



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
Education & Training Quality Authority
Kingdom of Bahrain - مملكة البحرين

Directorate of Vocational Reviews

Review Report

Bahrain Training Institute
Isa Town
Kingdom of Bahrain

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VO044-C3-R097

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Introduction

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over five days by a team of nine 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, and documents and materials provided by the Institute and met with learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

In the previous review, Bahrain Training Institute was judged as satisfactory as were all other aspects of its provision except for the effectiveness of training and assessment, which was judged as inadequate.

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	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Satisfactory (3)
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	Satisfactory (3)

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The overall effectiveness of Bahrain Training Institute (BTI) is satisfactory, as are aspects of learners' achievement and the quality of training and assessment, but the quality of the programmes, the effectiveness of support and guidance provided to learners, the leadership and management and capacity to improve are all graded as good. Learners enrolled on the regular and corporate programmes develop and gain appropriate vocational skills and knowledge that are relevant to their chosen field and suitable to their level. Learners in the regular full-time programmes exhibit the relevant vocational skills they gained through their assignments, workshop practical activities, projects and during their On-Job Training (OJT). However, a minority of them face difficulty in completing the given tasks and show limited skills development upon module completion compared to complexity expected at the programme level and the industry requirements. The majority of learners are attentive, demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning and are engaged during the practical activities in the laboratories and workshops, though, in sessions observed, there were cases where a minority of learners were not self-motivated. Programmes are delivered by qualified and experienced trainers, whom use a range of relevant vocational examples and explanation to enrich the learning experience. However, in the less effective sessions, they provide insufficient clarifications. Throughout the semester, trainers use a range of relevant summative assessments and utilise relevant prescribed grading criteria specifications to ensure consistency and fairness. Marking of learners' work is accurate with clear rubric and the mark awarded to learners' answers is consistent to the grading criteria. Nonetheless, in a few modules, particularly in those locally designed by BTI, the rubric is not sufficiently specific in order to avoid subjectivity of marking.

BTI offers a wide range of national and externally-accredited programmes that covers different specialisations, in addition to a range of professional and short programmes that are tailored to corporates' specific needs. These offerings are based on a thorough analysis and understanding of the local market in terms of levels required and professional standards that meet learners and stakeholders' needs and requirements. Learners are well informed about

their programme's details through effective induction that helps them to settle quickly and confidently. In addition, they are well supported and guided throughout their programme to help them achieve better outcomes.

The management monitors learners' achievement and the quality of training on continuous basis. Learners' achievement data are collected, aggregated and analysed. Furthermore, trend analysis on learners' achievement and trainers' performance are carried out and outcomes are used to trigger further improvement. The Institute has a well-articulated five years' strategic plan that is focused towards continuous improvement of its provision. BTI's quality assurance is inclusive; a set of clear policies and procedures are in place to guide the quality of teaching, assessment practices, and programmes' design. Whilst useful verification and moderation practices are implemented, the quality of implementation is not consistent amongst all courses/programmes.

Capacity to improve

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

Grade: Good (2)

BTI's capacity to improve is good. The majority of areas for improvement that were highlighted in the last BQA review report have been effectively addressed. Specifically, the internal quality assurance arrangements have been improved and are currently effectively disseminated among the institute's divisions. This is in addition to further improving record keeping about learners' progress and achievement. BTI management has initiated rigorous practices for improving and maintaining learners' achievement, and as a result, the number of dismissed learners has decreased over the last three years and learners' achievement has improved. During the last three years, BTI has introduced a number of improvements to its infrastructure, such as adding two new buildings, electrical station and green house nursery, and lately has introduced Moodle e-learning portal, which have impacted the quality of the provision positively.

The Institute maintains effective links with local stakeholders and external partners through the Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), OJT and industry immersion programmes, through which BTI responds effectively to their requirements. As such, BTI carried out market study that had indicated the need to suspend a few of the programmes it used to offer and introduce new programmes through the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC), High National Certificate (HNC) in Marine Engineering, BTEC Extended Diploma (ED) in Agriculture, Higher National Diploma in Business and Diploma in Laboratory Management.

