

Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**Leaders Institute for Training & Development
Seef District
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 30 May - 1 June 2016

VO048-C3-R036

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Introduction

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

In the previous review, Leaders Institute's overall effectiveness was judged as satisfactory, as were all other aspects.

This Report summarises the 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	Good (2)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Good (2)
Quality of programmes	Good (2)
Quality of support and guidance	Good (2)
Leadership, management and governance	Good (2)
Capacity to improve	Good (2)
Overall effectiveness	Good (2)

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: Good (2)

The overall effectiveness of Leaders Institute is good, as are all aspects of the provision. Learners gain very useful practical skills and knowledge. Employers and learners acknowledged that the skills gained are valuable in the workplace and reflected well in improved practices. For instance, learners stated that they gained the confidence to act quickly in the case of emergencies and in communicating and dealing with difficult customers, and knowledge of how to keep food safe. Several learners have been given higher responsibilities or promoted after attending courses at the Institute. The pass rates for the vast majority of the externally accredited courses are higher than or comparable with the average global rates.

The management employs qualified trainers who use an effective range of training methods and learning resources to engage learners. The majority of courses are well structured and planned, meeting stakeholders' needs effectively. Trainers often adopt a practical and participative approach to create a favourable learning environment, continuously checking learners' understanding and providing instant feedback. Trainers use their vocational experience and the visits they make to workplaces to enrich their delivery with real case studies and examples. The Institute uses its close links with major retail employers and other stakeholders, including the awarding bodies, to identify stakeholders' needs effectively. Trainers and staff are approachable and extend their support and guidance to learners where needed.

The management team has a shared vision, translated into well-structured strategic and action plans focusing on clear objectives that are regularly monitored. Detailed policies and procedures are in place, resulting in standardised practices and course files. However, while these files are regularly checked for completion the verification process is not detailed enough. Trainers' performance is frequently monitored in class and verbal feedback is provided, although identified areas for development are not explicitly documented for follow up. Staff and trainers are provided with a range of development opportunities and updates. Learners' and employers' feedback is regularly collected, aggregated and shared with trainers.

Capacity to improve

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

Grade: Good (2)

The Institute has good capacity to improve. The management team as well as the staff have a focused and shared vision aiming at improving the provision. Since the last review conducted in January 2013 and through the involvement of a consulting firm, the Institute has launched a number of improvement initiatives. A critical quality review was conducted in 2013 followed by another detailed review in 2014; the identified gaps in the provision resulted in the development of well-structured strategic and action plans to address the key areas for improvement. The annual action plans are periodically monitored against a set of key performance indicators (KPIs). Objectives achieved include the development of a quality manual with detailed policies and procedures, standardisation of course files covering most aspects of the training process, and a noticeable expansion in the externally accredited courses. The Institute also introduced a basic verification process, though it is not detailed enough.

Various performance data is collected, aggregated, shared with management and discussed quarterly during management and staff meetings. The Institute has appropriate physical and human resources including access to a pool of qualified trainers with relevant vocational experience. While enrollment dropped in 2015-2016 compared to 2014, repeat business has been maintained with major companies since the last review. Links are well established with stakeholders and awarding bodies. Recommendations of the previous review have been adequately addressed, such as the introduction of more structured assessments and regular collection of stakeholders' feedback.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Good (2)

Learners' achievement at Leaders Institute is good overall. The majority of learners acquire very useful vocational skills and knowledge that are relevant to their day-to-day duties. Most of the employers and groups of learners interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the learning experience at the Institute and confirmed that the skills developed are beneficial to their workplace and meet their objectives. Learners Performance Data (LPD) indicates that the success rate is high for both local completion and externally accredited courses, and the overall retention rate is 100% for the past three years, as expected in such very short courses.

Most learners in the local completion courses are awarded with a certificate of completion upon passing a number of formative and summative assessments.

Most learners in the Highfield Awarding Body Compliance (HABC) courses attain the course objectives and successfully achieve their qualifications in a timely manner. However, a few learners achieve them on their second or third attempts. For the vast majority of the HABC qualifications the pass rate is above or comparable with the international average pass rate; however, in a few qualifications they are below the average international pass rate. Records of learners' progress are kept by the provider, and these and the sessions observed show that learners' make appropriate progress.

