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للمؤهلات وضمان جودة التعليم والتدريب
National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**Bahrain Music Institute
Mahooz
Kingdom of Bahrain**

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The Directorate of Vocational Reviews

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:

Grade description	Interpretation
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

Description of the provision

Bahrain Music Institute (BMI) was established in January 2002. It is licensed by the Ministry of Education to offer music courses for children and adults in different instruments including Piano, Keyboard, Guitar, Violin, Drum, Saxophone, Flute and Oud. Vocal and theory courses are also offered. Courses offered are either internally designed or externally-accredited by the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music (ABRSM) of the United Kingdom.

BMI operates from one centre located in Mahooz and is owned and led by the managing director. The institute has a board of governors which provides the management with useful consultations. BMI employs two full-time administrative staff; a registration clerk and a secretary, one part-time staff who is in-charge of the marketing and public relations, and one part-time accountant. The institute recruits three full-time Piano teachers, two full-time Guitar teachers and one full-time Oud teacher. In addition to four part-time teachers to teach courses on Drum, Violin, Brass and Woodwind.

During the last two years (2012 and 2013), BMI enrolled 1025 learners; 481 learners were enrolled in 2012 where 56.75 % were enrolled in externally-accredited courses, and 544 learners were enrolled in 2013 where 44.67% of them were enrolled in externally-accredited courses. Non accredited courses include Drum and Oud; they constitute 23.7% of the last two years enrolment.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over three days, by a team of four reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed training sessions and other related activities, analysed data about the programmes and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, studied documents and materials provided by the institute and interviewed staff, learners, parents and teachers.

In the previous review, all aspects of provision were judged as outstanding. This report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what the provider should do to improve.

Table of review judgements awarded

Overall Effectiveness	
How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the full range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?	Grade: 1 Outstanding
Learners' Achievement	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 1 Outstanding
Quality of Provision	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	Grade: 1 Outstanding
How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	Grade: 1 Outstanding
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	Grade: 1 Outstanding
Leadership and Management	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade 2: Good

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

BMI's overall effectiveness is outstanding. Learners' achievement, quality of teaching and training, programmes offered, and support and guidance provided to learners are all outstanding. The effectiveness of leadership and management is good. The vast majority of learners develop high-level skills and knowledge and most of them make significant progress from their starting point. This was clearly reflected in the lessons observed, examinations results, and learners' performance in concerts where they display high level of self-confidence and harmony within teamwork. Learners are very enthusiastic and take great pride in their work and the majority of them have the ability to reflect on their progress and plan on how to improve further. Learners at BMI receive effective training by highly qualified teachers who observe individual learners closely and provide instant constructive feedback on how to improve. Learners are well informed of their progress and what is needed to improve and parents are kept aware of the progress made by learners. Learners have the opportunity to choose from a wide and comprehensive range of courses which include externally-accredited and internally designed non-accredited courses which cover most musical instruments with clear and well defined progression routes. The courses offered are supported with a variety of relevant additional activities to enrich learners' experience. BMI's management is focused on improving learners' achievement and the quality of teaching and support provided to learners. Achievement is closely monitored, especially in the externally- accredited courses where trends are monitored over years. High quality training staff are recruited, sufficiently inducted and effectively deployed. Trainers' performance is monitored frequently through class observations, which are introduced recently, and need to be more detailed, results of external examinations and annual appraisals. Learners and parents' feedback are sought informally however, recently the institute started to use suitable questionnaires for that purpose. Appropriate health and safety policies and practices are in place to ensure health and well-being of learners and staff.