In addition, the Institute has placed nine national programmes in various discipline on different levels of the NQF.

Well-structured strategic plan is closely monitored and followed up by the top management team and to ensure sustainable and continuous improvement, the Institute assess the effectiveness of trainers' performance through regular and frequent Trainers Delivery Audits (TDA) visits. However; TDA action plans were inconsistently implemented in a few cases. Sufficient human and physical resources are deployed to carry out the Institute's operational activities. Qualified and professional trainers with industrial experiences are recruited and deployed.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

Learners' achievement is satisfactory overall. Learners enrolled on the regular and corporate programmes gain adequate knowledge and develop appropriate vocationally-related skills and competences that are related to their chosen field and according to their level. Learners in the regular full-time programmes exhibit the skills they gained through their assignments, workshop practical activities, projects and eventually the OJT. The standard of learners' work in these programmes indicates an adequate level of performance and the majority of learners achieve the minimum pass grade (P) across the modules. Nonetheless, a minority of learners have difficulty in completing the given tasks and show limited skills' development upon module completion compared to its level and industry requirements; particularly in the HR programmes. Notwithstanding the above, there are a few examples of high achievers who either achieve high scores, or are graduates who have been employed in relevant fields. Learners attending the externally accredited programmes need to complete different formative and summative assessments including assignments, case studies, quizzes and a final examination to meet the international accrediting body (Pearson/BTEC) and BTI requirements. Learners who successfully achieve modules' requirements are allowed to progress to the succeeding semester. Although the majority of learners across the provision achieve the module objectives and make sufficient progress throughout their studies, a minority of them are not able to maintain the minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) to advance in the programme. In addition, only a significant minority of learners who are required to go through the orientation are able to progress successfully to ED programmes.

The regular full-time programmes constitute around 96% of the provision. More than two thirds of the learners are enrolled in externally accredited programmes; mostly pursuing BTEC qualifications and around 13% are enrolled in the BTI locally designed qualifications. Though, the overall achievement rate across the majority of programmes is maintained at an adequate level over the years, the achievement rate in the Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes is better than ED; considering that the HND qualifications represent a small proportion of the total enrolment.

Learners are expected to complete their qualifications within two years with three-year extension allowing them to complete within a maximum of five years. Analysing the performance of the learners enrolled since the first semester 2014-2015, almost half of the learners achieved the qualification they aim for within the expected period of two years. Nevertheless, 19% of learners from the overall enrolment since the last BQA review conducted in May 2014, were dismissed, and the overall achievement rate in a number of BTEC programmes at module level is relatively low; particularly the ED in HR programme. It is worth mentioning that achievement rates orientation programmes have slightly improved over the years.

From lessons observed, the majority of learners demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning and are engaged during practical activities conducted in the laboratories and workshops, though, in cases learners are not self-motivated. A number of learners are able to reflect suitably on their level of understanding by occasionally questioning their trainers during the sessions and exhibiting their work in the various extra-curricular activities. Moreover, learners' ability to reflect on their learning experience is cultivated through the OJT that provides learners with essential industry immersion. While the majority of learners are able to work independently and collaboratively during the in-class and practical activities, a minority of them remain dependent on trainers' directions to move forward.

BTI has a detailed attendance and punctuality policy, which is effectively implemented. It is shared with learners at the beginning of their studies and they are given immediate feedback on their attendance through the 'trainee online account'. The vast majority of learners attend on a regular basis; however, a few learners are awarded with Withdraw Fail 'WF' grade due to their low attendance rate.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

BTI trainers have relevant vocational qualifications and teaching experience, which is demonstrated during the observed sessions through sharing relevant range of vocational examples and explanations they provide in response to learners' questions. However, in the less effective sessions, trainers provide insufficient clarifications. Trainers use fit-for-purpose lesson plans that clearly identify the learning outcomes, instructional activities and the learning resources. Nonetheless, these plans do not always reflect effective utilisation of learners' prior or continuous attainment as there were cases where the activities were insufficiently adapted to the level of the learners. The majority of the observed sessions started on time and were well-managed with a progressive flow of the different tasks and activities. However, in a few sessions, time allocation to complete the different class activities was not effective.

