



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

Vocational Review Unit

Review Report

**Prestige Training Institute and Consultancy
East Riffa
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date reviewed: 11 – 13 October 2010

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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 five-point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
1: Outstanding	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all or nearly all aspects and is/are exemplary or exceptional in many.
2: Good	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are better than the basic level. Practice will be at least sound and there may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
3: Satisfactory	This describes a basic level of adequacy. No major areas of weakness substantially affect what learners, or significant groups of learners, achieve. Some features may be good.
4: Below satisfactory	This describes situations where major weaknesses in some areas affect the outcomes for learners and outweigh any strengths in the provision.
5: Very weak	This describes situations where there are major weaknesses in all, or almost all, areas and where, as a result, learners are very poorly served.

Introduction

Description of the provision

Prestige Training Institute and Consultancy (PTCO) was established in 2007. Prior to this, PTCO was operating as a training coordination office since 2001. PTCO offers short and non-accredited courses in soft skills, management, safety awareness and basic information technology (IT).

PTCO is run by a managing director, who is the owner and a trainer at the same time. At the time of the review, there was one newly appointed administrative assistant. In addition to the managing director, the institute uses six part-time trainers. In 2009, the institute trained around 90 learners, the majority of which are sponsored by their employers. PTCO is located at East Riffa.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over three days by a team of four reviewers. During the review, reviewers analysed data about learners' work, the courses they complete and talked with managers, trainers, administration and support staff, learners and employers.

This report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations for improvement.

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Grade 4: Below satisfactory

The overall effectiveness of PTCO is below satisfactory. The quality of programmes, the support and guidance offered to learners, as well as the effectiveness of leadership and management are below satisfactory. Although teaching and training practices are adequate, there was insufficient evidence to judge learners' achievements.

The institute does not keep reliable evidence to enable a robust judgment to be made on the extent that learners develop additional knowledge, skills or achieve their learning goals. The minimal amount of evidence that is available gives a mixed picture of inconsistent and subjective criteria used to assess learners' achievements. Moreover, the institute doesn't reliably assess learners before a course to identify their prior knowledge, attitudes or skills, and hence measure reliably the added-value of a course.

Although it is not evident how well teaching and training impacts on learning, trainers at PTCO use a variety of appropriate teaching and training practices that help motivate learners and check their understanding. Trainers prepare sessions based on adequate schemes of work, but the session plans, in most cases, are neither detailed enough, nor designed to cater for the varying needs of learners.

PTCO offers a limited range of courses with insufficient progression routes which are not based on a sound rationale or a reliable survey of market needs. Learners are not offered extracurricular materials or enrichment activities that help in furthering their understanding.

The institute does not have a proper system to ensure that sufficient support and guidance are always available to those who need additional support, as well as to those who need to be challenged and rewarded. Wherever it happens, it is left to individual trainer initiative. PTCO lacks a proper health and safety risk assessment to ensure the well-being of staff and learners.

Leadership and management have a broad mission statement but lack robust strategic plans to direct resources to bring about further improvement. The quality assurance processes are embryonic and have little impact on provision. Learners' achievements are not analysed, views of learners and employers are not consistently gathered and analysed; and staff are not effectively monitored and improved. The self evaluation is not critical enough to help the institute to improve.

Capacity to improve

Grade 4: Below satisfactory

PTCO lacks effective strategic planning, which is informed by analyses of learners' progress and achievements; or the views of learners and employers. The institute's management has an idea to convert into an applied academy, but this is not based on a clear rationale, and no specific actions have been taken so far towards this.

The record of improvement is limited. Recently, the institute introduced more audio and visual learning aids in classrooms in response to learners' feedback. The computers in the computer laboratory have also been recently upgraded. In order to improve the range of programmes, the institute has applied for nine more courses some time ago, but has not yet gained approval from the Ministry of Labour to run such courses. Moreover, the institute has not run any course since April 2010.