The majority of learners are attentive, self-motivated and enjoy their learning. They have positive attitudes towards their learning and are generally able to reflect critically on each other's and on their own attainment and understanding. Learners are able to identify their mistakes and correct themselves. The majority of learners are able to work well both independently and collaboratively. However, a few learners need trainers' support to move forward. The Institute has a clear attendance and punctuality policy which is shared with the learners. It is evident from the records kept and the sessions observed that most learners attend regularly and on time.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: Good (2)

The quality of teaching, training and assessment at Leaders Institute is good overall. Trainers are qualified, knowledgeable and have the relevant theoretical and practical command of the areas they teach. Trainers' vocational experience and subject knowledge are reflected in their accurate explanations, responses to learners' questions and the range of useful real-life case studies and vocational examples they provide, which are linked to learners' workplace experience. Most trainers use well-structured lesson plans that indicate the links between the planned activities and the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) and clearly state the roles of the trainer and learners. However, these plans are insufficiently informed by prior or continuous assessments. The training sessions are well managed and appropriately address the sessions' ILOs, which are shared with learners, and mostly start with a useful recapitulation of the previous session and end with a wrap-up summary.

Trainers use a variety of training methods including presentations, discussions, educational games, role-plays, demonstrations and a range of interactive individual and group activities

that effectively engage the majority of learners. Trainers accommodate the different individual learning needs suitably by using the group activities to involve the less able with the more able learners and by directing challenging follow-up questions to the more able learners. Learners are encouraged to present the outcomes of their group work and to answer questions raised by other group members. Occasionally, trainers promote learners' higher order thinking through useful discussion of work related topics and use problem-solving techniques to resolve workplace cases. Trainers utilise the available learning resources effectively in order to deliver the courses and facilitate learning, including videos, data shows, flip charts, dummies, and relevant course material.

Trainers evaluate learners' performance through a range of formative assessment methods which include a mix of objective and open-type questions that are appropriately linked to the ILOs and mostly accurately marked. Trainers check learners' understanding during the sessions through different questioning techniques. Learners are provided with instant and constructive verbal feedback; however, individual written feedback is minimal and does not precisely indicate where learners need to improve further. Records of learners' performance are regularly maintained and clear rubric is usually implemented; however, the records of formative assessment results are insufficiently maintained.

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

Grade: Good (2)

Leaders Institute offers a range of short and very short externally-accredited and local completion courses in different categories to meet learners' and stakeholders' needs. The Institute identifies stakeholders' needs effectively through a number of approaches. The management uses its strong relationship with the industry, Ministry of Labour & Social Development, Ministry of Health and awarding bodies as well as meeting with individual employers to sense the market needs. For instance, a course on food safety was launched in 2014 through an awareness seminar hosted by Leaders Institute and facilitated by an awarding body, attracting practitioners and officials from the Ministry of Health. In addition, mystery shopping, training needs assessments (TNA) and professional links of the trainers inform the need for additional courses.

The Institute relies on a reputed international publishing company and awarding bodies such as Highfield for course material and design. Course material packages are well structured and planned, with detailed course outlines which clearly indicate the aims, learning outcomes and assessment methods. However, a few locally developed courses are insufficiently structured, and in a small number of cases the assessment is not thoroughly linked to the predefined ILOs.

While a few courses have been formally reviewed by the Institute through a committee and improvement recommendations were provided, it is not clear how such recommendations are implemented as a detailed policy for designing, approving, updating and periodically reviewing courses is not yet formally developed. Nevertheless the awarding bodies continuously update the Institute with any changes, or releases of new versions of course material. Courses are well resourced to meet stakeholders' and learners' needs. Health and safety courses have a sufficient range of resources such as first aid kits and consumable items, manikins and dummies. Relevant educational videos and PowerPoint presentations are available for all types of courses. Soft skills courses are also resourced by useful equipment including MTA kits for experiential learning activities. Occasionally, a few courses are supported with relevant extracurricular activities to enhance the programmes, including presentations by external speakers.

The Institute has clear and effective access and entry-level requirements for courses and some courses also have routes for progression and further learning. The targeted audience is specified clearly in course brochures. Leaders Institute screens learners upon registration, based on their professional experience and educational background. However, a few learners with language difficulties are enrolled into courses designed to be delivered in a particular language. In these cases trainers usually interpret part of their delivery into Arabic or Hindi when needed.

How well are learners supported and guided?

Grade: Good (2)

Leaders Institute has a clear support mechanism in place, accessible to all learners to improve their achievement. A user friendly, informative website is regularly updated and informative brochures and leaflets are available to stakeholders. The Institute interacts actively through social media such as *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Instagram*. Induction to a course is thorough, where learners and employers are provided with information about programmes, prerequisites of awarding bodies and the relevant policies and procedures of the Institute. A useful manual is provided to all learners at the start of the course, which has the particulars of assessment procedures, relevant instructions and contact details of staff. Staff obtain information on learners' backgrounds and experiences through the pre-training screening process, and occasionally use those inputs in planning. Trainers of the Institute are bilingual and support learners by explaining in Arabic and English, and occasionally in Hindi, when required. Free coaching sessions are provided to learners who cannot pass a test on the first attempt, for example in the HABC Level 1 health and safety course.

