



Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**Excellence Training Solutions (ETS)
Sanad
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 5-7 October 2015

VO031-C3-R010

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Introduction

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA), conducted this review over three days, by a team of three 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 talked with learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

In the previous review, all aspects of the Excellence Training Solutions (ETS) provision were judged as satisfactory.

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

Grading scale:

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

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

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The overall effectiveness of ETS is satisfactory, as are all aspects of its provision except the quality of programmes which is good. The provider offers a good range of well-designed and attendance-based and externally-accredited courses that are highly responsive to stakeholders' and learners' requirements and aspiration. Courses are conducted by vocationally qualified trainers. They use their real-life experience and a useful range of training methodologies to stimulate learners' critical thinking and get learners engaged and motivated during sessions. However, in a minority of lessons activities time take longer than anticipated and marking and grading of learners' written assessments are inconsistent as these works are either not fully corrected or given inaccurate marks. The majority of learners gain and develop useful vocational skills and knowledge that are relevant to the world of work and to their day-to-day duties. Considering their starting point, the majority of learners progress reasonably through courses. However, a minority of learners do not develop skills and knowledge to the required standard.

ETS administration staff and trainers are supportive and provide learners with the required guidance. Trainers make themselves available to learners *via* their personal contacts and provide advice and consultation related to learners' workplace during and after courses. Learners who may require assistance with course-related or personal matters may also contact trainers directly. Although, ETS management has a focused vision, mission and sufficiently detailed strategic plan that is based on self-evaluation and a detailed SWOT analysis, arrangement for action planning and internal quality assurance are not fully disseminated across the organisation to impact continuous improvement. ETS management maintains useful links with relevant local and international stakeholders within the same industry to update and enhance their offering to reflect market changes and demands.

Capacity to improve

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

ETS has satisfactory capacity to improve. The management has taken steps towards addressing the QQA previous review outcomes. However, some recommendations are not yet fully implemented, such as ensuring that rigorous assessment is applied in all courses. The institute has recently broadened the range of its internally and externally-accredited courses and added new ones such as courses accredited by the Institute of the Leadership and Management (ILM), the Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance (HABC) and the American Heart Association (AHA). Currently, ETS is seeking the approval to expand the range of its courses offering by introducing new courses from the Institute of Sales and Marketing Management (ISMM). Whilst the provider has useful strategic and operation plans, that are focused on providing quality of training to its learners and has various quality assurance documentations in place, the provider's capacity to improve is hindered by the ineffective arrangement to monitor learners' achievements and implementation of internal quality assurance practices to impact continuous improvement. Enrolment is maintained along with an adequate repeat business for the past three years with major clients. The management maintains effective links with stakeholders and learners. The institute gathers stakeholders and learners' views at the end of a course, however, takes limited improvement actions to address these.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

Learners' achievement at ETS is satisfactory overall. The majority of learners gain and develop useful vocational skills and knowledge that help them with their professional duties. The majority of learners achieve course objectives and are awarded completion certificate after attending 75% of the required course hours. Moreover, in order to establish a starting point from which the impact of learning can be measured, ETS utilises relevant initial assessment to understand learners' prior attainment. Formative and summative assessments vary in level and rigorousness; nevertheless, these are generally sufficient to measure individual learner's attainment against the course objectives. The provided Learners' Performance Data (LPD) for the last three years indicates that the overall success rates are high; around 90% in the majority of courses such as the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) and the Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance (HABC) courses.

Despite this, a minority of learners do not develop skills and knowledge to the required standard.

Evidence from the meetings with learners, scrutinising the records of their works and the outcome of sessions observed by the review team revealed that, the majority of learners improve their skills and knowledge from their starting points. In addition the analysis of pre- and post-course assessment indicates that learners make sufficient progress during the courses. Also, the majority of the interviewed stakeholders express their satisfaction on meeting the course objectives, and the abilities of their employees to benefit from the learnt knowledge on their day-to-day responsibilities.

Throughout the course, learners need to fill in an individualised operational plan form. The outcome of this plan revealed that, the majority of learners reflect well on their learning and what skills they can implement at workplace and life.

