



Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**Yellow Hat Training
Al Suwaifiyah -Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 18-20 April 2016

VO086-C3-R031

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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 four reviewers. For this review, reviewers observed training sessions and other related activities, analysed data on the courses and the qualifications that learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and the materials provided by the provider and met with learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

In the previous review, Yellow Hat Training's (YHT) overall effectiveness was judged as good. All main questions were judged as good except the quality of programmes which was judged as outstanding.

This Report summarises 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	Outstanding (1)
Quality of support and guidance	Outstanding (1)
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)

Yellow Hat Training (YHT) offers good provision. The quality of courses offered and the support and guidance provided are outstanding. Learners' achievement, the quality of teaching and assessment, and the effectiveness of leadership and management are good.

The vast majority of learners gain effective knowledge, skills and competencies relevant to their courses, achieve their course ILOs, and progress well considering their prior attainment and over course levels where applicable. All learners enrolled in the externally-accredited University of Cambridge Examination Preparation Courses successfully achieve their qualifications. These learners constitute 4% of the total enrolment since the last review. However, a few learners in the local soft skills courses, which represent the vast majority of enrolment, develop minimal knowledge and skills. YHT trainers are highly knowledgeable and have wide professional and training experience. They succeed in engaging and motivating learners effectively through a variety of training methods and class activities. A range of relevant formative and summative assessments are used to evaluate learners' understanding and measure the achievement of the course ILOs. Although learners in the English and communication courses are provided with effective written feedback on their work, this is not the case on other soft skills courses. Courses are offered based on a good understanding of stakeholders' needs. Local soft skills courses are effectively customised to meet the specific needs of learners and stakeholders. Courses are well structured, planned and resourced to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. The longer courses are supported with relevant extra-curricular activities to enrich the learning experience. Learners at YHT receive effective support and guidance to help them achieve better outcomes. The learning environment is inspiring and supports the learning process. Arrangements for course delivery are highly flexible to suit the needs of learners and stakeholders. Links with stakeholders are well established and they are regularly informed on learners' performance during the course. YHT have developed a well-focused five year strategic plan based on a relevant SWOT analysis, and have an operational plan which is regularly followed up. Learners' and staff performance are closely monitored. However; the completed peers' class observation forms are not always informative or identify areas for further development. Although the provider has clear and effective arrangements for quality assurance, the internal verification is not formalised.

Capacity to improve

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

Grade: Good (2)

Yellow Hat Training's capacity to improve is good. Learners sitting for the University of Cambridge examinations achieve 100% pass rates. Since its previous review, YHT has made improvements to the provision which include the development of a five year strategic plan focused on improving the range of the courses offered, improving the quality of provision, developing clear quality assurance policies and procedures, and addressing the previous review recommendations. The provider has opened discussion with City & Guilds and the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) to add more externally-accredited courses and endorse YHT courses. Links with stakeholders are well-established and repeat business is good over the last three years. The number of enrolments was maintained between 2013 and 2014, and noticeably increased in 2015. While YHT has sufficient and appropriate physical resources to enable improvements to be carried out, the human resources are just suitable for the current situation.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Good (2)

The vast majority of learners gain relevant knowledge and practical skills relevant to their chosen courses and achieve the qualifications they aim for and their course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs). Most learners and stakeholders interviewed express their high satisfaction with the outcomes of the training provided and find it highly beneficial in improving their performance at the workplace. In the English and communication courses- both the local courses and the preparation for the externally-accredited University of Cambridge examinations- learners develop significant knowledge and skills. Learners' achievement in these courses is effectively and reliably measured with the assessment methods used focusing on the main language skills. These courses constitute 15% of the total enrolment since the last review. All learners who sit for the University of Cambridge examinations successfully achieve their qualifications. These learners comprise 4% of the total enrolment. In the soft skills courses which include the completion certificate courses which comprise 41% and the attendance certificate course which make up 44%, the vast majority of learners develop relevant knowledge and skills and achieve their course ILOs. Learners' achievement in the majority of these courses is measured through relevant

practical activities and post- course assessment. However, in a significant minority of the very short duration courses, learners' achievement is measured through the Self-Evaluation Checklist (SAC) and relevant role play where the rubric for the evaluation is not well-defined. A few learners in the soft skills courses develop minimal knowledge and skills, as reflected by their post-course assessment results and their evaluation of their own performance in the SAC.

In the English and communications courses, the vast majority of learners progress well throughout their courses considering their starting point and over course levels. Learners are attentive and enjoy their learning experience. During the observed sessions they were able to correct their mistakes and reflect on their peers' answers whenever the trainer instructed them to do so. In most cases they are able to reflect reliably on their level of attainment through the SAC in the soft skills courses and the Learners' Self-Reflection form in the English courses. They are able to work well both independently and collaboratively as needed. Most learners attend their sessions regularly and on time. The attendance policy is stated to learners and stakeholders and strictly followed-up. Although punctuality is not always recorded, learners always inform the trainer about any expected lateness, and the institute always follows- up with learners and stakeholders in cases of lateness or absenteeism.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: Good (2)

Trainers are highly knowledgeable and have theoretical and practical command of their fields. They provide accurate explanations of concepts, knowledgeable responses to learners' questions and use relevant vocational examples to link theory with practice. The main trainers for the English and communication courses have the University of Cambridge Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA).