The majority of trainers use a range of effective training methods to successfully motivate and engage learners during sessions. These include lectures, peer discussions, pair and team activities, which are directed to enhance learners' vocational skills and theoretical and practical knowledge. However, in a few sessions, training approach is more towards trainer-centered, thus limiting the chances of engaging passive learners. In the majority of the observed sessions, trainers appropriately checked learners' understanding through useful formative assessment methods such as questioning and in-class individual and group activities. Nevertheless, in a few sessions, assessment methods were not effective. For example, the difficulty level of questions was not commensurate to learners' capability. Throughout the semester, a range of relevant summative assessments that are closely aligned to the prescribed grading criteria specifications is used. Learners' vocational and practical skills are also assessed during their OJT. From the provided samples of module files and graded students' work, marking of learners' work is accurate with clear rubric and the mark awarded to learners' answers is consistent to the grading criteria, though, in a few modules, particularly in the BTI programmes, the rubric is not sufficiently specific in order to avoid subjectivity in the marks awarded and, in some cases, the mark distribution is not clear.

Trainers provide useful verbal feedback to learners during the sessions to help them advance in their programmes and records of learners' performance are systematically maintained.

While useful written feedback is provided, the quality and consistency vary among trainers. Nonetheless, this has improved and learners also have access to the feedback through the online learning management system. During the observed sessions, trainers suitably addressed learners' individual needs by providing further clarifications, repeating or simplifying explanations or through direct questioning to support learners who need help. Trainers stimulate learners' self-learning, higher order and critical thinking adequately through challenging questions, activities or work-related scenarios assignments, in addition to OJT opportunities. The majority of trainers suitably utilise the different resources and training material to optimise the learning experience, although in a few of the observed sessions, utilisation of resources such as the smartboard was not optimal.

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

Grade: Good (2)

Programmes on offer at BTI are based on a thorough regular analysis and understanding of the market in terms of levels required and professional standards that meet learners and stakeholders' needs and requirements. The research committee at BTI conducts a very useful general market survey on a yearly basis, seeking their views and forthcoming plans for trainings, as well as conducting a number of purposeful surveys, targeting different industries. Feedback is carefully considered by the BTI management for offering new programmes. The Institutional Training Section (ITS), is responsible for marketing the BTI regular long and professional programmes. The Section is responsible for coordinating with clients requesting specific programmes and arrange for conducting Training Need Analysis (TNAs) and placement tests. In general, all the regular and professional programmes are well supported with a relevant extensive range of extra-curricular activities that support and enhance programmes on offer and improve learners' experience such as the BTI skills competition, Regional GCC skills competition, Agricultural Exhibition, Art Expo, as well as many other exhibitions, workshops, and lectures. The Institute arranges site visits to major industries so that learners are exposed to real working environments. In addition, in order for learners to graduate, learners are required to complete a compulsory three months OJT to obtain relevant knowledge and practical skills and competencies.

In general, programmes on offer are well structured and planned with informative course outlines, schemes of work, and assessment mapping sheets. These different documents state the programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), outlined topics, assessment methods,

and other relevant information for both learners and trainers. The externally accredited programmes by BTEC follow a comprehensive course descriptor provided by the awarding body.

The Institute has a formal policy and relevant procedures to develop, approve, update and review the programmes on offer. Programmes are reviewed every two years, and the Module review and evaluation takes place at the end of every semester. The newly developed programmes mapped to the NQF, are at levels 5 and 6. They follow a robust design process in line with both NQF and BTI regulations, including being scrutinised by the internal mapping and confirmation committees. The range and quality of learning resources vary from one division to another. Programmes in the majority of divisions are resourced adequately, whereas in others, resources used do not always reflect the emerging industrial standards, particularly in art and design and engineering workshops.