It is evident from the learners' active participation and discussions during the observed sessions that, the majority of learners are attentive, have positive attitude, self-motivation, and are enjoying their learning. Generally, ETS learners have the abilities to work independently and collaboratively within a team when given opportunities; and reflect critically on what they need to do to improve. Relevant records of attendance and punctuality are regularly maintained. Learners attend regularly. However, punctuality remains an issue as it is not well recorded.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

ETS's effectiveness and assessment in promoting learning is satisfactory. ETS's trainers have good command of their specialism and are able to utilise relevant real-life examples to address learners' questions and make useful connection between concepts to learners' professional environment. Generally, suitable range of training methodologies are used by trainers to engage and motivate learners in the majority of sessions. In better sessions trainers adopt effective participative teaching approach using the 'star method' to motivate learners to participate along with use of praising words and open discussions. Trainers use a range of questioning and relevant vocational examples to stimulate learners' critical thinking. For instances, learners are required to analyse and evaluate situations and reflect on their findings in front of their classmates. Learning resources and materials are used

effectively to aid the delivery of the training. These include informative slide shows; data show projectors, flip charts and relevant video clips.

Lesson plans are sufficiently structured with clear objectives, aligned to learning resources and to the on-going assessments of learners. Moreover, trainers have access to useful pre-course reports, which include useful information about learners' prior knowledge and expectation in order to customise session delivery accordingly. Sessions start on time and objectives are shared. However, in a minority of sessions, activities time take longer than anticipated.

Trainers cater for learners' individual needs well through practical relevant examples, reiterating information, simplified Arabic or English language and co-teaching. In addition, learners are assessed adequately through relevant pre- and post-course tests and trainers use direct questioning, activities to gauge learners' understanding and provide instant and suitable verbal feedback. However, generally marking and grading of written assessments are inconsistent as parts of learners' work are not corrected fully or given inaccurate marks. ETS keeps records of learners' performance and provides performance report at the end of the course, which contains scored marks, learner's attendance and feedback comments. Nevertheless, the reports are not sufficiently detailed.

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

Grade: Good (2)

ETS utilises the outcome of the yearly industry surveys and through various communication channels with the market place to obtain valuable information about the labour market training needs. As a result, ETS offers courses that are highly responsive to stakeholders' and learners' requirements and aspiration. Furthermore, ETS customises a range of short courses, as in the case of the First Aid and health and safety courses for specific clients' needs. Additionally, in order to develop and customise courses that addresses the clients' specific needs, ETS offers TNA services at different levels of the clients' operation to gauge their requirements, such as the specialised TNA that was conducted on a wholesale environment.

ETS offers a good range of attendance-based courses which are short in nature and cover soft skills and basic leadership and management areas. The institute caters for employers' specific requirements. Additionally, it also offers a few externally-accredited courses from the Institute of the Leadership and Management (ILM), the Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance (HABC) and other courses from the American Heart Association (AHA).

ETS has effective formal mechanism in place to design, approve, review and update courses. Detailed course outlines are shared with stakeholders and learners. Course developer ensures that course assessments and activities are suitably integrated to match course objectives and outcomes. Moreover, all ILM courses follow the international awarding body standards. Courses are resourced well to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. Such resources include relevant training games, videos segments and handouts. Likewise, health and safety courses are sufficiently resourced with first aid dummies and kits. Considering the nature of these short courses, ETS provides relevant extra-activities to enrich the learning experience, such as on-site trips in the health and safety course and mystery shopping activities in the soft skills courses.

ETS has clear access and entry-level requirements to all courses. Local attendance and externally-accredited courses have specific target audience, which are clearly stated on the courses outlines. Additionally, learners on attendance courses are screened before they are enrolled and useful information about their educational background and prior skills are gathered and communicated with trainers in advance, which are utilised for the sessions' planning.

How well learners are supported and guided?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

ETS support and guidance provided to learners is satisfactory overall. In order to help learners achieve better outcomes, ETS has a useful procedure in place to support learners and to assist with course-related and personal matters as and when required. Administration staff are supportive and provide learners with the needed support and guidance. Moreover, trainers are approachable through contact details that are made available to learners to provide advice and consultation related to their workplace during and after the course. Although learners' performance report is shared with employers at the end of the course, the report is not sufficiently informative as these reports do not indicate how learners have progressed or gained the required skills, knowledge and how to improve further. Individual learners who face learning challenges are provided with one-on-one support.

