



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

# **Directorate of Vocational Reviews**

## **Review Report**

**Horizons for Human Resource Development  
(Horizons HRD)**

**Al Hoorah**

**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 17-20 June 2019**

**VO028-C4-R008**

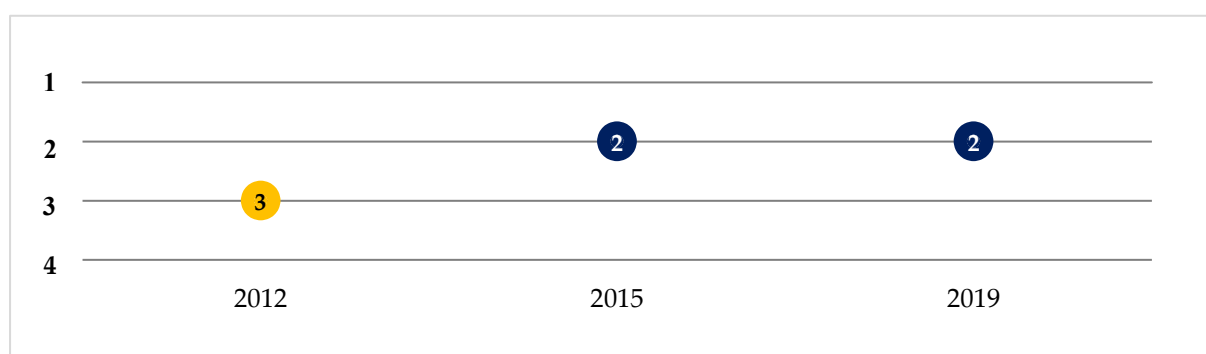
## Introduction

The Directorate Vocational Reviews (DVR) of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over four days by a team of four 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 the documents and materials provided by Horizons for Human Resource Development (Horizons HRD) and collected feedback from learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

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

Summary of review judgements		
	Aspect	Judgement
Outcomes	Learners' achievement	2
Programmes and processes	Effectiveness of teaching/training and assessment	2
	Quality of courses/programmes	2
	Learners' support and guidance	2
Management and governance	Effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	3
Capacity to improve		3
Overall effectiveness		2

### Provider's overall effectiveness throughout the last three reviews



Outstanding	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Inadequate	4
-------------	---	------	---	--------------	---	------------	---

## Overall effectiveness ‘Good’

---

### Judgement justifications

- All Aspects of the provision are judged ‘Good’ except the Aspect: leadership, management and governance, which is judged ‘Satisfactory’.
  - Horizons HRD’s Strategic Plan focusses on improving learners’ achievement and the quality of the provision. Planning is informed by regular SWOT analysis, and annual operational plans are developed accordingly; however, their implementation is not monitored consistently.
  - Although monitoring of trainers’ performance is regular, the identified areas for development are not always followed up.
  - Learners’ achievement in the Certified Professional in Human Resources Management & Compensation (CPHRC) programme is not systematically monitored as no records are kept on learners’ performance during this course, except for the final pass/fail results. This programme represents most of the total enrolment since 2016.
  - Quality assurance measures are adequate, and the verification and moderation of assessment is not effective enough to foster continuous quality improvement.
  - Most learners develop effective knowledge and skills relevant to their learning, particularly in the externally accredited programmes and preparatory courses for professional certificates.
- The majority of learners achieve their course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)/objectives in a timely manner. The pass rate in the CPHRC programme is comparable to the global rates.
  - Horizons HRD trainers are well-selected. They employ their theoretical and professional experiences and use interactive training methods and a variety of learning resources to engage learners productively throughout the session.
  - Learners’ understanding, and achievement of their course ILOs/objectives are assessed through effective formative assessment tools that are suitable for the courses, especially that most of the courses are of short or very short duration. Nevertheless, in a number of the local attendance courses, the pre- and post-course assessments measure the lower level of the course outcomes and marking scheme is not clear.
  - Courses are offered based on a clear understanding of the market considering local training needs and international studies and trends. In some cases, local attendance courses are tailored to learners and stakeholders’ needs and expectations.
  - Most courses are well structured and planned with clear outlines. Course have clear ILOs or objectives; however, the assessment tools in the CPHRC programme are not mapped clearly to the stated objectives.

- The Institute has a formal support and guidance policy and learners are well supported and guided to achieve better outcomes. However, the policy is not

detailed enough to fully cover the actual support and guidance provided to learners.