The provider adopts clear requirements and mechanisms for access and entry to programmes on offer which are implemented effectively. Learners who are not achieving the set minimum grade in the placement test are enrolled in the orientation programme to improve their English, mathematics and information technology knowledge and skills.

How well are learners supported and guided?

Grade: Good (2)

Learners at BTI are provided with good support and guidance to help them achieve better outcomes. A range of effective policies and procedures related to learners' support are in place. Trainers are usually approachable, friendly and committed to providing assistance including extra support during office hours. Learners are provided with a range of effective induction to help them settle quickly and confidently. They are provided with a 'Trainee and Admission Guide' which comprises helpful information about BTI's rules and regulations, attendance policy, assessment, marking scheme and appeal policy. Learners and employers have easy access to information about the upcoming programmes, through the Institute's website and communication with the staff. Furthermore, informative brochures and leaflets are available to stakeholders. BTI has recently implemented an e-learning portal to provide learners with easy access to module and programmes materials.

The Institute arranges exchange field visits to high school learners, to raise their awareness about the vocational study and programmes offered at BTI. Learners facing difficulties are provided with additional support such as one-on-one support sessions, remedial classes, in addition to conducting special programmes for the orientation learners. To encourage high performance, high achievers are rewarded in a special ceremony and 'A' credit programs are provided to support learners to improve their GPA.

Effective arrangements are in place to support learners with special needs, along with a detailed procedure that ensures equal opportunities to access programmes. In the registration form, learners can specify any special need and suitable adjustments are offered when needed to meet the special needs of learners, such as providing car park area, special arrangements for examination and providing advice in selecting suitable major of study.

Learners are provided with a useful advice for career choices. They have access to effective personal professional support that impacted their performance and work attitude positively. Furthermore, effective bridging arrangements are negotiated with different local universities and colleges to provide BTI's graduates with opportunities for further studies. The Institute arranges a number of events throughout the academic year to introduce learners to real life working environment such as career week, agriculture forum and robotics competition. Additionally, the provider updates stakeholders, where applicable, about learners' progress and attendance through a useful monthly report. The Institute is very flexible in delivering programmes that suit the needs of learners and stakeholders. The arrangements for the delivery and scheduling of corporate courses are highly flexible and always negotiated with clients to suits their needs. Moreover, evening classes are scheduled to accommodate the needs of employed learners. Learners have an on-line access to their progression and attendance records. Additionally, on line feedback is also provided to help learners improve their performance.

BTI premises and facilities provide a suitable learning environment, equipped with appropriate workshops, computer laboratories and a library which includes relevant textbooks for the use of learners and trainers. The new two buildings provide spacious classrooms that are well equipped with interactive video projectors. However, old buildings are not conducive and the capacity of the car park area is not sufficient.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: Good (2)

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good overall. BTI management monitors learners' achievement closely. For this purpose, the Institute collects, aggregates and analyses records about their achievement on continuous basis and conducts useful trend analysis on learners' achievement, where outcomes are used to trigger further improvement. However, monitoring of learners' performance on the corporate programmes, which represents less than 10% of the enrolment, is insufficient.

The Institute's vision and mission statements are clear and are used to guide its five years' strategic plan, which is focused towards providing quality vocational education and training for the local market. Monitoring of the strategic plan is supported by a set of consolidated performance reports that are produced by each division on regular basis. The Institute has effective organisational structure supported with sufficient human and physical resources. Clear roles, responsibilities and accountability are defined and shared with the staff. Additionally, there are a clear mandate for standing committees that support the implementation of BTI's policies and procedures.

