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National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

Score Training Institute
Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain

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The Directorate of Vocational Reviews

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. Established to raise standards in vocational education and training, the DVR 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 DVR'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

Score Training Institute (Score) was established in September 2011. The institute is licensed by the Ministry of Labour (MoL) to offer courses in soft skills, management, English language and basic health and safety. All courses offered are internally designed and non-accredited courses.

Score's Board of Trustees consists of three members and is responsible for providing relevant consultations about labour market needs and courses. The institute is overseen by a managing director who is the owner and all departments report to him. Score employs one full-time and two part-time marketing staff, one full-time and another part-time administration staff. In addition to an internal and an external verifiers. The organisational structure shows that the provider is planning to recruit one more part-time marketing staff and two full-time trainers. Score draws from a pool of 15 trainers who work on a part-time basis as and when needed.

During the last two years, Score enrolled 197 learners; 25 learners were enrolled in three courses conducted in 2011, 118 learners were enrolled in 13 courses conducted in 2012, and 54 learners were enrolled in five courses conducted in 2013 until the time of the review visit. Learners are adults, employed by private and government organisations.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over three 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, studied documents and materials provided by the institute and interviewed staff, learners, employers and trainers.

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

Table of review Judgements awarded

Overall Effectiveness	
How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the full range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Learners' Achievement	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Quality of Provision	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
How well do courses meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all students?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

All aspects of provision are judged as satisfactory. Learners develop suitable relevant knowledge and skills, and the vast majority achieve their courses objective and make appropriate progress considering their starting point. However, a few learners are not doing as well as expected. Although the majority of trainers are qualified and have command of their specialisms, training methods used are mostly trainer-centred with few opportunities provided for learners to contribute in the sessions. Learners' engagement is marginal. Assessment is adequate and records on progress are kept and updated by trainers. Resources are adequate and used appropriately in the sessions. Links with employers are adequate and suitably utilised to inform the range of the offered courses. Courses are sufficiently structured and resourced to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. However, course materials are occasionally reviewed and the courses lack additional activities to support and enhance the learning experience.

Although learners are sufficiently supported and guided to achieve better; this is done on an *ad hoc* basis. Useful and well-written trainee's performance reports are kept however, these are not shared with learners or employers. The reports shared with employers are insufficiently detailed. Learners are kept aware of their progress through verbal feedback provided during class activities. Nonetheless, a minority are not aware of their progress and how to improve further.

Some strategic planning is undertaken by the management however, it is not systematic or comprehensive enough. Learners' achievement is sufficiently monitored and analysed however, current verification process is ineffective to identify issues in assessment. Suitable training staff are recruited and adequately monitored however, the recently introduced internal lesson observations focuses on what the trainer does in a session rather than what has been delivered and how effective the process is. The feedback provided is insufficiently informative and rarely identify areas for development. Health and safety policies and practices are in place. Few issues were highlighted by the review team for which the provider took immediate actions to address.

Score has satisfactory capacity to improve. Responding to learners' feedback, the institute has moved recently to a more appropriate premises. The management initiated

communication with The Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) in UK to be recognised as an approved training centre to offer ILM externally-accredited courses. In addition, communication is initiated to offer a range of English Language courses through becoming part of a franchise of international English school. Notwithstanding the above, it is premature to judge the impact of these on the overall effectiveness of the provision. The provider has developed clear policies and procedures relevant to training and learning and have assumed adequate quality assurance measures monitor the quality of the training provided. Score has relevant strategic plan, sufficient and appropriate physical and human resources to enable improvement to be carried out , the provider's capacity to improve would further benefit from a structured action planning. Repeat business is good however, number of enrolment decreased from 118 learners in 2012 to 54 learners up to the date of the review in 2013 as the provider stopped training activities for a while due to change of premises.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The vast majority of learners achieve their course objectives however, a few are not doing as well as expected. Learners develop suitable relevant vocational skills and knowledge; their contributions and level of understanding were adequate in the observed sessions and most learners' interviewed found the training provided useful for their work needs as well as their personal lives. Learners' achievement is measured through post-course assessment which constitutes 50% of the total score. Learners' work, participation and attendance contribute to the other 50%. In order to pass a course, a learner has to score 50% overall. Pre- and post-course assessments are relevant. Progress is measured to be the difference between pre- and post-course assessment and records kept indicate that the vast majority of learners are making at least satisfactory progress from their starting point however, a minority are making insufficient progress. Taking into account the level of learners on entry, methods of assessment, and the training methods used, learners make adequate progress overall.

