



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

Directorate of Vocational Reviews

Review Report

Future Institute for Training & Development
Isa Town
Kingdom of Bahrain

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Introduction

The Directorate 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 certificates learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and the materials provided by the Institute and met with learners, stakeholders, trainers, management and support staff.

In the previous review the overall effectiveness of Future Institute for Training & Development (FITD) was judged as inadequate, as were learners' achievement, quality of teaching and training, support and guidance, and leadership and management while the quality of programmes was judged as satisfactory.

This Report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what the Institute 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	Judgement
Learners' achievement	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of programmes	Satisfactory (3)
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 the Future Institute for Training & Development (FITD) is satisfactory, as are all aspects of its provision. Learners generally gain and develop vocationally relevant skills and knowledge across the appropriately structured and planned courses that generally meet learners' and stakeholders' needs. Learners display a positive attitude towards their learning, and the majority make sufficient progress relevant to their prior attainments and complete the course requirements in a timely manner at which time they receive attendance certificates. However, a minority do not master the required skills upon completing their courses and/or their progress is minimal. Most of the courses are of short duration, where learners are properly supported and guided to improve but not necessarily to achieve the best outcomes. Relevant formative and summative assessment methods are used to evaluate learners' understanding and measure their achievement of their course objectives. However, assessment methods in a minority of courses are not sufficiently rigorous. Records on learners' performance are kept in the majority of courses and adequately monitored, though the results are not aggregated or analysed to monitor trends over time.

FITD has qualified trainers who use their professional experience to enrich training by providing practical real-life examples and deploying an adequate range of training methodologies and learning resources to facilitate learning. The majority of learners are engaged, though in a minority of cases the training methods used do not sufficiently motivate learners to participate productively throughout the session or stimulate their higher order thinking. Trainers use suitable lesson plans, although the outcomes of learners' prior or continuous assessments are not used to inform lesson planning. Appropriate links with stakeholders are maintained, where FITD properly senses their needs and is responsive to their requirements. However, the mechanisms for designing, updating and reviewing the courses are not sufficiently systematic.

The newly appointed management and the staff are managing the day-to-day operations to a suitable standard. Strategic planning is linked to the outcomes of the self-evaluation process, though this is not done regularly and the plan is ineffectively monitored. Trainers are suitably deployed, inducted, and their performance is regularly monitored. However, the completed class observation forms are not sufficiently detailed. The internal quality assurance system is ineffective and a number of policies and procedures are not sufficiently detailed or holistic to

cover all of the courses' components. The verification and moderation processes are not implemented effectively.

Capacity to improve

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

During the last three years the management have made improvements, partially addressing the last review recommendations particularly in improving learners' achievement and the quality of training. The Institute has developed a suitable action plan to address the identified key areas for improvement from the last review, which have been implemented. For example, the internal lesson observations system has been improved, now being more critical, although the completed forms are not always sufficiently detailed. Another example is that learners' achievement is measured and the data is kept. Although a number of externally accredited courses have been discontinued since the last review these have been replaced in 2016 and 2017 with a few specialised soft skills courses. There are plans to establish affiliations with international awarding bodies in order to offer externally accredited courses, and to broaden the range of local courses to include more training courses specifically in the fields of finance, accounting and information technology. Other improvements include the recruitment of a general manager and a trainer on a full-time basis. Based on the enrolment levels, the organisational structure is fit for purpose and the Institute has a plan to expand it further to include more staff specifically in marketing and quality assurance. The new management team and the staff are qualified and have a vision focused on improving the provision. The Institute has sufficient physical resources and access to a pool of experienced and qualified trainers. The number of enrolments and the courses offered have been improved in the last two years, compared to 2014 and 2015. Overall, reasonable repeat business is maintained through employees of AL Meer Group. Moreover, the management has carried out a range of development initiatives, including signing Memorandums of Understanding with a few companies and improving the learning environment. There is also a plan to further improve the current learning environment or to move to better quality premises.

