



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

Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**Gulf Aviation Academy
Muharraq
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 18-22 March 2018

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Grading scale	1
Table of review judgements awarded.....	1
Review judgements	2
Overall effectiveness	2
Capacity to improve	3
Learners' achievement	4
The quality of provision.....	5
Leadership, management and governance	9
The provider's key strengths	11
Recommendations.....	12
Appendix	13
Description of the provision.....	13

Introduction

The Directorate Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over five days, by a team of five 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 met with learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

In the previous review, Gulf Aviation Academy (GAA) overall effectiveness was judged as Outstanding, as were all aspects of its provision.

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	Judgement
Learners' achievement	Outstanding (1)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Outstanding (1)
Quality of programmes	Outstanding (1)
Quality of support and guidance	Outstanding (1)
Leadership, management and governance	Outstanding (1)
Capacity to improve	Outstanding (1)
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding (1)

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: Outstanding (1)

The overall effectiveness of Gulf Aviation Academy (GAA) is outstanding, as are all aspects of its provision, with learners acquiring and developing highly effective employability vocational skills and knowledge in the field of aviation industry. They obtain the certificate they aim for and successfully achieve the course objectives in a timely manner. Learners are able to master the given tasks and meet the emerging and updated international aviation standards through the well-structured and rigorous assessment methods applied in the four areas of learning which emphasis on mastering specific technical skills in the field of pilot, security, engineering and cabin crew trainings. GAA provides learners and stakeholders with a wide range of programmes that highly meet their aspiration and needs; these are highly regulated with rigorous and well-structured procedures that ensure the offered programmes are designed, reviewed, amended and approved in accordance to the international standards of relevant regulatory bodies.

Programmes are delivered by highly qualified and experienced trainers, with wide and relevant theoretical and practical background in the field of aviation. They effectively utilise the highly inspiring learning environment that is equipped with the necessary industry standard resources related to the field of aviation with full range of facilities. During sessions, trainers are highly capable of adapting their delivery to different airlines' specifications, respond well to learners' inquiries and enrich learners' knowledge and experience by providing valuable hands-on experience and sharing relevant real-life examples derived from their own experience. This was especially evident during Airbus Procedural Training 'APT', Full Flight Simulation 'FFS', engineering and cabin crew practical sessions. Throughout their learning journey, learners receive very effective support and guidance that help them to settle well and achieve learning outcomes, these are well stated in the GAA operational manual. Trainers and administration staff are friendly and approachable. Prior to start of a course they provide very useful induction to familiarise learners with aspects related to their learning such as learners' documents, facilities and services, training procedures, dress code, and as required they provide effective remedial sessions and supplementary materials.

The senior management and the Board of Directors maintain highly effective business relationship with major airline companies within the region and with the international regulatory bodies to inform its improvement directions and decisions. These are further reflected on the on-going revision of its strategic, marketing and action planning to meet the evolving needs within the aviation sector. The management maintains detailed learners' achievement records for various programmes and groups within the four learning areas and data trend analysis is used to predict improvement actions. However, these are used more effectively in engineering and pilot divisions.

Capacity to improve

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

Grade: Outstanding (1)

GAA has an outstanding capacity to improve its provision. The management is highly committed for continuously maintaining a high quality provision to meet the international standards required by the regulatory authorities within the aviation field. This is clearly evident by the well implemented and monitored internal quality assurance system that ensure consistency and improve learners' achievement to meet their expectations. This is further coupled with the inspiring learning environment and resources that meet international standards and enrich learning experience. GAA's management is guided by highly relevant strategic and action planning that are closely measured through specific Key Performance Indicators (KPI), as such the management has taken significant improvement actions for gathering employer' and learners' feedback and further improved its links with its stakeholders through website and social media platform. GAA has increased the range of internally and externally accredited programmes on offer, such as introducing security programmes for both civil and military in coordination of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and Air Traffic Control (ATC) trainings in coordination with the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), and introduction of the Boeing 787 and the Airbus 320NEO trainings. Subsequently, enrolment has increased rapidly, and GAA has maintained reasonable repeat business with major clients during same period. Learners' success rates for most programmes over the past three years are maintained at high level and steady. GAA is currently embarking on developing a new Learners Management System (LMS) to improve

data management and planning to expand the number of Full Flight Simulators (FFS) by placing a couple of them in the neighbouring countries.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

Learners' achievement at GAA is outstanding overall. Learners acquire and develop very effective vocational skills and knowledge which are highly relevant to their profession and applicable to their workplaces. Learners demonstrate their capability by purposefully applying the required standards and develop employability skills relevant to the aviation industry as seen from most of the observed sessions including APT and FFS simulator sessions. Also, learners are able to master the given tasks and meet the emerging and updated international aviation standards through the well-structured and rigorous assessment methods applied in the four areas of learning which emphasis on mastering specific technical skills in the field of pilot training, security, engineering and cabin crew. Most learners achieve very high proficiency rates which are reflected in the standards of learners' attainment seen in the observed lessons and the results of the theoretical tests. Almost all learners are highly satisfied with the standards of development of skills and knowledge, these gained skills has ultimately impacted positively in the work environment.

