



# **Vocational Review Unit**

## **Review Report**

**Yellow Hat Training**

**Suwafiyah**

**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 7- 9 May 2012**

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## The Vocational Review Unit

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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**

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### **Description of the provision**

Yellow Hat Training (YHT) was established in July 2010 and is licensed by the Ministry of Labour (MoL). The institute has one branch located in Suwafiyah. During 2011, YHT enrolled a total of 324 learners and in 2012 had enrolled 204 learners by the time of the review. All learners are employed and sponsored by their employers.

YHT mainly provides English language and workplace communication skills. The English language courses are either internally designed or are preparation courses for the University of Cambridge examinations. All the communication skills' workshops are internally designed by the institute.

YHT is operated by a chief executive officer (CEO), a director of studies, a business development director and two part-time training assistants. The CEO and the director of studies are the only trainers at the institute.

### **Scope of the review**

The review was conducted over three days by a team of three 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, examined documents and the materials provided by the institute and talked with staff, learners, employers and trainers.

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

## Table of review judgments awarded

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<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	
<b>How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the full range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?</b>	<b>Grade: 2 Good</b>
<b>Learners' Achievement</b>	
How well do learners achieve?	<b>Grade: 2 Good</b>
<b>Quality of Provision</b>	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	<b>Grade: 2 Good</b>
How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	<b>Grade: 1 Outstanding</b>
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	<b>Grade: 2 Good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all students?	<b>Grade: 2 Good</b>

## **Review judgements**

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### **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 YHT's provision is good. All aspects of the provision are also judged to be good except the effectiveness of programmes in meeting learners' and stakeholders' needs which is judged as outstanding. The majority of learners develop confidence in using industry-related communication skills as well as English language skills. Moreover, they make good progress compared to their starting points. This is achieved through effective preparation and delivery of lessons by trainers who have comprehensive subject knowledge and provide continuous assessment of learners' work. Moreover, courses have a well-planned structure and are customised specifically to meet learners' and stakeholders' needs. They are delivered with coherence to ensure learners' acquisition of the relevant knowledge, understanding and skills. Learners are effectively and systematically supported. Additionally, management keeps a close relationship with stakeholders and monitors individual learners' performance, although it has not yet started an analysis of trends and its strategic plans have not been cascaded into specific action plans.

YHT has good capacity to improve. During the last year the institute added ten new internally designed workshops in communication skills specifically designed to improve language and communication skills in the workplace. Moreover, it introduced the preparation course for the University of Cambridge examination, Key English Test (KET). The institute is planning the delivery of various courses which are now on offer such as Business Language Testing Services (BULATS) and the University of Cambridge International Certificate Courses in the following: the International Certificate in Financial English (ICFE), the International Legal English Certificate (ILEC) and the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). YHT's physical and human resources are sufficient to meet current needs, but would need increasing if the provision expanded. The institute has a number of useful rules and checklists in place to ensure the quality of provision; however, there is no appropriate quality assurance document in place yet and detailed strategic plans are yet to be developed. However, there is a plan for a consultant to develop these in the near future. The repeat business is high and enrolment is increasing. The self-evaluation form (SEF) is very informative, well evidenced and appropriately critical.

## **Learners' achievement**

### **How well do learners achieve?**

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

The majority of learners develop confidence in using industry-related communication skills as well as English language skills. Employers also testify to good skills development in English language as well as communication skills which are applied in the workplace. Most learners make good progress considering their starting points on the English language courses. There are examples of learners who started at the initial level and passed the KET of the University of Cambridge Examinations. From the lessons observed, learners show good progress in the communication skills workshops as well. This is evidenced in the activities and tasks given to them. Learners at workshops, which comprise the majority of conducted courses, are provided with pre-course assessments which are effective in identifying their prior knowledge to build on and target specific skills. Moreover, a group of learners for a service industry employer were observed in the workplace to ensure their skills development. As for the KET preparation course, the success rate is a commendable 100 per cent as the whole group of fourteen students passed their external examination. These comprise around 7 per cent of total learners in 2012. The retention rate is high on all courses and workshops, which is expected for courses of a short duration. Except for KET, courses are not subject to systematic internal or external moderation or verification processes.

Learners very much enjoy class activities and their learning experience at YHT. Moreover, they are self-motivated and take pride in their work. They are given opportunities to reflect critically on how well they are progressing and are requested to fill in a useful self-assessment check (SAC) to evaluate their progress. They are encouraged to analyse their work level and achievement of outcomes and critically suggest ways that may improve their work using the new tools and techniques gained in the workshops. Games and group tasks are used effectively to stimulate learners to think carefully and solve problems they face at work. During the lessons observed, learners were able to work both independently and collaboratively. Attendance and punctuality are both recorded and a policy is available on attendance. Attendance is high, however punctuality was an issue in a few cases during the observed lessons.

## **The quality of provision**

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

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

Trainers display comprehensive subject knowledge in their preparation and delivery of lessons. In workshop sessions, learners are presented with new techniques that help them in tackling different problems related to their work and developing their 'soft' skills. They provide extra explanation and examples when required and always address learners' queries. Lessons are well-planned and based on the results of effective placement tests and show how teaching is catering for anticipated problems that might be faced by learners. In the communication skills workshops, a pre-course assessment is implemented to cater more effectively for learning needs and the completion of tasks by learners. All lessons start on time and lesson objectives are shared and discussed with learners.