Learners are attentive and generally enjoy their learning experience however, only a few are self-motivated. When given the opportunities, learners are able to work independently and collaboratively, however, during sessions observed they were not always provided with all the planned activities. Moreover, allocating more time for group discussion and activities is suggested by learners in the feedback collected by the institute. Few learners were able to reflect on their progress during activities held and challenged their trainers and each other. In addition, learners are asked to complete an 'Interim Evaluation Form' where they evaluate the gained knowledge and their ability to implement what they mostly know. In most of the samples seen, their self-evaluation was in line with their progress and grades growth.

Retention rate is high at 99% as expected in such short courses. Records of attendance and punctuality are kept and these indicate that learners are attending regularly. The lessons observed revealed that the vast majority of learners arrive on time to their training sessions with a few arriving late without being sufficiently challenged. Attendance rate ranges between 80-100% across all courses during the years 2011 to 2013.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Score's trainers are qualified and have relevant theoretical command of their vocational specialisms. This was clearly evident in the observed sessions where accurate explanations of concepts were provided and suitable vocationally-related examples were used. However, a few have insufficient years of work or training experience. Although all sessions have a relevant session plan that includes the topics to be delivered and sometimes the activities with the time allocation, these plans are not informed with the outcomes of pre-course or continuous assessments to meet learners' specific needs. Most sessions start on time with recapitulation of the previous session and sharing the topics to be delivered however, time was insufficiently managed in some sessions as recapitulation and some activities took longer time than planned. Training methodologies used are mostly trainer-centred with limited learners' engagement. Learners' workbooks show that not all planned activities are conducted. Trainers generally deliver the session to accommodate the needs of the average-level learners, with appropriate support being provided to the less able learners. Nonetheless, more able learners are insufficiently challenged. In most cases, trainers use simple forward questions to assess learners' understanding which might hinder furthering learners' understanding and abilities.

Learners are sufficiently assessed by a number of appropriate assessments' tools. Trainers use relevant pre- and post-course assessments to measure the added value. In addition, the institute uses an 'Interim Evaluation Form' where learners are asked to evaluate their progress as a percentage of knowledge improvement. Progress is measured through continuous assessments incorporated in learners' workbooks and participation. However, in limited occasions, individual learners' understanding was assessed insufficiently. Written and verbal feedback provided are general nevertheless, it is more constructive in the few communication courses conducted where learners are provided with effective written feedback on how to improve further. The results of both summative and formative assessments are always kept and regularly updated to monitor learners' progress, however workbooks' marks are not always an accurate reflection of the quality of performance. In some activities, grading is informal and left to the trainers subjectivity. Moreover, a special arrangement is organised for those learners who miss their post-course assessment due to work commitments, whereby the post-course assessment is conducted *via* telephone calls. However, this practice is insufficiently reliable.

The available learning resources and materials are adequately used to deliver the courses; these include data shows, flip charts and sometimes relevant pictures, videos and learning games.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Score offers an appropriate range of non-accredited short courses mainly in management and soft skills, in addition to very few courses in English language and basic health and safety which meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. Courses are offered based on a 'Module Initiation Form' which is sent to the institute's current list of employers to seek their training needs, in addition to input from national studies carried out by Tamkeen, views of the Board of Trustees who are mainly professionals with considerable experience of the market needs, and requests of employers and individual learners. The outcomes of all the above are sufficiently used to inform the range and the structure of the offered courses. For example, Score has customised the 'Professional Employee' course to meet the specific needs of an employer; accordingly this course was conducted four times for other different clients afterwards. Recently, Score started conducting Training Needs Analysis (TNA) for employers however, the impact of this practice is yet to be seen.

Programmes are sufficiently resourced to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. The available resources include real objects, relevant learning games and videos. For courses conducted outside the institute's premises, Score has introduced recently a useful training preparation checklist, used before, during and after the course to make sure that all resources required are communicated to the relevant parties and available when needed. Most of the provided course materials are appropriately structured. Bi-lingual PowerPoint presentation slides which has detailed information with diagrams and sufficient planned activities are provided to trainers. Nevertheless, the courses lack any additional activities to support and enhance the learning experience. Course materials are reviewed and updated only when a course is requested to meet learners' and stakeholders' needs.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Learners receive suitable support and guidance to help them achieve better outcomes. However, the provided support and guidance are *ad hoc*. On the first day of any training

course, learners are provided with a suitable induction programme which includes general information about the provider and the available facilities at the training venue, delivery plan and assessment methods, attendance and punctuality policy, and guidance on health and safety precautions. Trainers provide appropriate support inside the training sessions. Course materials are translated to Arabic to help learners with language barrier. In addition, the provider utilises an evaluation tool called 'Trainee's Case', found in a number of courses' files, to assess those learners who are not able to attend the post-course assessments due to work's commitments. However, the implementation process is ineffective as marks are given based on a telephonic call with the learner. Most learners interviewed are satisfied with the support provided where they found the provider's staff and trainers cooperative, friendly and approachable.