## Capacity to improve ‘Satisfactory’

---

### Judgement justifications

- Improvements carried out to the provision are in line with one of the provider’s strategic objectives which is focusing on expanding professional programmes. These include gaining more recognition such as receiving the approval of the Institute of Sales Management (ISM) as recognized Institute, becoming a registered education provider of project management programmes by the Project Management Institute, becoming a preparation provider for the certificate of the Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI), in addition to Institute for Human Resources Management Education (iHRME), and the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) accreditation.
- Currently Horizons HRD is working on developing a national human resources programme in collaboration with a local consultancy firm and is updating the Institute website.
- Recently, the Institute introduced a new measurement tool to assess

learners’ performance in local attendance courses based on a clear rubric; however, the impact is yet to be seen.

- The Institute has sufficient and appropriate human and physical resources to enable improvement to be carried out. Trainers are well-selected and there are plans to move to bigger premises.
- The number of enrolments decreased from 663 learners in 2016 to 297 learners in 2017, which was maintained in 2018 (304 Learners).
- The previous review recommendations are insufficiently addressed. Quality assurance measures are just appropriate. Nonetheless, the verification and moderation of assessment are not effective to secure continuous quality improvement. Moreover, learners’ achievement is not systematically monitored by the management across all programmes.

## The provider's key strengths

---

- Most learners develop pertinent knowledge and effective skills, and the majority achieve the course certificate in a timely manner.
- Horizon HRD trainers employ their theoretical and professional experience and use effective training strategies and variety of training resources to engage and motivate learners productively through the session.
- Trainers assess learners' understanding and achievement of course intended learning outcomes/objectives through effective formative assessment methods that are suitable to the nature and duration of the conducted courses.
- Courses are offered based on a clear understanding of the market, derived from local and global needs' studies, and most courses are well-planned, structured and supported with a wide range of high-quality resources to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders.
- Learners at Horizons HRD are well-supported and guided to achieve better outcomes.

## Recommendations

---

### In order to improve, Horizons HRD should:

- further improve learners' achievement and ensure that they better develop the required skills and knowledge and achieve their course learning outcomes, especially in the local attendance courses.
- ensure that records on learners' performance are maintained in the CPHRC programme, and learners are provided with sufficient written feedback on how to improve further.
- improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that learners' achievement is monitored systematically, analysed and that outcomes are utilised for improvement.
  - improving the quality assurance arrangements; including the systematic and effective implementation of assessments' verification and moderation.

## Learners' achievement 'Good'

---

### Judgement justifications

- Most learners acquire and develop knowledge and practical skills that are relevant to the training programmes' field. This is clearly reflected in learners' participation and their produced work during the observed sessions.
- Learners are highly satisfied with the acquired skills and the extent these have improved their performance at the workplace and impacted their career progression. Evidence was provided on unemployed candidates whom managed to secure the employment they aspire for, and there were several cases of working learners being promoted to higher positions. In addition, the review team was provided with evidence of a number of success stories, particularly in the CPHRC programme, which constitutes 83% of the total enrolment.
- A significant number of the learners enrolled in the CIM courses, which represent a small portion from the total enrolment, achieve modules with distinction. On the other hands, the development of skills and knowledge in local attendance courses varies.
- Most learners achieve their course ILOs/objectives. The majority of learners enrolled in the CPHRC external programme and other preparation courses for external professional Certificates achieve the certificates/ qualifications they aim for in a timely manner. These make 93% of the total enrolment. The pass rate in the CPHRC programme is comparable to international pass rates. However, few learners achieve their module after several attempts. In addition, the Certified Management Accountant (CMA) learners fail to achieve the course requirements. This course represents only 2% of the total enrolment.
- Most learners are able to proceed successfully across modules to a more advance level. This is particularly noticeable in the longer courses. On the other hand, learners in the local attendance courses, make appropriate progress from their starting points, as reflected by the comparison between results of the pre- post-course assessment.
- Learners are committed and have positive attitude toward their learning. Most of them attend regularly and on time. The majority of learners reflect critically on what they have learnt; this was evident in the observed sessions, where they shared work-related experiences, responded to the challenging questions raised by the trainer and provided accurate justifications to their answers. Moreover, in the local attendance courses, learners are provided with useful opportunities to reflect on their learning by completing a 'trainee reflection form'.
- From the observed sessions and scrutiny of provided samples of learners' work, learners are able to work well independently and

collaboratively when given the opportunity.

### Areas for improvement

- the development of skills and knowledge in the local attendance courses
- the level of learners' achievement in the CMA qualifications preparatory courses.