In the English and communication courses, trainers used detailed lesson plans which clearly identify the learning outcomes, the activities linked to the skills to be addressed, the required material and resources, the assessment methods and the time allocation of each task. These plans are informed by learners' prior attainment as they identify anticipated problems which are addressed by the trainer during the course period. In the soft skills courses, trainers use clear agendas and detailed trainers' notes to plan their lessons meticulously. Lessons are well managed and have clear ILOs, usually starting with recapitulation of the previously covered material where the majority of learners actively

participate. A range of training methods and activities are used to effectively engage and motivate learners, such as role plays, group discussion, presentations, and individual and group activities. Learners' individual needs are accommodated well. In the English and communication courses, the placement test is effective in placing learners at the right course level thereby and minimising individual differences between learners. During the observed lessons, the trainer conveyed clear instructions, slowly and repeated several times, to accommodate the less able learners. The training methods used succeed in challenging learners and stimulating self-learning with learners being encouraged to think critically and extend their answers. For example, in one of the business English lessons observed, the trainer requested learners to put verbs in-to contextual sentences. It is worth mentioning that, class activities in the soft skills courses are effectively customised to the specific needs of learners and stakeholders.

A range of relevant formative and summative assessments are used to evaluate learners' understanding and measure the achievement of the course ILOs. In the English and communication courses, assessment includes progress and final tests which focus well on the required language skills. In the majority of the soft skills courses, particularly the completion certificate, assessment is mainly done through relevant pre and post-course tests as well as the class activities. In a significant minority of the soft skills courses, particularly the very short attendance certificate ones, assessment is done through the SAC and customised role plays though the rubric used for evaluating the role play is not clearly defined. Trainers maintain and regularly update learners' performance records. During the observed lessons, constructive verbal feedback was provided to learners. In the English and communication courses, effective written feedback is provided on learners' work. Other courses have minimal written feedback.

The available resources are effectively utilised to promote learning. This includes use of power point presentations, educational games, the white board and flipcharts.

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

Grade: Outstanding (1)

Courses are offered based on an informed understanding of the market and stakeholders' needs. The management has well-established links with their regular stakeholders and maintains on-going communication with them to improve the quality of the provision. YHT has a number of highly effective mechanisms to seek the market's needs such as gathering feedback from their clients, mystery shopping, and regular Training Needs Analysis (TNA) meetings. The outcomes of all these processes are utilised effectively to inform the provision.

For example, in 2015 the provider conducted several courses which were customised to the meet specific needs of stakeholders. YHT offers a wide range of soft- skills courses, in addition to business English and the externally-accredited University of Cambridge Examination Preparation courses which include Key English Test Preparation Course (KET) and Business English Certificate (Preliminary level- BEC1). The provider has the course materials and resources to offer higher levels of Cambridge Examination Preparation courses when needed. English courses have clear progression routes that are aligned with the Common European Framework Referencing (CEFR). A clear policy is in place for the design, approval, update and review of courses. All course materials are prepared by the training provider. Courses are well-structured and planned with detailed course outlines that indicate the course objectives/ ILOs and teaching and assessment methods, and an adequate number of learning hours is allocated to each course. Course outlines are always shared with learners and stakeholders in advance. Courses are well-resourced to meet the needs of learners' and stakeholders. These include customised materials and posters, learning puzzles and games, bingo cards, stories and dictionaries. In addition, learners and trainers have access to relevant books and materials.

Courses, particularly the longer ones, are supported with appropriate extra-curricular activities to enrich the learning experience such as team building games, scavenger hunts, pizza evening, and murder mystery evenings. The Centre may have such activities two or three times a year, to which ex-learners who keep in contact are also invited. YHT implements effective and clear requirements and mechanisms for access and entry level to courses. A highly effective placement test is used to place learners at the appropriate level in English courses, and is clearly aligned to the CEFR objectives. In other local courses, course outlines clearly identify the targeted audience.

How well are learners supported and guided?

Grade: Outstanding (1)

Learners at YHT are well supported and guided to achieve better outcomes. The provider has a special policy called 'C.A.R.E' which stands for Compassionate, Approachable, Reliable and Empathetic. This policy is implemented effectively to support learners to improve their achievement. All learners are provided with an informative induction prior to the start of the course, which includes all details relevant to the course, trainer and centre rules and regulations. YHT provides special coaching sessions for challenged learners to help them practice more and improve their achievement, for learners who need to enhance their self-confidence, and for talented learners. Learners with social or emotional challenges in their personal or work life are provided with free counselling sessions by the trainers. Learners enrolled in University of Cambridge examinations preparation courses are provided with a special induction prior to undertaking the placement test, with a candidate

handbook which includes relevant information about the international examination preparation and progression levels. Learners are also provided with extra free sessions to practice relevant activities and mock examinations.

