



هيئة ضمان جودة التعليم و التدريب
Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training

Vocational Review Unit Review Report

**Golden Trust Training and Consultancy
A'ali
Kingdom of Bahrain**

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The Vocational Review Unit

The Vocational Review Unit (VRU) is part of the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET), an independent body set up under Royal Decree No.32 of 2008 amended by Royal Decree No. 6 of 2009. Established to raise standards in vocational education and training, the VRU 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 VRU'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

Golden Trust Training and Consultancy (GTIC) was established in 2007 and is licenced by the Ministry of Labour. GTIC offers a range of International Professional Diplomas from Cambridge International College (CIC) UK, Edexcel BTEC Level 2 Certificate in Employability Skills and non-accredited courses in management and business fields.

Since the last review in December 2008, GTIC has enrolled 1225 learners, 487 in 2011 alone. Most learners are mainly employed adults or sponsored university job seekers aged 18 and above. Currently there are 34 learners, attending CIC Diplomas.

The institute is located in A'ali where it delivers its long courses but most other courses are delivered in hotels or occasionally at the client's premises when required. The institute is led by the centre's president, who is also the owner and a trainer, who employs one vice-president, one head of training affairs, one head of client relationship, a deputy manager - training affairs who is also a trainer, an admission and registration officer, a training coordinator, a client relationship officer, an administrator, an accountant, a caretaker and a driver; all are employed on a full-time basis. In addition, GTIC has a large pool of local and international part-time trainers, ten of whom form the core team who are used on a regular basis.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over four days by a team of four reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed training sessions and other related activities, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, documents and the materials provided by the institute and talked with management, trainers, staff, learners and employers.

In the previous review, overall effectiveness was judged as satisfactory as were all other aspects. The provider's capacity to improve was judged as good.

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

Table of review judgments awarded

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

The overall effectiveness of GTIC is good as are all other aspects of the provision. Most learners make good progress and gain vocationally relevant skills across the wide range of the well-structured and planned courses offered. However, the attainment of the recent batches taking the externally-accredited CIC diploma programmes is relatively lower than the global rate. The institute focuses appropriately on identified market needs and many courses are tailored to the needs of specific clients. Qualified local and international trainers use a range of appropriate resources and teaching techniques and share their industry related experience. Learners are regularly assessed and their work is marked. However, they do not usually receive detailed written feedback. Learners are provided with effective support and guidance by the trainers, staff and management, who are always available. The institute has a management team that has a clear and shared focus on raising learners' achievement with detailed strategic and action plans. However, arrangements for the assessment of prior learning is not rigorous enough.

GTIC has good capacity to improve, with a well-structured and resourced management team and administrative staff and a noticeable growth since the last review especially in terms of enrolment, programmes and human resources. While enrolment has steadily increased from 273 in 2009 to 487 in 2011 and a good part of this has been on the externally-accredited diploma programmes, the retention and success rates on these programmes have declined. The full-time staff of the GTIC has increased from two in 2008 to ten in 2011 and an advisory Board has been established. Similarly, the offered courses have been expanded from 23 short courses to 73 and five more CIC diploma programmes have been conducted since the last review. The institute very recently received the ISO 9001:2008 certification. GTIC has expanded its client base noticeably and many major organisations sponsor learners for more than one course. Tamkeen has recently signed an agreement with GTIC to train 200 learners on a new externally-accredited human resources course. The centre has also secured larger premises at a better location in Juffair and they will move within two months. One English language trainer and an administration officer are going through their final recruitment stages.

Learners' achievement

How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade 2: Good

The majority of learners make good progress and gain vocationally relevant skills across the range of courses on offer. Learners enjoy their learning experience and are generally self-motivated. They are able to work both independently and collaboratively during class interactions taking on different roles in groups. Success and retention rates on the GTIC's short courses are both high at 97 per cent in 2011. While a few learners on the CIC diploma programmes achieve their qualification with merit or even distinction, the attainment of recent batches on these programmes is below the global rate. An attendance policy is available and appropriately adhered to but learners' punctuality is not always recorded. The attendance rate is high at about 95 per cent.