## Effectiveness of teaching/training and assessment 'Good'

---

### Judgement justifications

- Horizon HRD trainers employ their theoretical and professional experience and use effective training strategies and a variety of learning resources to engage and motivate learners productively during sessions. The learning experience is enriched with purposeful real-life examples that illustrate related concepts.
- Considering the nature and the duration of the conducted courses, trainers assess learners' understanding and achievement of course objectives *via* effective formative assessment methods such as open and direct questioning techniques, peer's evaluation, learners' self-assessment activities, which were noted during the observed session. However, in a number of the local attendance courses, the pre- and post-course assessment tools used focus only on measuring the basic levels of course outcomes and do not assess the attainment of all expected learning outcomes. Recently a new measurement tool has been introduced.
- Sessions are well structured utilising detailed plans that outline the topics to be covered, training and assessment methods, and the resources to be used. The delivery of sessions ensures active engagement of learners in different activities.
- In the majority of the sessions observed, trainers addressed the different learning needs by providing further explanation, where needed, and challenging tasks for higher ability learners.
- Trainers stimulate learners' critical thinking by further questioning techniques and promote self and life-long learning through useful debates, promoting problem solving skills, discussing learners' own experience and enhancing their presentation skills.

- Except for the CPHRC programme, comprehensive records on learners' performance are kept. For the CPHRC, the Institute keeps the final pass/fail results of learners; no further records of their performance during the course are kept.

- Constructive ongoing verbal feedback on learners' performance is provided during the sessions. However, the written feedback on learners' work is inconsistent.

#### Areas for improvement

- The written feedback on learners' work
- records of learners' performance throughout their enrolment in the CPHRC programme.
- Assessment methods used to ensure achievement of learning outcomes of the local attendance courses.

## Quality of course/programmes 'Good'

---

### Judgement justifications

- Horizons HRD courses are offered based on a clear understanding of the market, derived from local and global needs' studies. A recent detailed paper of a 4-initiative-driven Market Needs Study Analysis, constitutes the basis and rationale for both programmes initiation, and updates. The outcomes of learners' reflection and clients Training Needs Analysis (TNAs), are utilised to formulate and introduce specific programmes that meet both learners and stakeholders' needs.
- Horizons HRD, provides a range of short local attendance courses, preparatory courses for professional certificates and externally accredited programmes. The externally accredited programmes constitute most of the

conducted courses; and these include the Institute for Human Resources Management Education (iHRME) qualifications which are the Certified Professional in Human Resources Management & Compensation (CPHRC), and the Certified Senior Professional in Human Resources Management & Compensation (CSPHRC). Preparatory courses for professional certificates include the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) Courses, and Project Management Institute (PMI) courses. The vast majority of learners are highly satisfied with the offered courses, which match their needs and requirements.



- Courses are well structured and planned. While course outlines are fit-for-purpose in most of the externally accredited programmes, these are adequate for the local attendance courses. In both cases, clear ILOs/objectives, training methods and assessment schemes are detailed.
- Progression paths are clearly defined in the externally accredited programmes. Assessments (formative and summative) in the local attendance courses are appropriate, while in most of the externally accredited programmes these are fit-for-purpose. In the majority of the offered programmes/courses assessments are mapped to the specified ILOs/objectives. However, assessment tools in the CPHRC programme are not always mapped to the stated objectives.
- A methodical mechanism to design, approve, update, and periodically review programmes is in place. Trainers are solely tasked with the design of the local attendance courses, which are then subject to the verification and approval of the Institutes' top management. While there is evidence of updating current programmes/courses, audit trails that indicates the full implementation of the formal mechanism to design, approve, update, and periodically review programmes are not always available. For the externally accredited programmes, Horizon HRD aligns its offering with the awarding bodies' updates.
- Horizons HRD maintains a wide range of high quality learning resources, which are available to trainers and learners. Learning materials are up-to-date, reflecting current body of knowledge in the externally accredited programmes, and the local attendance courses. Moreover, learners - particularly those enrolled in the professional programmes - have access to online resources, in addition to the focused and varied collections available in the Institute's library.
- Horizons HRD provides clear and detailed access and entry level policy and a procedure for implementation. Requirements are defined for each course/programme on offer. The mechanisms practiced (using TNA, interviews and/or pre-course assessments) are effective in ensuring the placement of accepted learners at the appropriate levels, and facilitating the bridging of knowledge gap, if necessary.

### **Areas for improvement**

- documentation of the actual design, approval, updates, and periodic reviews of programmes/courses.
- mapping of assessment tools in the CPHRC programme to the stated objectives.