Almost all learners achieve the certificate they aim for and successfully achieve the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) in a timely manner. The retention and success rates are sustained high with overall rates of almost 100%. Learners are professional in their aviation field and are capable to meet the required prerequisites. They make remarkable progress throughout the course; the progress of learners is measured using robust criteria which is designed in-line with aviation international standard such as the EASA, International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the ICAO. In the pilot training, learners continuously maintain their daily performance on Maintenance and Flight Training Device (MFTD), Full Flight Simulators (FFS), Licence Skills Test (LST), and Aircraft Type Training details are assessed and the level of attainment is recorded using the 'Training Progress Form', which stipulates rigorous criteria.

Learners show high level of confidence and are able to work independently and effectively with their peers. They build on each other's contributions and divide responsibilities extremely well during practical assignments. This is clearly evident in the observed sessions and through samples of learners' work and portfolio. Learners have positive attitude towards their learning, most of them are self-motivated and show high level of enthusiasm. Most are proactive during the sessions and reflect critically and effectively on what they have learnt and what they need to do improve further through sharing relevant experience from their workplace and purposeful discussion with their trainers particularly in pilot training. Learners are highly committed to their programmes; they attend on time as part of their work duties. The attendance record is maintained regularly. The Academy has clear overall attendance and punctuality policy which is implemented effectively through instant follow-up procedure to absent learners.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: Outstanding (1)

GAA trainers are experienced and highly qualified, with relevant theoretical and practical command in the field of aviation, including pilot, engineering, cabin crew and aviation security training. They are licensed and authorised to train these programmes by the Bahrain Civil Aviation Affairs (BCAA) and EASA. During sessions, trainers are highly capable of adapting their delivery to different airlines' specifications, respond well to learners' inquiries and enrich learners' knowledge and experience by providing valuable hands-on experience and sharing highly relevant real life examples derived from their own experience.

GAA trainers apply a range of highly effective training approaches – which are selected based on programmes objectives- to motivate and engage learners interactively and productively throughout the sessions. These approaches include, open discussion, purposeful question and answer and practical demonstrations. In line with the principle of 'learning by doing', trainers apply highly-related hands-on practices, where learners perform the simulating to real environment under the supervision of the trainer. This is especially evident during Airbus Procedural Training 'APT', Full Flight Simulation 'FFS', engineering and cabin crew practical sessions. Sessions are well structured and planned; using lesson plans that are guided by a thoroughly prepared Training Needs Analysis 'TNAs'. to cater for stakeholders and learners' specific needs and they are approved by the awarding bodies. For example, In the pilot programmes, trainers use programmes syllabus in accordance to the type of the aircraft and the airline company.

Trainers effectively manage training sessions; objectives are shared with learners and time is allocated to maximize the productivity of both theoretical and practical phases; leading to progressive and systematic flow of the sessions' targeted activities, effective summary and evaluation for the outcomes. Learners' understanding of the theoretical knowledge and acquiring of the needed practical skills and competencies - as specified by the regulatory authority and the airline companies -, through a range of highly relevant progressive formative assessments in addition to the comprehensive final written and practical examinations. The practical examination in all programmes covers specific manoeuvres that are clearly defined, and graded using a well-structured grading system.

Records of learners' achievements are regularly maintained. During sessions, instant constructive verbal feedback on learners' performance is provided. In programmes, learners' performance evaluation is complemented with trainers' written comments, such as in the pilot and aviation security training; these comments are mostly critical and very useful. However, in a few cases, they are not detailed. Trainers address learners' different needs effectively during sessions, by supporting learners in areas they need to improve further, by providing them with full opportunity to learn from their mistakes and repeat tasks. Likewise, learners with higher ability are provided with challenging tasks.

Trainers consistently stimulate learners' critical thinking and lifelong learning during sessions through highly technical questions, and sharing challenging real-life scenarios which demand accurate response, particularly during simulations, cabin crew emergency evacuation training, first aid sessions and the on-job-training. Trainers utilise a range of efficient training resources very well to promote effective learning and enrich learners' experience. These include cabin service mock-up, Airbus 320-330 procedurals and simulators, Computer Based Training (CBT) learning software laboratory, in addition to PowerPoint presentation, video clips and airlines manuals.

