Directorate of Vocational Reviews
First Monitoring Visit Report

Delmon Academy for Computer and Managerial Sciences

Manama

Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of last review: 24-26 December 2012
Date of First monitoring visit: 22 October 2014
VO094-C2-Ma008

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Monitoring visit

The purpose of monitoring visits is to evaluate the progress made by an institute in addressing the key issues for action identified by the review report.

Information about the provider

The Delmon Academy for Computer and Managerial Sciences, hereinafter referred to as Delmon Academy, was established in 2010 and is licensed by the Ministry of Labour. Delmon Academy is located in Seef District.

Delmon Academy offers a range of short non-accredited courses mainly in business, management, English language, and soft skills as well as two externally accredited programmes, namely: International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) and the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT). AAT is offered at three levels. Delmon Academy is an ICDL approved training and test centre. Since the last review in December 2012, the Academy has trained 148 learners. The ICDL learners comprise 52% of the total enrolments of the Academy.

Currently the Academy is staffed by a managing director, an assistant managing director, a training manager, a quality assurance manager, a programmes coordinator, and two administrative staff. The Academy employs a pool of trainers; almost all of whom are employed on a part-time basis.

Last review outcomes

The overall effectiveness of Delmon Academy was judged as inadequate in the last review. However, the quality of teaching and training, the effectiveness of programmes in meeting the needs of learners and stakeholders and the effectiveness of leadership and management as well as the capacity to improve were all judged as satisfactory. Nevertheless, the review report concluded that although teaching and training was just sufficient to deliver the materials, learners were not routinely successful in achieving the targeted qualifications, or in making sufficient progress, especially on the longer accredited programmes. In the AAT programmes, the pass rates were on average below the international pass rates by a significant margin and in the ICDL programmes, the pass rates were much lower than those seen with similar providers. The review report stated that these results occurred either from the inappropriate placement of

learners, or from the insufficient support measures provided to help those learners struggling to achieve better. Assessment of learners' prior attainment was not always sufficient or used effectively enough to plan for sessions or to accommodate the full range of learners' needs.

While for the accredited courses, records for individual learners' progress were kept, not all learners were assessed formally on the non-accredited courses to facilitate tracking of their progress. In addition, programmes were appropriately resourced, yet some programmes, especially the longer ones, lacked sufficient opportunities for enrichment activities. The review report also highlighted that the provider lacked effective strategic planning and clear objectives that can be systematically monitored. Monitoring of trainers' performance through lesson observations was also an issue, as the outcomes of these observations were not sufficiently critical. It was also observed that the analyses and monitoring of learners' views were not systematic enough to identify and monitor improvement trends. Therefore the institute is subjected to a monitoring visit to assess the progress it is making in addressing the recommendations detailed in the review report.

Any significant changes to the provider since the last review:

A number of improvements have been made by the newly reformed management team who has been assigned clear roles and responsibilities. Focused strategic and detailed action plans are now in place and used to steer the improvement efforts. The Academy has now clear focus on quality improvement through the establishment of a quality assurance committee and development of a number of relevant procedures and forms. The Academy is now located at a better venue at Seef area with improved administration, particularly as exhibited from the standardized course file system resulting in more consistent documentation and training process audits. The Academy held a number of training and development workshops to staff and trainers on a few relevant aspects. The majority of the recommendations of the last review have been addressed by the provider.

Criteria for judging progress on an issue / recommendation and the provider overall progress:

Table 1: Judgement per recommendation

Judgement	Standard
Fully Addressed	The provider has demonstrated marked progress in addressing the recommendation. The actions taken by the provider have led to significant improvements in the identified aspect and, as a consequence, in the overall effectiveness of the provider, particularly in the outcomes for learners.
Partially Addressed	The provider has taken positive action to address the recommendation. There is evidence that these actions have produced improvements and that these improvements are sustainable. The actions taken are having a positive, but as yet incomplete, impact on the quality of provision and outcomes for learners.
Not Addressed	The provider has not taken appropriate actions to address the recommendation and/or what actions have been taken have had little or no impact on the quality of provision and outcomes for learners. Weaknesses still persist within this aspect of provision.

Table 2: Overall Grading

Grade	Grade Description	Standard
A	**Sufficient progress**	The provider has fully addressed the majority of the recommendations contained in the review report, and/or previous monitoring report, and includes those which have most impact on learners' achievement, and the rest have been partially addressed. **No further monitoring is required.**
B	**In progress**	The provider has at least partially addressed all of the recommendations contained in the review report and/or previous monitoring report.
C	**Insufficient progress**	The provider has made little or no progress in addressing the majority of the recommendations contained in the review report and/or previous monitoring report.

Progress on recommendations

Recommendation 1:

Improve learners' attainment and progress in AAT, ICDL and English courses.

Judgment: partially addressed

Comment:

Overall, learners develop relevant skills and knowledge appropriate to their chosen profession. Most learners progress appropriately and their attainment level has improved since last review, as indicated from the sessions observed and learners' work. According to the 'individual performance reports' produced by the trainers, the ICDL post-course assessment results are high, indicating a comparable success rate with another well-known institute in the local market. However, these attainment grades could not be verified due to the lack of any official documents or ICDL issued certificates for the groups of learners who attempted the final examination. The ICDL learners comprise more than half of the total enrolment of the Academy. On the other hand, most of the learners in the English courses have high attainment and generally progress well. Their gained knowledge is up to a good extent. They comprise 11% of the Academy intake. While the AAT course is still available in the list of courses on offer, it has not been delivered to any groups or individuals since the last review.