Before the start of a course, learners have access to appropriate guidance on course selection through informative brochures that are available at provider's website and various social media. In addition, useful course outlines and content are specified in writing, and shared with employers in advance.

In the first day of a course, learners are made aware of the assessment procedure, attendance policy and general rules through a useful trainee handbook. Moreover, ETS ensures that learners are familiar with health and safety precautions. Training coordinators are available during course delivery to deal with logistical arrangement and any assistance that learners may require.

The provider is flexible in accommodating employers and learners working hours and uses a range of suitable outside premises to run courses, it ensures that these venues are comfortable, safe and conducive to learning. ETS learning environment and facilities are safe and fit for purpose; it includes suitably equipped class rooms, IT laboratories, small library and dedicated prayer room.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

ETS has clear vision and mission statements which are linked to its strategic planning and focused on raising learner's achievement. Whilst these plans are reviewed periodically; action planning is not disseminated across the organisation to impact continuous improvement. ETS organisational structure is adequate to meet its aims and objectives; sufficient human and physical resources are in place. The organization structure includes chief executive, general manager, quality manager and administration staff. Job roles and responsibilities for every function are clearly identified. Although the institute maintains various quality assurance policies, procedure and manuals including internal lesson observation, these practices are not fully utilised to improve the quality of training and assessment as most procedures are not fully implemented in its operation, for instant, the areas that trainers need to improve further although identified, are not followed up systematically.

Whilst, ETS monitors learners' achievement and carries out basic analysis, identified areas that the institute needs to improve further are not systematically acted upon. The institute recruits qualified trainers on full- and part-time basis. Full-time staff are appraised annually and provided with sufficient development opportunities. Trainers once recruited are effectively deployed within the area of their specialisation and provided with sufficient induction on the provider's training approach.

Learners' feedback are sufficiently gathered, aggregated, and occasionally limited actions are taken to address their views. Useful links with relevant regional and international bodies

are maintained and used to update and enhance courses to meet market changes. ETS health and safety procedures and practices are in place. The premises is maintained to reasonable standards, layout is suitable for the nature of the business. The provider conducts self-evaluation periodically and a management review report is produced on monthly basis. The submitted Self-Evaluation-Form (SEF) is sufficiently detailed and covers most aspects of the provider's operation. Although the SEF highlights a few relevant areas that the provider needs to improve, these are not critical enough, and the grades provided overestimate the provision.

The provider's key strengths

- The effective links maintained with regional and international bodies used to enhance courses.
- The wide range of courses on offer that match stakeholders' and learners' needs and aspiration.
- The useful advice and consultation provided by trainers and staff relevant to learners workplace during and after the course.

Recommendations

In order to improve, ETS should:

- ensure that learners develop skills and knowledge relevant to their learning and course level
- improve teaching and assessment by:
 - ensuring that assessment and marking of learners' work is consistent
 - ensuring learners' performance report is informative and convey the areas that learners need to improve further.
- strengthen the leadership and management by:
 - enhancing the approach for gathering and analysing learners' achievement across the institute and ensure that outcomes are used to trigger further improvement
 - improving the internal quality assurance system to monitor and improve the overall performance of trainers, assessments and verification.

Appendix

Overview of the institute

Excellence Training Solutions was established in 2005; it is licensed by the Ministry of Labour to offer management, soft skills and health and safety basic courses. Most courses are short and non-accredited with a few that have recently been endorsed by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM). ETS also runs a range of courses that are accredited by the Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance (HABC) and American Heart Association (AHA).

ETS operates from one location in Sanad area. It is managed by a chief executive who is also the owner, and recruits a general manager, and a quality manager, in addition to administration staff. ETS has four full-time trainers and a pool of part-time trainers who work as and when needed. Since 2012, the provider enrolled 2198 learners on various courses; all are sponsored by their employers.