The unemployed university graduate learners found their programme of short courses, Edexcel employability skills, CIC diploma and the on-job-training (OJT) more relevant to the business world than their previous academic studies. Those graduates with a non-business background were helped to compete in the labour market with more confidence, becoming adept at writing proper resumes, interviewing better and undertaking effective job searches. A few learners got jobs even before completing the programme or at the OJT stage. Employed learners also cited the benefits they gained from the useful group work, the relevant vocational examples used and the case studies as well as from sharing their experience with their peers and interacting with their trainers. A number of learners who completed the diploma programmes got a pay rise. Others have become more motivated and accurate at work and better able to manage their teams. A significant minority of mature learners were able to reflect appropriately on how well they were progressing by questioning trainers during sessions and sharing experiences. They are able to plan what they must do to improve in terms of career and adopting new business strategies. However, learners with insufficient English language preparation find the CIC assessment method a demanding challenge hindering their drive to obtain a professional qualification. Of 150 CIC diploma learners 88 have so far successfully graduated.

The quality of provision

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

Grade 2: Good

GTIC's trainers are qualified, have good command of their specialism and use real vocational examples in their training. Well-known international speakers and authors of management and business books are invited to conduct the successful workshops organised and share their experience. Most trainers share session objectives at the start of the session and effectively engage and motivate learners to participate by using a good range of teaching methods and activities that include effective question and answer sessions, learning games, group work and presentations. Training sessions are generally well planned and timely managed and suitable session plans are followed. However, these plans are not informed by prior assessment to accommodate learners' individual needs. Consequently a significant minority of learners' individual needs are insufficiently addressed.

Learners' work is appropriately assessed and corrected. Short courses are assessed through pre-course and post-course tests while the longer courses such as CIC diplomas have module tests, two mid-term tests and a final external examination. The Edexcel employability course is assessed by assignments. Learners' progress and attainment records are kept for all courses and learners generally receive useful verbal feedback as a group or as individuals. However, the written feedback is inconsistent and lacks sufficient detail, an issue also highlighted by one of the external verifiers. Resources are effectively used to promote learning. Real-life examples and local case studies are often brought by trainers or learners themselves to discuss in class. For example, learners study the balance sheet for a well-known local bank and reflect on the local labour law, redundancy and labour union regulations. Presentations delivered by learners are video-recorded and also used for learning purposes. In the most successful sessions, trainers challenge learners by eliciting their understanding through questioning and probing prior to introducing any new concept.

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

Grade 2: Good

There is a wide, balanced range of accredited and non-accredited human resources, management, business and soft skills courses offered based on an appropriate market needs analysis. As a result, employers are satisfied with these programmes which generally meet

the needs of learners and match their abilities and aspirations, although some learners find the assessment methods for the externally-accredited courses difficult. GTIC also offers customised courses based on employers' specific needs. However, the courses are not systematically reviewed on a regular basis.

The wide range of accredited courses is offered in collaboration with Cambridge International College (CIC), Edexcel and the Institute of Human Resources Management Education (iHRME), USA. The provider has also been approved to run mind-mapping courses accredited by PRISM. GTIC offers twelve CIC diploma programmes in various management and business-related disciplines and seven Edexcel courses at levels two and three. Out of the four iHRME courses on offer, the "Certified Human Resources Professional" course has been agreed with TAMKEEN to start by the end of February 2012 to train 200 Bahrainis. In addition, GTIC offers 73 soft skills short courses ranging from one to five days. The institute organises a few workshops annually utilising international speakers.

The programmes are appropriately structured to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders and supported with good quality course materials provided by the accrediting bodies or an international publishing company. Additional suitable resources such as a library and a computer laboratory are made available for learners' use. Learners are also given a list of further references and website addresses to help them explore the material further. Visits to businesses, such as one local bank, and presentations by invited speakers were used to enrich the programmes. Copies of relevant local laws and regulations, both in Arabic and English, are also shared with learners.