Overall the self-evaluation process is adequate, though it is not comprehensive nor is it regularly carried out to trigger continuous improvement. The Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) submitted for this review is fairly informative and identifies a range of improvement actions, but the grades are overestimated. Notwithstanding the above, the recruitment of full-time staff has slightly impacted the implementation of Quality Assurance (QA) measures; although the current QA system is not fully developed the arrangements have improved since the last review, with a proper QA manual which has been updated to include more relevant policies

and procedures and has developed a number of forms which have been implemented in some courses. However, a number of the policies and procedures are insufficiently detailed, or do not properly cover all aspects, such as those relevant to the monitoring of trainers' performance and learners' achievement. Also, a few of the practices are ineffectively or inconsistently implemented, particularly regarding the moderation and verification processes.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

Learners acquire knowledge and develop appropriate vocational skills relevant to their chosen courses. This is evident from learners' contributions and their levels of understanding in the sessions observed, their assessment results, and the available samples of their work. Feedback received from the different groups of learners and stakeholders expresses their satisfaction with the learning experience at the Institute and confirms that the skills developed are relevant to and to some extent impact their performance at their workplace. Learners achieve appropriate levels of attainment, as revealed in the standard of their work and analysis of post-course tests' results. The majority of learners make adequate progress considering their prior attainments, this being evident from the performance records available for the majority of courses and the comparisons of the pre- and post-course test results. However, a minority of learners do not achieve as expected and have difficulty in successfully completing the required tasks, thereby gaining only minimal value from their course.

Analysis of the Learners' Performance Data (LPD) indicates that the overall retention and success rates across the provision are almost 100%, which is to be expected in courses with such short and very short durations, most of them not exceeding eighteen hours. The vast majority of learners complete their course requirements and are awarded certificates of attendance upon attending a minimum of 85% of the approved training hours. A variety of formative and summative assessment tools are used to measure learners' achievements, though the results of these are not considered when granting the certificate.

From the observed sessions and scrutiny of learners' work, the majority of learners are able to work independently and/or collaboratively during the in-class activities and discussions. Learners are attentive and the majority demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning experience. However, only a minority of learners are self-motivated and able to reflect suitably on each other. This is evident from their interactions with their trainers during the observed sessions and the sharing of cases from their work experience. The Institute uses a self-

evaluation form and an end of course evaluation questionnaire in which learners are asked for feedback on their learning experiences, though some of the completed forms are not sufficiently critical nor are they closely followed up by trainers.

The Institute has a brief attendance policy which is suitably implemented. From the sessions observed and the attendance records it is evident that the majority of learners do attend regularly and on time, but there are a number of cases where learners arrive late.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

Trainers are qualified and have relevant theoretical and practical command of their specialisms. Their experience and subject knowledge are shown in their accurate explanations of concepts, appropriate responses to learners' questions and enhancement of the course delivery with a range of useful vocationally-related examples and practical real-life cases. They also encourage learners to provide relevant examples from their own work experience. Trainers use generic lesson plans with clear objectives, though these plans are not sufficiently informed by the outcomes of prior attainments or continuous assessments of learners. Trainers adequately accommodate the different individual learning needs, as training targets the average level of learners who make up the majority. Sessions are appropriately controlled and generally time-managed with brief recapitulation of the previously covered materials, though they only occasionally start on time and in a minority of cases time management is ineffective.

Trainers use an appropriate range of training methods to deliver their sessions, such as lecturing, open discussions, questioning techniques and role plays as well as an adequate number of individual and group activities to engage the majority of learners. The available learning resources and materials are used suitably to deliver the courses and facilitate the learning experience, including the proper use of data show projectors, clear PowerPoint presentations, whiteboards, flipcharts, videos and specific course materials. Nevertheless, from the observed sessions, trainers rarely use approaches that enhance learners' thinking and encourage self-learning through challenging follow-up questions. Moreover, in some instances trainers are not sufficiently able to actively engage the less motivated learners to participate effectively throughout the training sessions.

It is evident from the observed sessions and videos of previous courses that trainers check learners' levels of understanding and their abilities to complete the in-class activities. This is

done through a variety of formative assessments such as targeted and open questioning techniques, practical activities and exercises. Relevant Summative assessment methods are also used to measure learners' individual attainment, such as post-course tests in the majority of the local attendance courses. These assessments include a mix of objective and open-type questions that are appropriately linked to the course objectives, and are usually marked. However, in a minority of cases the marking of assessments is not sufficiently rigorous. Learners' performance records are generally maintained in most courses. Learners are provided with instant verbal feedback to help them improve, though the written feedback provided on the limited amount of learners' work available is not constructive enough and does not precisely focus on where learners can improve further.