BMI's capacity to improve is good. Learners' retention and pass rates are maintained high at 99% and 98% respectively for the last two years. The management is committed to improve the provision; the organisation structure is expanded by recruiting one full-time Piano teacher and currently the management is finalising the recruitment of a full-time artist officer who will be in-charge of all the technical aspects of the courses offered. The

improvements accomplished include the development of the Oud curriculum, and the update of the institute website. The management is planning to expand the range of the externally-accredited courses by introducing the Trinity College curriculum for Drum courses. BMI has sufficient quality assurance measures in place and the performance of both the learners and the teachers is monitored closely. The institute has sufficient and appropriate human and physical resources to enable improvement to be carried out. The number of enrolment is maintained for the last two years and repeat business is good.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Learners' achievement is outstanding overall. Most learners make significant progress at all levels and grades; this is clearly evident from the observed sessions, examination results and learners' performance in concerts. Records of learners' achievement and progress reports show that most learners joined BMI without any background in music and achieved high standards towards the end of their courses. ABRSM examination results show that learners maintain their progress over levels and some of them score better marks and display better performance and progress in the higher course levels. Moreover, a significant number of learners make outstanding progress as reflected by their scored marks and their high level of self-confidence when playing the instruments, a few learners however need more practice to achieve their course requirements in a timely manner.

The vast majority of learners are highly skilled and develop the expected level of musical knowledge. They are confident, fluent, play the musical instruments accurately, and show well above average level of performance; these high standards were reflected in learners' attainment in most of the observed sessions and in concerts. Learners also develop other useful skills such as teamwork and confidence to perform in front of audience.

Most learners meet the level requirements successfully and achieve the certificates at which they aim for. The overall success and retention rates are at 98% and 99% respectively. These high rates are sustained for the past two years across all levels and grades of the externally-accredited courses and are reflected in the observed sessions where learners show high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding. Learners opting to sit the ABRSM examination achieve high competency rates with a significant number scoring distinction grades. Those who fail or miss their examination do not exceed 5% of the total learners registering to sit the examinations.

Parents and learners expressed their high satisfaction with the learning experience at the BMI. Learners are able to work independently and collaboratively with the teachers during the sessions or within a group during the concerts. They were very enthusiastic and self-confident, and fully engaged throughout the observed sessions. Learners take great pride in their work and the majority show an ability to reflect on how well they are performing; this was evident in the observed sessions, where learners critically identified their weaknesses and repeated their practice in an attempt to improve further.

The vast majority of learners show a very high level of commitment to their learning as reflected in the regular attendance. They utilise their time effectively at the institute to practice even without the presence of their teachers. Although attendance is recorded and monitored regularly, the system used does not aggregate this information to provide the overall attendance rate. According to the aggregation manually produced by the institute, overall attendance rate is maintained high for the past months at 88%. However, punctuality is not recorded although it was not an issue in the observed sessions.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The effectiveness of BMI teaching and training is outstanding overall. Most of the observed sessions were judged good or better. Teachers are qualified and have high level of subject knowledge and vocational expertise in the instruments they are teaching. Sessions are one-on-one where learners' individual needs are considered and met effectively. Training is learners' focus where they are kept fully engaged in their practice throughout the sessions. Sessions are well planned, with effective time management and are linked sometimes to the previous session's music notations. Most teachers use session plans that are based on the course curriculum and share the session objectives with the learners. Session usually start with warming up through practicing scales, arpeggio, practicing separate hands or sight reading of new notation to ensure that learners receive the main and the most important practices needed.

Learners are assessed accurately and rigorously through continuous in-class assessments and theoretical and practical examinations, and are provided with constructive feedback on how to improve. During the observed sessions, teachers provided continuous and instant constructive verbal feedback on how to improve. Moreover, teachers maintain highly detailed records on individual learner's progress in every session, which are updated regularly. These records usually identify areas that need further improvement. Learners are continuously challenged to improve, the musical notation provided to learners in their book progress in complexity and techniques to ensure that learners develop the targeted skills and achieve their course objectives. They are provided also with opportunities to participate in concerts and build their self-confidence to perform in front of audience. All sessions are supported by an effective deployment of high quality musical instruments and relevant ABRSM and musical books used for the theoretical and practical sessions.