Course outlines are available for employers before the starting of a training course however in a few of the courses, the provided objectives are inappropriate. Stakeholders are updated regularly on the range of courses on offer through flyers, emails, calls and visits. However, the recently launched website is insufficiently detailed.

Learners' attendance reports are sent regularly during the course to their employers whom are updated also on their employees' achievement upon course completion. However, the current performance reports sent to the employers are insufficiently detailed. These only include marks related to attendance, overall participation and pre- and post-course assessments. The institute currently keeps a 'Trainee Performance Report' for each individual learners. The report is well written and in addition to the above mentioned information, it includes evaluation of learner's personal characteristics, behaviour and interaction in classroom. Nevertheless, it lacks feedback on how learner could improve further and is not shared with the learner or the employer. Learners are only provided with verbal feedback on exercises and activities conducted during training sessions; a minority of them are not kept aware of their individual progress or what they need to do to improve further.

Courses are held either at Score's or employers' premises or at hospitality venues. Score's premises and facilities are fit for purpose. The number of available classrooms are sufficient, suitably equipped with training aids, furnished, ventilated and air-conditioned. However, the layout of some of the classrooms restrict carrying out some activities. Arrangements for the delivery of courses are flexible to suit the needs of different stakeholders. Employers can choose the venue, the time and the language of training, however a few learners highlighted their dissatisfaction with the venue and the timing of the training course they attended.

Leadership and management

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The institute's mission statement is clear and has appropriate focus on the learner, and is shared with staff and trainers. Score has developed a strategic plan with relevant priorities some of which are sufficiently challenging. The time frame of the plan is ten years with no action plans developed to ensure the systematic deployment and progress monitoring. There are some fragmented efforts. However, these are not aggregated in structured action plans that set clear accountabilities, timescale and performance indicators.

Considering the type of courses offered and the number of enrolment, the organisation structure is adequate. Senior management staff are suitably qualified with sufficient vocational and teaching experience.

Adequate health and safety measures are in place and learners are provided with the relevant guidance at the start of any training course. The review team highlighted some minor issues in the new premises and the management took immediate actions to address them.

Learners' achievement is sufficiently assessed in all courses and relevant data are retained. Achievement data are analysed on individual-course levels and aggregated to provide an overall view of the trends over years. However, the current verification process is superficial and is ineffective in identifying issues in assessment or marking. Moreover, it only includes samples of learners' marked work.

The majority of trainers recruited are qualified and have sufficient work experience. They are suitably deployed and are provided with appropriate induction on the institute's vision, mission and procedures especially those related to training delivery and assessment. The institute's management conducts meeting with trainers as needed to discuss issues relevant to training such as outcomes and assessment criteria, appropriateness of activities utilised for training and records keeping.

Trainers' performance was monitored through casual visits conducted by the managing director and learners' feedback. A formal internal lesson observation scheme was introduced recently. However, the form used focuses on what the trainer do in a session rather than the effectiveness of their delivery, The completed forms are insufficiently informative and rarely identify areas for development.

Although learners' prior attainment is appropriately assessed, the outcomes are insufficiently analysed or utilised. Learners are requested to complete a trainee's objectives form which mainly gather information related to learners' workplace and their career objectives. Pre-course assessment is conducted for all courses however, the outcomes of these and the trainee's objectives forms are insufficiently analysed or utilised.

Learners' feedback about the provision is regularly sought, aggregated and suitably analysed. Employers' feedback is gathered verbally. Recently, a form was introduced for this purpose. Outcomes of the feedback collected is used appropriately to improve the provision. Appropriate links with employers are maintained, Score communicates with employers about their training needs and customisation of courses to their specific needs.

Score's Self-Evaluation Form (SEF), submitted for this review, provides insufficient information to justify judgements made, and the stated grades overestimates the institute status.

The provider's key strengths

- Achievement records are kept, aggregated and analysed to monitor trends over time
- Learners' feedback about the provision are regularly collected, aggregated, analysed and appropriately used to improve the provision.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Score should:

- improve learners' achievement to ensure that all learners make sufficient progress
- improve the quality of training by:
 - enhancing training methods to better engage and motivate learners
 - enabling learners to further their understanding and solve problems
- improve leadership and management by:
 - developing action plans to ensure systematic monitoring of implementation and progress
 - ensuring better analysis of learners' prior attainment outcomes and effective utilisation of these in lesson planning for better accommodation of learners' varying needs
 - improving the current verification process
 - developing the recently introduced internal lesson observation form to have sufficient focus on training and learning and ensure that observations conducted are critical and informative to foster continuous improvement of training.