## Learners' support and guidance 'Good'

---

### Judgement justifications

- Learners at Horizons HRD are provided with effective support and guidance that help them achieve better outcomes. This includes extra and revision sessions to ensure that they are well-prepared for the final examinations. In addition, learners have access to online resources and mock examinations for most of the preparatory courses for professional certificates. Learners who lack the needed knowledge and background in the CPHRC programme are provided with a bridging course.
  - Staff and trainers are approachable and supportive. Measures are in place to support learners in completing their registration, final and reset examination processes. Arrangements for courses delivery are highly flexible to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. Though Horizons HRD has a formal support policy in place, it is not detailed enough and does not fully cover the actual support and guidance provided to learners.
  - Learners are provided with a range of extra-curricular activities, such as 'Think-participate to succeed' and 'STEPS', to enrich their learning experience and life skills. They are also provided with counselling sessions that cover learning difficulties, social issues and career guidance.
- Learners and stakeholders have access to well-informed advice and guidance about the courses/programmes on offer. This is done through purposeful discussions with the staff, having access to course booklets and information stipulated on the Institute's social media (Instagram). Learners are provided with a very useful induction programme that enable them to settle easily and quickly.
  - Most of the learners enrolled in the CPHRC programme -which makes most of the total enrolment- are walk-in learners. These learners are informed of their pass/fail results upon programme completion. Employers of learners enrolled in the local attendance courses are provided with performance report and course certificates; however, the comments provided in these reports are not detailed enough to reflect learners' development.
  - The Institute has a general policy to identify learners with special educational needs and or disability (SEND) and suitable arrangements are in place. However, the policy is not detailed enough.

### Areas for improvement

- learners' achievement reports.
- details of the learners' support policy including those with special educational needs and or disability.

## Effectiveness of leadership, management and governance 'Satisfactory'

---

### Judgement justifications

- Horizons HRD has clear vision and mission statements that are focused on partnership with clients and meeting their needs. The strategic planning is based on an informed and regular SWOT analysis. The set strategic objectives are focused on improving learner's achievement and the quality of the provision. Strategic plans are translated to detailed annual operational plans that set tasks, accountabilities, general timescale, and success criteria. Although the Institute monitors its progress towards achieving the set objectives, targets are not always set for the success criteria, and some success criteria are not task specific.
- Learners' achievement is sufficiently monitored in the local attendance courses and preparatory courses for professional certificates; however, learners' achievement in the CPHRC programme is not systematically monitored.
- Trainers' performance is regularly monitored through internal lesson observations carried out by the quality assurance manager, and the outcomes are shared with trainers. However, the raised areas for developments are not always followed up. Staff performance appraisal is conducted quarterly, and staff and trainers are provided with opportunities for in-house training related to their roles and responsibilities.
- Horizons HRD organisation structure is fit for purpose considering the type of the offered courses and number of enrolments. Roles and responsibilities are clearly identified in the job descriptions. The Institute has recently established a number of internal committees to carry out and follow up main processes related to organisation of courses, evaluation and improvement and programme approval; however, these are not yet fully functional.
- The Institute has an internal quality assurance manual that includes a set of clear corporate and academic policies and procedure, these are appropriately implemented. However, learners' prior attainment is inconsistently assessed, and the internal moderation implemented so far is insufficiently effective in ensuring continuous improvement of assessment. A new improved moderation form was

developed recently; though not yet implemented.

- The learning environment is fit for purpose, health and safety measures are in place and the premises are free of any obvious hazards. Horizons HRD premises are well furnished, ventilated, lightened and airconditioned. It includes two class rooms equipped with smart projectors. Nonetheless, most of the training events are conducted in hospitality venues.
- Learners' views and feedback about the provision are regularly gathered, aggregated, analysed, and utilised to improve the provision. Links are maintained with awarding bodies and the local community.
- Horizons HRD has recently established a board to monitor the overall performance of the Institute.

**Areas for improvement**

- monitoring of learners' achievement in the CPHRC programme.
- follow-up of the class observation outcomes.
- effectiveness of the assessments' internal moderation process.

## Appendix (1): Provider information

<b>Name of the provider (English)</b>	<b>Horizons for Human Resource Development (Horizons HRD)</b>					
<b>Name of the provider (Arabic)</b>	آفاق لتنمية الموارد البشرية					
<b>Licensing body</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Development (MLSD)					
<b>Year of establishment</b>	1999					
<b>Age range of learners</b>	18 and above					
<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Male</b>	180	<b>Female</b>	194	<b>Total</b>	374
<b>Learning areas</b>	<b>Externally accredited</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institute for Human Resources Management Education (iHRME) qualifications which include Certified Professional in Human Resources Management &amp; Compensation (CPHRC), Certified Senior Professional in Human Resources Management &amp; Compensation (CSPHRC)</li> </ul>				
	<b>Preparatory courses for professional certificates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation for Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) qualifications</li> <li>Preparation for Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) qualifications</li> <li>Preparation for Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) qualifications</li> <li>Project Management Institute (PMI) qualifications</li> </ul>				
	<b>Local attendance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soft skills</li> </ul>				
<b>Institution's listing status</b>	<b>Listed on the National Qualification Framework (NQF)</b>					