BTI recruits qualified staff with vocational experience, once recruited they are provided with effective induction on BTI's policies and procedures. The effectiveness of their teaching and learning is verified through audit visits stipulated in their TDA approach and the visits are well managed by the quality assurance staff. A number of scheduled and walk through TDA visits are implemented using fit-for-purpose forms that cover most aspects of teaching, learning and assessment and the outcomes of these critical observations are translated into action plans, but the implementation is inconsistent in a few cases. Professional development of individual trainers is tightly linked to these outcomes. Moreover, the Institute arranges with local industries for the immersion training programme, where trainers are given the opportunity to work for a period of time in a given industry to ensure that their vocational knowledge, skills and work-related experience are up to date. The outcomes of these industrial trainings are effectively utilised in updating modules content and delivery.

BTI's approach to quality assurance is inclusive, a set of clear and precise policies and procedures are in place to guide the quality of teaching and assessment practices, and programmes design. In general, useful verification and moderation procedures are implemented, but there are a few cases where moderation is implemented inconsistently. Notwithstanding the above, the outcomes of the verification and moderation are incorporated into divisional operational plans and implementation progress is monitored on fixed intervals, and suggested recommendations are included on the overall improvement action plans. The Institute executes effective admission diagnostics tests, the outcomes of which are utilised effectively to improve the programmes content and delivery.

BTI self-evaluation approach is continual and covers the main aspects of the provision. Issues identified are followed up and corrective actions are stated in the operational plan to abide with the requirements. Regular and effective Head of Divisions (HoDs) meetings are held, the outcomes of these being followed-up and the overall performance overseen by the Head of training programmes quality control group who is reporting to the Director General. The Self Evaluation Form (SEF) submitted for the purpose of this review is informative and detailed. However, grades on some areas under estimated the provision. The Institute has suitable health and safety policies and procedures. The premises are safe and free from obvious hazards, and the management maintains a healthy and safe environment. Productive links with local and international partners are maintained. In addition, learners, trainers and employers' feedbacks are regularly gathered and improvement actions are taken based on their views.

The provider's key strengths

- The well-structured vocational programmes that are based on a thorough analysis of local market and industry needs.
- The comprehensive support and guidance provided to learners throughout their learning journey.
- The systematic quality assurance procedures and practices implemented throughout the institute's operations to ensure consistency of teaching and learning experience.

Recommendations

In order to improve, BTI should:

- enhance learners' attainment and qualifications' achievement across all programmes
- ensure that learners successfully achieve modules requirements on a timely manner and that they develop skills and knowledge relevant to the module level, particularly in HR programmes
- utilise an effective range of teaching methods to better motivate and engage learners productively throughout the sessions and improve the learning process
- enhance the resources available to enrich learning, particularly in art and design and engineering workshops
- further improve the verification and moderation process to ensure the consistency of assessment across divisions and use outcomes for improvement.

Appendix

Description of the provision

Bahrain Training Institute (BTI) was established in 1981 by the High Council for Vocational Training as a vocational training centre. In 1992, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Now the Ministry of Labour and Social Development) restructured the centre to be an institute and provide vocational qualifications and training courses to meet the needs of the labour market. In 2011, a Royal Decree restructured the BTI and placed it under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education (MoE). BTI offers a wide range of regular full-time programmes in addition to short corporate training. The vast majority of courses are accredited by BTEC and are offered at two levels; the Higher National Diploma (HND) and the Extended Diploma (ED) in the field of Engineering, Business, Information Technology, and Art & Design, as well as programmes from Cisco Networking Academy, and IATA Travel & Tourism, and recently BTI introduced its own Certificate and National Diploma qualifications at levels 5 and 6 of the National Qualification Framework (NQF). Most of the corporate programmes are also externally accredited by international awarding bodies such as The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), The Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT), The Certified Internet Web Professional (CIW), The International Air Transport Association (IATA), International Computer Driving License (ICDL), and CISCO.

BTI is led by a Director General, who is supported by three directors for the three main directorates which are the engineering and science, the business and arts, and the trainees' affairs. The Institute also employs the Head of training programmes quality control group and the Support services group who report directly to the Director General. Financial affairs, administration and human resources are facilitated by the MoE. BTI has around 350 full-time staff members; part-time trainers whom are drawn on when needed.