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

Grade 2: Good

Learners at GTIC receive effective support and assistance to help them achieve better outcomes. This includes providing on-the-job-training (OJT) opportunities and job placement at the centre or with partners. At least three learners who studied at GTIC have been given the chance to do their OJT at the institute and were recruited there afterward. Learners are always provided with revision sessions, guidance on how to solve examination questions and have access to trainers through email or mobile. Appropriate communication is held with employers through visits and meetings by the head of client relationship, a consultant and the president of the institute. GTIC conducts most of its courses at well-resourced venues such as hotels and the longer courses at fit-for-purpose premises and facilities. However the lighting, the small screen for projection and the classrooms set up in partitioned halls are issues of concern in their current location in A'ali.

Learners and employers receive an updated course outline in advance or at the first day of the course and an effective induction is held for the long accredited courses such as the CIC programmes where a detailed guidance manual is provided to learners. Course and examination timings are flexible and negotiated with learners and employers to suit their work schedules and convenience. Individual cases in need of support with their studies are provided with a self-study package or the main points of the sessions they missed are discussed with them. In addition, learners on long courses have a class representative to discuss their issues with the management.

Generally, learners' progress reports are sent to employers but individual learners are not necessarily made aware of their progress. Administrative staff are always available to answer learners' queries and to follow up with them in case of absences or class cancellations. Well-informed advice and guidance about programmes and updated information on courses are available through prospectuses and flyers. The GTIC website is user-friendly but does not have sufficient details on all courses.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good

GTIC leadership and management have a clear vision shared with staff who participated in a SWOT analysis and produced a detailed strategic and action plan with key performance indicators (KPIs) focused on improving the quality of the provision. Processes are guided by a comprehensive quality manual and guidance handbooks, and the staff and trainers are made well aware of their roles and responsibilities. GTIC recruits from a pool of qualified local and international trainers and their performance is monitored through a suitable lesson observation form. However, they are not provided with detailed feedback to improve further. A procedure for assessing prior attainment is in place, but its effectiveness varies.

The views of learners are systematically collected, aggregated and analysed. Detailed reports are produced per each course and trainer and shared with employers. Occasionally, feedback on short courses is video-recorded. GTIC also pursues feedback from clients and employers through visits by the head of client relationship, a market study by a contracted consultant and informally through calls. However, formal documented feedback from only a relatively small sample of employers has been collected and analysed. The management and staff are responsive to emerging issues raised and take appropriate actions. Records of

learners' achievement are maintained and aggregated in the form of statistical summaries. Issues with attainment of certain groups such as the CIC diploma are followed up by management in internal meetings and through contacts and visits to the CIC officials in the UK. However, trend analysis is not conducted to inform long-term decisions.

Effective links are maintained with a wide group of local and international institutions such as the Supreme Council for Women, University of Bahrain, BIBF and the International Federation of Training and Development Organisations (IFTDO) where GTIC is a registered member. The institution's health and safety policy and procedures are in place and a thorough risk assessment was conducted by a specialised company twice in 2011. The SEF is informative and well supported by relevant data and analysis. It identified accurately most areas for improvement, particularly the need to improve the success rate on the CIC diploma courses through a more rigorous admission test and the provision of Business English for those lacking English writing skills. The SEF grades are also reasonably accurate.

The provider's key strengths

- The majority of learners make good progress and those on the Edexcel employability programme gain very useful work searching skills and develop positive attitudes
- Trainers are qualified, have good command of their specialism and use real vocational examples and a good range of teaching methods and activities
- A wide range of externally-accredited and non-accredited programmes is on offer and courses are customised to suit employers' specific needs
- Management, trainers and staff are helpful and provide effective support to help learners achieve better
- GTIC has a clear quality focused vision and detailed strategic and action plans with KPIs developed collaboratively through SWOT analysis
- Effective links are maintained with a wide group of local and international organisations
- The views of learners are systematically collected, aggregated and analysed.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Golden Trust Training and Consultancy should:

- improve the attainment on the externally-accredited courses to enable learners to achieve their objectives and intended qualifications by:
 - devising more robust admission measures to ensure that learners are placed on appropriate courses and their prior attainment is used in lesson planning
 - ensuring that effective written feedback is provided on learner's work to help them achieve better
 - enhancing learners' English writing skills to a level matching the external examination requirements
- ensure that effective feedback is provided to trainers to help them improve further.