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

BMI offers a wide and comprehensive range of ABRSM externally-accredited courses and a few numbers of internally designed non-accredited musical courses. These cover almost all the specialties of the instrumental music; such as keyboard, strings, woodwind, brass, percussion, vocal and music theory, in addition to a few advance courses such as Conducting, Harmony and Orchestration. The institute also offers a number of prior levels courses to prepare learners for their first grade of the ABRSM externally-accredited courses. The courses on offer are for different age groups and abilities with well-defined progression routes that highly match learners' capabilities and aspirations and meet the specific needs of learners and their parents. A number of learners completed their higher education studies in music outside Bahrain and have indicated that attending courses at BMI has helped and prepared them for their further study.

The institute has effective and reliable system for planning, delivering, assessing and monitoring learners' achievement and the progress they make on these courses. In addition, the offered courses are very well structured and resourced to match learners' needs and abilities. The design and delivery of these courses ensure the gradual, timely and accurate progression of knowledge acquisition and skills development. For example, the Oud course material is internally designed based on the curriculum of a well-known Arab world schools of Oud and is divided into a number of progression levels following the ABRSM eight levels. Furthermore, BMI published a book titled 'an introduction to the classical guitar' which is prepared by a BMI former teacher and is used as an extra material together with the ABRSM curricula. All classrooms are well resourced with high quality instruments.

A good number of additional activities are provided to learners to enrich and enhance their learning experience; for example attending workshops conducted by external well-known speakers and practitioners for Oud learners, and participating in a number of events and festivals for other instruments. Moreover, BMI conducts a number of concerts for learners such as the monthly concert, which is introduced recently for beginners, in addition to Christmas, National Day and the pre-examination concerts where learners from different levels and grades are provided with the opportunity to perform in public. These activities are highly relevant and affect learners' progress well in terms of being more confident to perform in public.

Courses are regularly updated and reviewed to meet learners' and stakeholders' needs. The institute has a policy on reviewing and updating courses offered. ABRSM course materials are reviewed regularly and updated. The institute and continuous follow-up is maintained

with the ABRSM regarding any changes introduced to the syllabus. The BMI's managing director relies on his knowledge, experience and wide relationships in the musical field to inform the provision on the quality and relevance of the offered courses. The institute publishes a newsletter regularly to inform learners and parents about the institute's activities and encourage learners to participate in concerts. Recently, BMI started to seek stakeholders' views regarding the range of the offered courses however; this process is yet to be implemented systematically.

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Learners at BMI are provided with outstanding support and guidance to help them achieve better outcomes. Newly enrolled learners are inducted effectively; they are provided with an informative guidebook for learners and parents who stipulates the institute's rules and regulations, the courses offered, the training methods used, and guidelines on how to prepare for the practical and theoretical examinations. The guidebook also includes notes for parents on how to encourage their children to practice at home. Sessions are one-on-one where teachers observe learners closely and keep detailed log of individual learners' performance in each session; identifying specific areas for development. This, with the continuous constructive feedback provided to them during the training sessions, aids learners in realising significant progress and achieving the course objectives. Low performing learners are offered extra practice and are requested to practice more at home. In addition to learners being provided with different opportunities to perform in public, those on the music theory courses are offered mock examination to prepare them for their ABRSM examination. CDs which include extra music notation are provided to learners at all levels to help them in their practice.

Learners and their parents have good access to well-informed guidance about the programmes on offer *via* updated brochures, the well-constructed and effective institute's website, and its newsletter. The 'frequently asked questions' booklet provides learners and parents with useful information about courses, registration rules, curriculum, certificates and others. Teachers provide learners and parents with a progress report every four sessions for beginners; the report includes some notes about the learner's overall performance, shows how the learner is progressing and developing technical skills and identifies the aspects which needs improvement. Results of examination are shared with learners and parents.