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

Grade: Outstanding (1)

The effectiveness of programmes in meeting the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders is outstanding overall. The GAA management offers programmes based on systematic and precise understanding of the aviation market needs and the new trends within the global context. As such, in regular basis the Academy undertakes a comprehensive market

studies. These studies are highly responsive to the local, regional and international aviation market changes. In addition, the Academy management team and its BoD are well aware of the evolving changes in the aviation industry and accordingly they take proactive approach, by developing clear, effective, and reliable market and sales strategy to adapt to these changes. The outcomes of these studies highly satisfy the specific needs and aspiration of learners and stakeholders. Programmes on offer include initial, recurrent, and conversion programmes. The duration of these programmes varies ranging between long, short and very short. In addition to a few externally accredited programmes, mainly in the security training.

GAA programmes are highly regulated with rigours and well-structured procedures that ensure the offered programmes are designed, reviewed, amended and approved in accordance to the international standards of relevant regulatory bodies such as the EASA, IATA, BCAA and the ICAO. These programmes are supported with all-encompassing training manuals that consists of scheduling of tasks, assessment methods, and course outlines. They are very well planned, structured, and tailored to specifically enhance and support practical and theoretical learning.

All programmes are supplemented and supported with extensive range of industry standards up-to-date resources to meet the needs and the high expectations of stakeholders. GAA takes prompt response to the local and regional airlines requirements and new resources are obtained, such as state of the art 'mock-up' of Boeing 787 flight simulators, as well as, equipping the premises with the industry standards resources for Air Traffic Controller (ATC) course. Furthermore, a number of programmes are supported with a range of relevant practical activities that are utilised by the trainers to effectively enrich the learning experience, for example, extra practical tasks are provided for learners on the B1/A330/A320, TRNT 700 and CFM56 training respectively. GAA effectively implements a clear and rigorous entry requirements and mechanisms for access to all programmes as stipulated by the relevant international bodies. Moreover, in a few cases a verbal interview is carried out in the first day of a course. At the same time, GAA ensures that learners at least have the required certification and pre-requisites for a course.

How well learners are supported and guided?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

GAA has a comprehensive mechanism to support and guide learners throughout their learning journey to achieve the best learning outcomes and obtain their certifications. The Academy has clear policies and procedures relating to learners' support and guidance that are embodied in its operation manual. Trainers and administration staff are friendly and approachable; they provide helpful support and guidance to learners, including effective remedial sessions and supplementary materials. Additionally, the induction policy and procedures are clear and detailed; learners are provided with a thorough induction on the first day of the programme particularly to familiarise them with aspects related to their learning such as learners' documents, facilities and services, training procedures, induction tour, dress code and emergency contacts. The Academy also supports learners coming from abroad for booking comfortable accommodation and facilitate their transportation.

Learners and stakeholders have access to very useful course information prior to a course; they are provided with informative trainee guide and brochures related to GAA learning approach. Similarly, detailed course outlines are sent to potential learners and their employers before the start of a course. Furthermore, relevant information about programmes are posted on the GAA website and social media network. The management has initiated a plan to further improve the current website and activate more the social media platform. GAA keeps highly effective communication links with stakeholders to inform them about learner's performance upon course completion. GAA maintains strong links with the stakeholders via sales person for each department. Learners' and employers' feedback reflect very strong satisfaction of the provided support. The arrangements for the delivery of programmes is highly flexible and negotiated with employers and learners to suit their needs. For instance, time and dates are arranged according to the stakeholders' needs.

GAA has an inspiring learning environment; the academy buildings provide spacious learning spaces where they are equipped with the necessary learning resources related to aviation. Additionally, learners have access to various facilities such as full flight simulators training devices (FFS), laboratories, cabin service mock-up, tower simulator room, water training facilities, well-furnished classrooms supported with smartboards and internet connection, a small library and a Wi-Fi access.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: Outstanding (1)

GAA management is directed by clear vision and mission statements that are focused towards providing quality of training for the aviation industry in the region that are shared with learners and stakeholders. GAA has well-structured three-year strategic directions that is effectively linked to its marketing and operational campaign with very clear and relevant KPIs; the management closely monitors the progress of these actions. GAA deploys sufficient human and physical resources that suites the nature of the provision operation and meet its expansions aims. Each staff is guided by a detailed job role and responsibility for his duties, clearly indicated in the GAA's operation manual. Most senior staff have extensive experience in the field of aviation. Internally, the management holds regular meetings and emerging issues are followed-up instantly. Fit for purpose governance arrangement is in place, with the performance of the Academy are overseen by a six-member Board of Directors (BoD) who have a mixture of professionals' experiences within the aviation's sector, they contribute positively to the development of the provision and provides effective advice when required. The management and the BoD maintain highly effective links with employers and relevant international authorities, dedicated account manager for major clients are assigned. Feedback of learners are gathered and improvement actions taken based on their views. Recently the feedback of stakeholders is gathered.