Training promotes the use of different methods that are best suited to learners' needs and effectively encourages most of the learners to participate. Learning resources, such as a data show, video clips, games, flash cards and books, are effectively used to promote learning. Clear marking schemes are in place for each English language level and KET preparation. Trainers continuously assess learners' work. Although useful verbal feedback is provided to learners, the written constructive feedback on learners' notes and class activities are not sufficient. On English language courses, trainers keep appropriate records of learners' progress and their feedback indicates reasons for various results. However, in the communication skills workshops, records do not indicate clearly enough learners' performance and the achievement of tasks.

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

#### **Grade: 1 Outstanding**

The institute offers a range of comprehensive, internally designed courses in English language and workshops in communication skills, all with clearly stated learning outcomes that meet the needs of learners and stakeholders extremely well. It also offers preparation courses for various University of Cambridge examinations such as the Key English Test (KET), the Business English Certificate (BEC), the International Certificate in Financial English (ICFE), the International Legal English Certificate (ILEC) as well as the Business Language Testing Services (BULATS). Materials are authentic and specific, and courses are carefully planned, resourced, delivered and assessed to measure learners' attainment and the different learning outcomes. Courses and workshops at YHT are effectively based on analyses of local market needs and onsite research of employers' needs.

Courses are extensively customised through meetings and effective analysis of stakeholders' needs. These take into account the nature of business, work conditions and documentation related to each stakeholder. Learners and employers are highly satisfied with the courses. YHT has a well-planned structure of English language courses with tasks that are clearly set and assignments and assessments catering for learners' needs. These are delivered with coherence to ensure learners' acquisition of the relevant knowledge, understanding and skills. Suitable extra-curricular activities are provided to learners to enrich their use of English language and 'soft' skills. For example, learners are given the opportunity to take part in games such "Dinner Mystery Murder" with different learners playing characters to solve the murder. This works as a means of improving their English language in an entertaining way. Learners are also given references to websites and extra books to read.

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

### **Grade: 2 Good**

Trainers and staff at YHT provide effective, systematic support to learners to achieve better outcomes. They also maintain open communication channels with learners during and after the courses and provide them with individualised advice related to their workplace. For English language courses, learners with lower achievement are provided with coaching clinics to help them improve. Moreover, a homework hotline is provided to learners during certain hours should they need help with their studies. YHT provides a punctuality prize for punctual learners. Learners on KET preparation courses are provided with extra classes for practising and revision of examination trials. YHT has a welcoming, inspiring and appropriately equipped learning environment and a well-stocked library with books in the areas of English Language, teacher training and workplace communication skills.

Learners have access to well-informed advice and guidance about courses. This occurs mainly through the trainers and staff, as the institute's leaflet is basic and its website is currently under construction. The institute provides flexible arrangements for the delivery of courses to suit the needs of learners and stakeholders. Detailed course descriptions with learning objectives and content are available in advance for learners and stakeholders. YHT maintains effective communication channels with stakeholders regarding learners' achievement and sends them detailed performance reports. Learners are made aware of their progress during the courses through verbal feedback and they receive reports on their English language grades at the end of the courses.

## **Leadership and management**

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

**Grade: 2 Good**

YHT has a clear vision, focused on learners' achievement and lifelong learning. It has also developed a set of core values and key success indicators. However, strategic plans are not cascaded into specific actions with responsibilities and deadlines. YHT management maintains a close relationship with its key employers and carries out personal visits to them. Moreover, clear reports are sent to employers at the end of the courses on the performance of learners which also include what is required for the next stage. Highly qualified trainers and staff are recruited and deployed. Additionally, they are provided with appropriate opportunities to attend conferences. Staff also share knowledge through 'peer teaching' sessions. The management structure currently meets the provider's aims and objectives. Systematic lesson observations are conducted and a detailed form is available where the feedback is shared with the trainer. The trainer also completes a 'Self-Reflection Form' before the discussion of the feedback. A job description is in place for staff members and the appraisal system is fit for purpose. Regular monthly meetings are held and documented showing responsibilities and deadlines.

YHT has a health and safety policy with relevant measures in place which are communicated to learners. Effective placement tests for English language courses are conducted as well as a useful pretest for the communication skills workshops to assess, analyse and utilise learners' prior attainment. Learners' views are collected at the end of the courses. These are discussed and, where appropriate, actions are taken. However, employers' feedback is only taken orally after the courses. A simple questionnaire was distributed to key employers at the end of 2011 to obtain their views on the provision. Although management monitors the results of individual learners' performance closely and provides them with guidance on how best to progress, there is little aggregation of data at management level for the purpose of trend analysis.

## **The provider's key strengths**

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- Effective industry-related communication skills and confidence developed by learners and the opportunities provided to reflect critically on how well they are progressing.
- The comprehensive subject knowledge of trainers which is reflected in the preparation and delivery of well-planned lessons based on effective initial assessment.
- Extensively customised workshops and courses which take into account the specific needs of learners and employers and their work conditions.
- Effective, systematic support provided for learners to achieve better outcomes and the open communication channels maintained with them during and after a course.
- The close relationship management has with its key stakeholders through personal visits and clear, useful reports sent to employers at the end of courses.

## **Recommendations**

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**In order to improve, YHT should:**

- assess and record learners' performance and achievement of tasks in the communication workshops and provide written constructive feedback with the marking of learners' work on all courses
- ensure a more structured approach to management strategies including:
  - developing and cascading strategic plans to specific actions with clearly assigned responsibilities and deadlines
  - the aggregation of data at management level for analysis of trends
  - documenting quality assurance procedures.