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The Institute offers a number of short and very short local attendance-based vocational courses in the fields of management and soft skills for the workplace. These courses are implemented according to an appropriate mechanism that mainly depends on conducting frequent meetings with the senior managers of specific organisations to identify their employees' training needs. The course contents are based on analysis and understanding of the stakeholders' requirements. According to analysis of learners' and stakeholders' feedback, the courses offered generally meet their vocational needs. In collaboration with a consultancy company FITD also carried out a Training Needs Analysis for specific organisations; this was done under the umbrella of the parent company using a number of different methods such as data collection, questionnaires and interviews. A number of the Institute's courses are based on the recommendations. However, the Institute lacks a holistic approach to systematically analyse local labour market needs.

Courses are appropriately designed to enhance the learners' levels of understanding, with proper course outlines and basic course plans which clearly indicate the course objectives and topics to be covered, though the training and assessment methods are not always included. The different components of the courses are suitably structured with sufficient theoretical and practical course material which is supported with a sufficient number of activities. The scheduling of contents and the structure of assessments are adequately planned in a sequence that gradually increases the acquisition of knowledge and skills' improvement. The Institute relies on learners' end-of-course feedback and their achievement results to review and update courses. Policies and procedures have been developed for the design, evaluation and update of these training courses, and there are dedicated forms for this purpose. The preparation, design and update of the training courses are the responsibility of the trainers, though they

are then approved by the Institute's management. However, there is no specific rubric to be followed for the evaluation and approval processes, these procedures being conducted through verbal agreements and not officially documented. The relevant forms have not been utilised fully up to the date of the review.

The Institute provides adequate resources and materials for the delivery of the courses, meeting the needs of learners and stakeholders. Resources include PowerPoint presentations and relevant materials. A few courses are enriched with limited extra-curricular activities such as end of course projects, to support and enhance the learning process. The Institute has a proper mechanism for signing up to courses, clearly specifying the target audiences in the course outlines and brochures. Courses on offer are soft skills, and by their nature and contents do not require a great deal of screening of learners' background; where needed, the language used is adjusted to learners' requirements.

How well are learners supported and guided?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

Considering the nature of the courses offered at the Institute and their duration – soft skills courses with short duration – FITD has adequate arrangements to support learners through a fit-for-purpose support and guidance mechanism. Learners and stakeholders receive adequate advice and guidance on courses on offer; they have access to information about the courses, offered through various means including telephone, emails, meetings and promotional brochures. However, the information on the Institute's website and the social media applications are not sufficient nor are they updated frequently. Prior to commencement of a course, the course outlines and sometimes the course contents are shared with learners. Learners receive an informal induction session by the General Manager on the first day of their course to familiarise them with key aspects related to their learning. This includes information about the Institute, general rules and regulations in the classrooms, health and safety arrangements and the available facilities at the Institute. They are provided with verbal encouragement on their course of study and their career progression and development. The Institute has suitable arrangements to support learners with special needs. FITD has recently developed special forms for talented and less able learners, though there has been only one case seen for each category, where the support provided was just adequate. Nevertheless, the overall support provided is not sufficiently systematic to help learners reach their full potential, and the current written policy for this purpose is not comprehensive and covers all categories of learners including those with special needs.

The Institute communicates appropriately with relevant stakeholders through a variety of approaches. Final reports are shared upon course completion; these mainly summarise the course information and the outcomes of learners' end of course evaluations including

recommendations for the future. However, only in a few courses has an individualised learners' performance report been shared with stakeholders which contains information about learners' attendance, grades and their attitude towards their learning. The arrangements for delivery and scheduling of courses are sufficiently flexible to suit the convenience of learners and stakeholders in terms of preferred course timings, dates, choice of venues and language of instruction; these are discussed with them to meet specific needs. Most courses are held at the Institute's premises, where the learning environment is to some extent appropriate, training classrooms being properly equipped with the necessary learning aids and resources. However, these premises are not sufficiently conducive to learning.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The Institute has shared vision and mission statements which are sufficiently focused on improving the quality of the provision. The management team has developed a three-year strategic plan with a set of objectives that are appropriately challenging and are focused on improving the quality of the provision and specifically improving learners' achievement. The plan is translated into an operational plan through which the strategic objectives are cascaded into actions with clear accountabilities. However, the stated actions are not always specific, a number of the identified Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are not measurable, and the progress made in achieving the objectives is not sufficiently monitored, though the practices are occasionally discussed during meetings and the outcomes are sometimes used to inform the strategic planning. A SWOT analysis has been conducted and the previous review recommendations are also used to set the Institute's strategic directions, though the self-evaluation process is not comprehensively carried out to trigger continuous improvements. The Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) submitted for the review is fairly informative and identifies a number of areas for improvement, though the judgements overestimate the performance of the Institute.