Recommendation 2:

Ensure that all learners are assessed initially, continuously and at the end of the course; and ensure that assessments are reliable and relevant to course objectives.

Judgement: fully addressed

Comment:

Learners' prior and post- course attainment are appropriately assessed across all courses with useful comments from the trainers. The assessment methods and contents are relevant to the course objectives and reliable. The majority of assessments have marking rubric to be followed by the trainer to identify the different levels of learners. Appropriate assessment and grading of the learners' work are used as seen from the marked activities, presentations, and reports produced. In the case of ICDL, the pre-course assessment is developed internally by the trainer; it is in-line with the course objectives and the learning outcomes, and is set at a suitable level. The post-course examination is taken online, with the presence of the trainer and an external invigilator from the ICDL. However, no ICDL official records were provided by the Academy to ascertain the success rate of those who attended these examinations.

Recommendation 3:

Make courses, particularly the longer ones, more engaging by enriching them with relevant extra-curricular activities

Judgment: fully addressed

Comment:

The Academy has developed a plan to enrich the learning experience in many courses with extra-curricular activities. These are in the form of invited speakers, related lectures or group site visits, followed by a mini report related to the studied topics, to be produced by the learners. Many examples were seen in soft skills and English courses, where they conducted a number of these activities, with relevant reports produced by the learners. For the ICDL, a guest speaker was invited and talked about e-commerce security, and a site visit to a local Bank has been scheduled. Lately in 2014, the Academy has expanded the plan to include extra-curricular activities on all courses. The plan included different types of awareness, cultural, educational trips, contests, celebrations and social meetings. Some of these events are in the form of social activities which are not directly relevant to the long courses in particular, yet the Academy has just started implementing this new plan.

Recommendation 4:

Improve all learners' achievement by providing them with systematic and personalised support to overcome their individualised weaknesses

Judgment: partially addressed

Comment:

Delmon Academy has made a few measures to address this recommendation such as introducing special needs and differentiation policy, discussing learners' difficulties in a number of meetings, using a form for categorizing learners at three levels and introducing relevant rubric for assessing learners' work and activities accordingly. Trainers also add their comments on lesson plans to highlight certain issues with a number of learners who need further attention. Individual support and follow-up forms are also introduced but occasionally used. However, the impact of this on improving learners' achievement is not yet evident, particularly on the long courses to help them achieve their intended qualifications.

Recommendation 5:

Introduce more specific and detailed strategic objectives to improve the provision overall and regularly monitor their progress

Judgment: fully addressed

Comment:

Delmon Academy has recently developed appropriate strategic and detailed action plans. These plans are well-focused on addressing the identified areas for development to improve the quality of the provision. The set goals are linked to improving teaching, enriching the curriculum, improving learners' achievement and improving the quality of performance monitoring. The action plan has clear lines of accountability, time scales and key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor the progress made towards achieving the set priorities. However, a few of these KPIs are not always practically measurable. Monitoring of the implementation of the set objectives is done through a follow-up form and the periodic reporting of performance in the regularly held management meetings.

Recommendation 6:

Enhance trainers' performance by applying lesson observations more critically

Judgment: fully addressed

Comment:

Trainers' performance is monitored regularly in class using a suitable form. Performance grading on these forms are generally critical with useful identification of strengths and areas for development. However, occasionally the low graded items are not commented on to help trainers improve. An appropriate procedure is in place with some useful information relevant to observing trainers' performance in class. A workshop on lesson observation was held to the senior management to enhance their skills in monitoring trainers' performance. Trainers were also provided with development opportunities that include workshops on assessment for learning and another on how to cater for differentiation in class.

Recommendation 7:

Ensure that the outcomes of learners' and employers' views are fully utilised by introducing improvement actions based on their feedback

Judgment: fully addressed

Comments:

Learners' feedback is systematically collected and aggregated. The outcome is reported to the management in detailed reports and shared with trainers. Actions are identified and some specific meetings and instructions are provided to trainers to consider learners' feedback. Trainers also adjust their lesson plans based on sensing learners emerging needs. A relevant policy on seeking stakeholders' feedback and acting on its outcomes is in place. A number of additional useful forms have been developed and recently used to gather the views of learners and employers including 'Training Impact Form', 'Self-review Sheet' and 'Feedback on Activity Form'. Due to the small number of courses, formal feedback collected from employers has been limited.

Overall Judgement and Further Recommendations

Overall Judgement: in progress

Comment:

It is evident that Delmon Academy has made adequate progress in addressing the majority of the recommendations, particularly the setting up of focused strategic and action plans that are periodically monitored. The restructured management team and the development of various policies, procedures and relevant forms, streamlined the training administration process and resulted on better standardization of course documentation and record keeping, especially for the recent courses. However, with the limited range of evidence provided on supporting the claimed improvements on the success rate of the ICDL learners, overall Delmon Academy is still in progress towards addressing all recommendations and it needs to use its recently improved processes and resources to create a positive impact on the overall success rate. Further evidence is required to show that focused support to those learners in need of individual attention to achieve better helped them achieve their intended qualifications. From the range of developments the Academy has recently introduced, it appears that there is sufficient capacity to improve to address the remaining aspects of the recommendations and achieve higher success rates.

Summary of progress grades

Overall progress grade	Grade: B	Description: In progress
Recommendations	**Description**	
Recommendation 1	Partially addressed	
Recommendation 2	Fully addressed	
Recommendation 3	Fully addressed	
Recommendation 4	Partially addressed	
Recommendation 5	Fully addressed	
Recommendation 6	Fully addressed	
Recommendation 7	Fully addressed	