PTCO is practically run by one person for most of the time, and does not have sufficient human resources to support further expansion or improvement. The institute has been trying to recruit more full time administrative staff to provide the necessary support services for staff and learners but with limited success.

The self evaluation form (SEF), which was completed prior to the review, was not critical enough, lacked clarity and specified irrelevant priorities for improvement; a matter that reflects the institute's inability to self-analyse relevant shortcomings and hence introduce the necessary measures and plans to improve.

Summary of grades awarded

Overall judgement	Grade
Effectiveness of provision	Grade 4: Below satisfactory
Capacity to improve	Grade 4: Below satisfactory
Review findings	
How well do learners achieve?	Insufficient evidence to grade
How effective is training?	Grade 3: Satisfactory
How well do programmes meet the needs of learners and employers?	Grade 4: Below satisfactory
How well are learners guided and supported?	Grade 4: Below satisfactory
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade 4: Below satisfactory

Main judgements and recommendations

Strengths

- None.

Areas for improvement

- **Lesson planning which is not based on initial assessment or caters for learners' varying needs.** Learners are assessed initially using the general aptitude test (GAT) which gives trainers a broad idea of learners' English abilities. However, this system is not used effectively to identify learners' varying needs and plan lessons which accommodates these needs.
- **Monitoring and recording of learners' progress and achievements.** PTCO keeps insufficient records of learners' progress and achievement to enable a robust judgment to be made on how well learners achieve. In addition, the institute's methods in assessing skills and knowledge during a course are neither reliable nor consistent.
- **The range of programmes which is narrow and not informed by a survey of local market needs.** The limited range of courses offered by PTCO are nearly all only offered at a basic level and provide no progression opportunities for learners. The only exception to this is the scaffolding safety courses, which are offered at two levels. PTCO pays insufficient attention to labour market needs. Although a very short study was prepared two years ago, the study was too generic and the outcomes have not been reflected clearly in the range of programmes on offer.
- **The absence of health and safety risk assessment and procedures.** The institute lacks a proper health and safety risk assessment or procedures. Learners and staff are not inducted about health and safety sufficiently well to ensure their well-being. The premises lacks a fire or smoke detection system, the fire extinguishers have not been maintained for a long time, there is no first aider or sufficient first aid facilities and the building has no emergency exit doors.
- **Insufficient gathering and analyses of learners' and employers' views.** Although learners' views are gathered through feedback forms, these are not effectively analysed or used to plan for improvement. In addition, PTCO does not systemically gather employers' views with links to the labour market restricted to some personal communications with a few selected employers.

- **Ineffective systems to monitor and improve trainers' and staff performance.** Trainers and staff are insufficiently monitored or given guidance on how to improve. There is no structured lesson observation in place to monitor the quality of training in sessions. Although the managing director conducts ad hoc spot checks on some trainers, the observation is rather casual and does not follow specific criteria. There is not yet a system in place for staff appraisal.
- **A lack of robust strategic planning.** There is an absence of effective strategic direction or plans to introduce more improvement at the institute.
- **Self-evaluation which is insufficiently critical.** For example, the self-evaluation form (SEF), which was filled prior to the review, was not critical enough, lacked clarity and specified irrelevant priorities for improvement.

Recommendations

In order to improve, PTCO should:

- improve initial assessment to accurately measure previous knowledge, skills and varying needs; and plan lessons accordingly
- introduce reliable methods of monitoring and recording of learners' progress and achievements
- introduce a wider range of programmes according to a robust survey of local market needs
- carry out a comprehensive health and safety risk assessment; and take the necessary corrective measures
- ensure that learners' and employers' views are consistently gathered and use the outcomes for action planning
- devise a system for lesson observation and performance appraisal to monitor and improve trainers' and staff performance
- establish proper strategic plans to improve the overall provision
- ensure that self-evaluation is conducted regularly and more critically; and use the outcomes to improve the provision.