The Institute has a brief quality assurance booklet, with a range of forms and checklists which are used to standardise practices and ensure that documentation is consistent across the different courses. However, the relevant policies and procedures are not sufficiently detailed and the quality assurance measures are not always effectively implemented, particularly those relating to the quality of training and assessment. The Institute lacks effective and comprehensive moderation and verification processes. Learners' prior attainment is mainly measured through written pre-course assessment in most courses, but the outcomes are not

sufficiently used in informing lesson planning. The Institute maintains adequate records on learners' performance for the majority of the courses and these are suitably aggregated, but achievement trends are not monitored over time to inform decision making nor are they closely analysed for future improvement.

The current FITD organisational structure is fit-for-purpose to meet its objectives, considering the enrolment numbers and the range and type of courses offered, with roles and responsibilities for staff being clearly identified. Nonetheless, some posts are vacant such as QA and marketing staff. The management and staff are qualified and have relevant experience. The governance arrangements are adequate in setting the Institute's strategic directions and decision making. Qualified trainers are selected and appropriately inducted and deployed to deliver courses related to their educational and professional backgrounds. Trainers' performance is regularly monitored through a session observations system, with a dedicated form being used, but the completed forms, although critical, are not sufficiently informative and do not clearly highlight the areas for further development or follow-up actions to ensure continuous quality improvement. It is worth mentioning that the most recent forms are better and have more details. Staff performance is monitored and the full time trainer is provided with development opportunities. Learners' and stakeholders' feedback about the provision is frequently gathered by various means; but although sometimes the highlighted issues are acted upon the forms are not regularly aggregated nor analysed.

The premises are free from obvious hazards and the essentials of health and safety measures are in place, with the majority of learners confirming that they are provided with relevant instructions at the start of their courses. However, the Institute lacks a dedicated policy and relevant documentation regarding this.

The provider's key strengths

- Qualified and experienced trainers are recruited. They deploy a range of training methods which succeed in engaging learners.
- The arrangements for delivery of courses are sufficiently flexible to accommodate the needs of learners and employers.

Recommendations

In order to improve, FITD should:

- ensure that learners further develop relevant knowledge and vocational skills and sufficiently progress to achieve their course objectives in a timely manner
- enhance lesson planning and ensure that trainers use more effective training strategies to engage and motivate learners productively throughout each session
- ensure that learners are rigorously assessed, while accurate and comprehensive records on learners' achievement for all courses are maintained throughout each course and that these are aggregated, critically analysed and closely monitored to inform decision making for improvement
- improve the internal quality assurance system to include more comprehensive and detailed policies and procedures, ensuring effective and continuous monitoring of the overall performance of trainers and the provision.

Appendix

Description of the provision

Future Institute for Training & Development (FITD) was established in December 2007 as a subsidiary of Al Meer Group of companies. It is licensed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development (MoLSD). The Institute caters for adult learners, most of who are employed by Al Meer Group of companies. The courses offered are based on learners' and stakeholders' feedback and generally consider their needs and specific requirements. FITD offers a number of local attendance-based courses, mainly in the fields of management and soft skills for the workplace. All offered courses are of short or very short duration, not exceeding eighteen hours.

Since the last BQA review the Institute has enrolled a total of 115 learners on ten different courses that are approved by MoLSD. These comprise 9 in 2014, 16 in 2015, 50 in 2016, 26 in 2017 and 14 in 2018 to the date of this review. A further 228 learners have been enrolled from Al Meer Group in different internal courses in various areas of soft skills.

The Institute operates from one branch located in Isa Town where it mainly delivers its courses, with only a few being held at the directorates of Al Meer Group. The organisational structure consists of a general manager who oversees the overall performance of the institute and currently carries out some quality assurance activities such as lesson observation and moderation and verification processes. Support is provided by a training coordinator, a computer technician and one trainer; all staff are working on a full time basis. The Institute relies on resources provided by Al Meer Group of companies. In addition, FITD has a pool of qualified and experienced local and regional part-time trainers who are utilised as and when required, and the general manager takes part in training when needed.