The YHT learning environment is inspiring, supporting the learning process. There are sufficient and appropriate classrooms which are well equipped with training aids and materials, a lot of educational posters with inspiring quotes are displayed, and all facilities are relevant and in place to provide a comfortable and friendly learning environment. Learners have access to an informative helpdesk, free Wi-Fi, and a variety of learning resources including books, games and puzzles which are used in class delivery and can be borrowed by learners.

The advice and guidance provided prior to the start of the course is thorough. Course outlines are informative and shared with learners and stakeholders in advance. Enquiries from learners and stakeholders are promptly replied to and addressed. YHT maintains very effective communication with clients to keep them informed them with learners' performances during the course. Performance reports shared with the stakeholders include information about learners' attendance and punctuality throughout the course, their progress and achievement results, and analysis of their feedback about the course.

Arrangements for the delivery of courses are highly flexible to suit the needs of learners and stakeholders. Courses are tailored to their specific needs and they can always choose the trainer, time, dates, days, and venue. Any changes suggested by the learners or corporate clients throughout the course or after completion are taken into consideration, and changes are made as relevant within the course or in future courses.

YHT has relevant policies and effective practices to identify and accommodate learners with special physical and educational needs.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: Good (2)

YHT has clear vision and mission statements which are shared with staff and stakeholders. In 2015, YHT conducted a useful SWOT analysis and used it to develop a five year strategic plan focused on continuously seeking out the market needs, expanding the range of courses offered and the professional development of staff members. This plan is supported by a clear operational plan which is regularly monitored. Considering the number of enrolments and the range of courses offered, the current organisational structure is fit for purpose. Members of the senior management are qualified, with relevant wide training and professional experience. Staff are effectively and efficiently deployed.

Clear quality assurance policies and procedures are in place. YHT has an effective placement test to place learners at the right course level in the English and communications courses. Outcomes are effectively utilised to inform lesson planning. In the local completion and attendance certificate courses, learners' prior attainment is sufficiently assessed through pre-course assessment and the information gathered from the clients; the outcomes of these are effectively utilised in customising the formative assessment used during each course. Nevertheless, the internal verification process is not formalised.

Learners' achievement is closely monitored in the English and communications courses and the local completion certificate courses, and sufficiently monitored in the local attendance certificate courses. Achievement data is analysed on individual course levels and where needed the outcomes are utilised to inform decision making. For example, the management is currently studying the idea of merging the supervisory skills and team leading courses based on the results of the two courses as well as the level of intakes. The management also produces relevant analysis on the frequency at which courses are requested the stakeholders.

Qualified and experienced trainers are recruited and deployed effectively. Their performance is regularly monitored through regular meetings, checking of assessments results and peer class observations. Trainers are also provided with the opportunity to reflect on their own performance. However, the completed class observations are not always sufficiently informative and do not identify areas for further development.

Learners' feedback about the provision is regularly sought, aggregated and analysed. Links with stakeholders are well-established; the provider continuously seeks out their training needs and there are several cases where courses are customised to meet their specific needs. Their feedback is gathered through different methods. Generally, learners and stakeholders are highly satisfied with the course outcomes.

The Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) completed in preparation for this review is informative with reference to the supporting evidence. However, the judgements are slightly overestimated.

The premises are free of any obvious hazards, and all essentials of health and safety are in place. Learners are provided with relevant guidance at the start of their courses.

The provider's key strengths

- The vast majority of learners gain effective knowledge, skills and competencies, achieve their course ILOs, and progress well.
- Trainers are qualified, highly knowledgeable and have wide relevant training and professional experience
- Courses are offered based on informed understanding of the market and stakeholders' needs. They are well-structured, planned and resourced to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders
- Learners are well-supported and guided to achieve better outcomes
- Learners' performance is effectively monitored
- Links with stakeholders are well-established.

Recommendations

In order to improve, YHT should:

- further enhance skills and knowledge development in the soft skills courses
- ensure that learners in the local soft skills courses are provided with sufficient written feedback on their work to help them improve further
- improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the internal class observations are critical, informative and identify further areas for development
 - formalising the internal verification process.

Appendix

Description of the provision

Yellow Hat Training (YHT) was established in July 2010 and is licensed by the Ministry of Labour (MoL) to offer training in English, workplace communication, leadership, management and soft skills. The English courses are either internally designed or are preparation for the University of Cambridge examinations. All courses offered are short or very short where the learning hours vary from 30 in the English and communication courses to 8-16 in the soft skills courses. Since its last review of May 2012, the provider enrolled 231 learners in 2012, 265 in 2013, 262 in 2014, and 462 in 2015. In 2016, YHT has enrolled 23 learners up to the date of this review. Most learners are sponsored by their employers or through the Labour Fund (Tamkeen).

The provider operates from one centre located in the Suwaifayah area. It is managed by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/director and employs a full-time director of studies and a director of business development/head of administration. The CEO and the director of studies are the only two trainers in YHT.