To maintain consistency of training and assessment, and updating of programmes that meet the international aviation standards, GAA deploys an effective range of quality assurance manuals for the four learning areas, that contains thorough procedure and practices. These are well documented, audited and updated in regular basis by the quality assurance department and as per the authorities' requirements. Notably, GAA has an effective verification and moderation procedures implemented and are managed by the head of department. The management maintains detailed records about learners' achievement for various programmes and groups about the four learning areas. A comprehensive process is in place to ensure accuracy of assessments and are analysed by the head of department and discuss the outcomes of these in the monthly meeting with trainers. Corrective actions are addressed and followed-up by the management team. However, these are used more effectively in engineering and pilot divisions. Due to the nature of the aviation field, GAA

depends largely on the initial assessment and screening carried out by employers to enrol learners on various programmes.

Comprehensive health and safety procedure and practices are in place. The management maintains healthy and safe environment, by following rigid procedures. All health and safety devices are of high standards and are well maintained; GAA carries out frequent risk assessments to proactively avoid any hazardous situation. Self-evaluation process is comprehensive; in annual basis the GAA undertakes an inclusive self-evaluation sessions and internal audit for all the four divisions, issues raised are acted upon on timely manner. GAA uses the outcome of these sessions to shape up its strategic direction. Furthermore, the provided Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) for this review is sufficiently details and provides useful information about its operation. GAA recruits highly qualified staff and trainers and are deployed according to their specialisations. Full-time trainers are provided with relevant development opportunities in the field of aviation. GAA implements effective class observation process with detailed form covering all aspects of teaching and assessment. Identified areas for development during these visits are recorded and discussed with trainers and followed up on the annual appraisal meetings.

The provider's key strengths

- The highly effective employability vocational skills and knowledge developed by learners that are relevant to the aviation industry, and their ability to obtain the certificate they aim for and successfully achieve the course objectives in a timely manner.
- The highly qualified and experienced trainers, who are licensed by the regulatory authorities, with relevant theoretical and practical command in the field of aviation.
- The wide range of programmes on offer that specifically meet local and international market needs for the aviation field, which are based on comprehensive market studies.
- The highly inspiring learning environment that is equipped with the necessary industry standard resources related to the field of aviation, with full range of facilities.
- The well-established links maintained with employers and international regulatory bodies that are utilised well to inform its improvement decisions.
- The effective strategic, marketing and action planning with relevant targets that are monitored closely, and are based on on-going self-assessment process.

Recommendations

In order to maintain its outstanding performance, **GAA** should:

- further improve overall learners' achievements data collection and analysis to inform decision making.

Appendix

Description of the provision

Gulf Aviation Academy (GAA) was established in July 2009 as a key component of Bahrain's aviation sector and solely owned by Bahrain Mumtalakat Holding Company. GAA is licensed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development (MLSD). The Academy is an approved centre by the Bahrain Civil Aviation Affairs (BCAA) and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) under European Union (EU) regulations as a Type Rating Training Organization (TRTO). The training focused initially on the initial type rating and subsequent recurrent training of pilots under the provisions of Air Navigation Technical Regulation-Flight Crew Licensing (ANTR FCL) and ANTR – Synthetic Training Device (ANTR STD) and Cabin Crew Training Organisation under ANTRs.

GAA offers programmes in the areas of pilot, cabin crew, engineering and security training. They fall into two categories: externally-accredited approved by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and GAA accredited programmes with international recognitions. Programmes offered vary in duration between 2 to 198 hours.

Most GAA learners are employed adults aged 18 and above. The total number of 10307 learners enrolled since the last review in 2014. Almost all learners are professionals and mainly in the aviation sectors. GAA operates from one location is in Muharraq. It employs around 48 full-time senior management and administrative staff and has access to a pool of 30 part-time trainers. The Academy's management team comprises a chief executive officer 'CEO', manager quality assurance, manager pilot training, manager cabin crew training, manager engineering training, commercial lawyer, manager human resources, manager customer services, manager IT, manager business development, manager facilities and building, manager simulator and equipment and financial controller. GAA's CEO reports to the Board of Directors.