Trainers and coordinators are accessible and communicate effectively via telephone, emails and WhatsApp. The administrative staff is highly responsive and always follows up on

lateness, absenteeism or any emerging requirements such as the change of examination dates. The Institute's environment and the chosen venues are fit for purposes and well equipped with learning resources and hygienic facilities. A checklist is always used to ensure that external venues meet the required standards. Mini libraries are usually set-up at hospitality venues to support learners with relevant reference material.

Arrangements for delivery of courses are highly flexible and the Institute always discusses with stakeholders on the choice of venue, date of delivery, timings and language of instruction. There is also a formal policy for supporting learners with special needs should the need arise. Learners and stakeholders have access to well-informed advice on choice of course and receive course outlines in advance. After each course has finished and for their future reference, learners receive study materials such as PowerPoint presentations, handouts and a summary sheet with the highlights of the course. Communication with stakeholders is effective; the Institute informs employers on learners' achievement upon course completion and individual learners are always made aware of their own progress. However, comments on the individual performance report are generic.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: Good (2)

Leaders Institute has a shared vision translated into a well-structured strategic plan covering 2013-2016 and linked to annual action plans that are regularly monitored. These plans were developed through a number of workshops facilitated by a consulting company. An appropriate organisational structure with defined roles and clear job descriptions is in place. There is an internal quality assurance function, supported by external resources. As part of its quality assurance system the provider has clearly written policies and procedures with related forms and checklists, used to standardise and ensure consistency of processes and course files. However, while administrative checks are always done on course files the verification process is not detailed enough. Through an external company a very detailed and critical quality review was done in 2013 with a follow-up review in 2014; these were used to inform the strategic plan. Trainers also provide feedback on courses once conducted that occasionally includes strengths, weaknesses and suggestions for improvements. Learners' achievement records are maintained in a useful Excel database along with other relevant aggregated data. The management reviews and signs learners' achievement records in each course file and are provided with summaries every quarter which are discussed in staff meetings.

Appropriate recruitment policy and procedures are used to select qualified staff and trainers; these are deployed effectively and provided with proper induction and access to an informative human resources manual and relevant procedures. Each trainer's performance is frequently monitored through class observations and verbal feedback is normally provided. However, areas for improvement identified are insufficiently documented for follow up. Staff and trainers are provided with a good range of development opportunities and continuous updates and internal knowledge sharing. Very useful links are maintained with stakeholders and awarding bodies, who occasionally share awareness events with the Institute. Learners' and employers' feedback is regularly collected and aggregated and useful summaries and charts are produced. While in few cases critical comments or lower ratings appearing in learners' feedback are not tracked, suitable actions are usually taken based on feedback received from stakeholders, such as revising the duration or timing of a course.

The premises are free from obvious hazards and health and safety measures are in place and managed by qualified staff. Sufficient staff have first aid training and learners are provided with health and safety instructions. The submitted Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) is informative, with a range of supporting evidence but with only a few priorities for development identified. Nevertheless, the 2016 action plan has a number of more relevant areas for development.

The provider's key strengths

- The very useful practical skills learners develop on the externally accredited courses.
- Qualified trainers who use an effective range of training methods and learning resources to engage learners.
- The well designed and structured externally accredited courses.
- Well-structured strategic and action plans focused on clear objectives that are regularly monitored.
- The effective links maintained with stakeholders and awarding bodies.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Leaders Institute for Training & Development should:

- further enhance learners' skills and knowledge development and ensure that they progress well
- improve training and assessment further by:
 - ensuring lesson plans are informed by prior and continuous assessment
 - ensuring records of formative assessments are kept and learners are provided with focused written feedback
- improve the implementation of the internal quality assurance system, particularly the verification process and follow-up procedures.

Appendix

Description of the provision

Leaders Institute for Training & Development was established in 2009. It is licensed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development to offer training in soft skills, business and basic health and safety. Most courses offered are short or very short. The externally accredited courses constitute approximately half of the courses offered and most are accredited by Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance (HABC). A few courses are also on offer accredited by the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) and the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).

Since the last review conducted in January 2013 the Institute has enrolled 1,408 learners; 318 in 2013, 646 in 2014, 425 in 2015 and 19 in 2016 up to the date of this review. Learners enrolling at the Institute are employed adults and mostly sponsored employees.

Leaders Institute operates from a single branch in Seef District, where it delivers very few of its courses. Most courses are held at employers' premises or hospitality venues. The organisation structure consists of a managing director who is the owner of the Institute, a full-time advisor who also works as the main trainer, three full-time sales and marketing staff, one full-time training coordinator who also oversees quality assurance, a full-time finance and administration officer, a part time designer and one caretaker. The provider also has a pool of more than 20 part-time local and international trainers who are deployed when needed.