.

BIHR has rigorous procedures to select and recruit from a pool of qualified trainers who are appropriately deployed based on their specialisation. They are provided with a useful formal induction programme and some are provided with development opportunities within their profession. The quality of the institute's training is assured through lesson observation schemes, however the system is not sufficiently critical and trainers are not always informed of what area they need to improve further.

Leadership and management monitor learners' performance throughout their stay at BIHR; learners' achievements results are gathered and discussed at the weekly academic committee meetings, and appropriate actions are triggered. learners examination results and other learners' work are verified and monitored further by an internal verifier and very useful comments are provided on how to improve learners' achievements further. Before learners start a course, the institute has a useful measure in place to evaluate learners current level of skills and knowledge. The institute employs the outcomes of the pre-course assessment, and interview sessions, and verifies individual learner's CV, and based on this it runs SWOT analysis to decide on learners' prior attainment and places each learner at a level equivalent to his/her abilities.

Through the end-of-course feedback forms, learners' views are collected on regular basis. The written comments are aggregated and discussed and acted upon. However BIHR does not ascertain employers feedback, most feedback received from employers are on *ad hoc*

basis and are not formalised. The institute maintains highly effective links with relevant stakeholders within the same industry such as feeder schools through active participation on local and regional expos and forums and by inviting international key speakers.

Health and safety aspects are in place, the well-being of staff and learners is well maintained. The premises is safe and the health and safety policy is detailed. All fire escapes are posted in each classroom. There are number of trained first aiders available on campus and learners are provided with a useful fire awareness presentation as part of their induction programme at the start of a programme. However the institute does not routinely carry out risk assessment.

The institute's self-evaluation is informative, it provides sufficient evidence about most aspects. The submitted Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) identifies a range of relevant improvements actions but, grades provided overestimate the institute.

## The provider's key strengths

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- The effective vocationally relevant knowledge most retail learners gain and the considerable progress they make from their starting point
- The suitably qualified and vocationally experienced trainers
- The highly effective and detailed market research undertaken to identify new and existing programmes on demand
- The appropriate balance of the internally-designed and externally-accredited programmes that closely match the needs of stakeholders
- The effective support and guidance most learners receive which help them in their achievement
- The highly effective communication with stakeholders to update them with their employees' performance
- The effective quality assurance system in place.

## Recommendations

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### **In order to improve, BIHR Institute should:**

- enhance training techniques to fully engage and challenge all learners
- ensure that trainers effectively utilise the outcome of the pre-course assessment on lesson planning
- improve the effectiveness and quality of the lesson observation scheme.