Arrangements for the delivery of programmes are highly flexible to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders in terms of the selecting of a suitable time slots, especially for learners who are full-time employers and/or are residents of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Learners and stakeholders are provided with clear course outlines, content and plans. The

centre's premises and facilities present a highly pleasant learning environment. Classrooms are sufficient and well equipped with the needed musical instruments such as acoustic and electrical Pianos, Violins, Guitars, and Drum sets. Pleasant painting and relevant training posters are displayed.

Leadership and management

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

Grade: 2 Good

BMI has appropriate vision and mission statements and with a focus on maximising learners' achievement and continuously improving teaching and training delivery. Recently, the institute has identified relevant long and short term objectives, which are translated to an action plan. However, the implementation is not monitored formally and progress is not recorded to show where the institute has reached in achieving the set objectives.

The management structure is fit for purpose. The institute's senior management is experienced in the field of music and sufficient and well qualified training staffs with vocational experience are employed, most of whom are employed on a full-time basis. Currently, the institute is in the process of expanding its structure by recruiting an artist officer to follow up all the technical aspects related to the training, including internal session observations, which are currently conducted by the managing director. BMI has appropriate health and safety polices and measures in place to ensure health and wellbeing of learners and staff.

Learners' achievement is sufficiently measured and relevant data are kept for all courses including the non-accredited. Prior attainment of learners is assessed suitably; new learners perform in front of the teacher and accordingly learners are placed on an appropriate level. However, this process is not documented sufficiently. The institute's management monitors learners achievement closely especially in the externally-accredited courses where learners' results are always followed up. Teachers are requested to provide detailed reports on learners failing their examinations. Results of the ABRSM examinations are discussed during the management and staff meetings. Trends of achievement are monitored over years in the externally-accredited programmes.

Qualified teachers with a wide range of experience are recruited, suitably inducted and effectively deployed. Teachers' performance is monitored and evaluated through class observations conducted lately by the managing directors, learners' results and the annual

appraisals Teachers are expected to meet set targets related to learners' achievement; they are rewarded on the percentage of learners who get Distinction or Merit grades in their ABRSM examinations.

Learners' and parents' feedback are sought mainly through informal discussions. However, during the last annual concert conducted in December 2013, the institute used a fit-for-purpose questionnaire to gather learners' and parents' feedback. Data collected are aggregated and analysed and, where possible, outcomes are used to improve the provision. For example, the institute introduced the monthly concerts for beginners based on parents' requests and added two extra classrooms for practice based on learners' requests.

BMI maintains effective links and presence with and the community by offering scholarships for talented learners through different educational and cultural government organizations. In addition, the performance of BMI teachers and learners in musical events organized by different societies and organizations.

BMI's Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) submitted for this review is sufficiently informative for the majority of the main questions, refers to relevant supporting evidence and identifies some areas for development.

The provider's key strengths

- The vast majority of learners are highly skilled, develop useful knowledge of their specialization, and most of them make significant progress from their starting point
- Teachers are highly qualified and have relevant theoretical and practical command of their specialism and the musical instruments they teach
- Training sessions effectively consider and meet learners' individual needs and succeed in keeping the learner fully engaged throughout the practical activities
- Teachers accurately and regularly assess learners and highly effective feedback is provided on how to improve further
- A wide and comprehensive range of externally-accredited (ABRSM) and a few number of internally designed non-accredited musical courses are offered with clear progression routes which meet the needs of learners and stakeholders
- Courses are supported with a variety of additional activities that enriches the learning experience
- Learners are well supported and guided to help them achieve better outcomes
- Learners' achievement is closely monitored, especially in the externally-accredited courses.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Bahrain Music Institute should:

- ensure that class observations are systematically conducted and that outcomes are always recorded for better follow-ups to ensure continuous quality improvement
- develop and implement a formal mechanism to collect, aggregate and analyse learners and parents' feedback and utilise the outcomes to improve the provision.