



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

# **Directorate of Vocational Reviews**

## **Review Report**

**Bahrain Institute**  
**East Riffa**  
**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 23-26 January 2017**

VO052-C3-R051

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## Introduction

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The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over four days by a team of four 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, examined documents and the materials provided by the provider and met with learners, parents, stakeholders management and support staff.

In the previous review Bahrain Institute's overall effectiveness was judged as satisfactory, as were all aspects of its provision

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

## Grading scale

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Outstanding	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Inadequate	4
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## Table of review judgements awarded

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Main Question	Judgement
Learners' achievement	Inadequate (4)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Inadequate (4)
Quality of programmes	Inadequate (4)
Quality of support and guidance	Inadequate (4)
Leadership, management and governance	Inadequate (4)
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Inadequate (4)</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate (4)</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: Inadequate (4)**

The overall effectiveness of Bahrain Institute is judged as inadequate, as are all the aspects of its provision.

Learners' attainment in General English courses, which comprise 69% of total enrolment, is not up to the required course level. They develop limited skills and knowledge specifically in writing, spelling and grammar across all levels. However, learners on the IT courses attain better skills. The Bahrain Institute learners attend regularly, though in a few cases batches of learners are reported absent for different reasons. Learners' understanding is checked through a number of formative and summative assessments. Scrutiny of their assessed works in the general English courses reveals that assessments and correction of the work is not rigorous in the majority of cases and awarded marks do not reflect the level of students' work causing grade inflation. Assessment is not of an adequate level to assess all English skills accurately, grade distribution is not clear with the same assessment tool being used for more than one level randomly, there are no effective marking schemes, and internal verification is not stringent. Nonetheless, IT teachers assess learners work appropriately by using practical assessments, which are graded using a set rubric.

The effectiveness of the courses offered in meeting the needs of learners and stakeholders is inadequate overall. The leveling in the English courses lacks clear rationale and logic. Moreover, there is no formal mechanism to design, approve, update and periodically review the courses. In IT courses the institute offers two versions of Windows - Windows 8 and the current updated version of Windows 10 - to cater for learners' needs yet the Institute still offers Microsoft FrontPage, although it is obsolete. In addition, low quality photocopied units of course books with supportive materials are used, for example Photocopied materials for IT courses are available either in Arabic or English, rarely in both. Nonetheless, the learning resources for IT courses include appropriate IT laboratories with satisfactory hardware and software.

The Institute's policy on assessment states that teachers' role is to aid learners to achieve better, but there are no clear functional steps on how this will be addressed or how learners at risk will be identified. Arrangements for the delivery of the courses are flexible to suit the needs of learners, parents and employers. Nonetheless, there is no specific policy available on

addressing learners' needs, cases are not well recorded, and arrangement and resources are not always relevant or effective.

The management has a strategic plan that is cascaded to an operational plan, with a list of tasks and accountability. However, these are not aligned to achieve expected results and cope with dynamic changes in the market. Moreover, the progress of the implementation is not always monitored and there is no time bound on some items. In addition, the self-evaluation process is not effective overall. Bahrain Institute conducts a SWOC analysis but it is not critical and in cases elements of the SWOC are not relevant. IT courses are open for all to join and learners' prior attainment is not sufficiently assessed in English as not all English language skills are tested and thus learners are placed in the wrong level.

## **Capacity to improve**

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

**Grade: Inadequate (4)**

Bahrain Institute has not addressed the recommendations stipulated in the previous review report of March 2014. SWOC analysis is outdated and not critical in identifying internal aspects and external environmental factors effecting the institute actual performance. Moreover, strategic planning is not effective, implementation is not monitored, and learners' achievement trends are not scrutinised. There is no formal mechanism to design, approve, update and periodically review all courses including structures and plans. In addition, there are no clear measures to quality assure the provision and although arrangements in place are insufficient these are not used fully to guide the provision in meeting the organisation's expectations. The SEF submitted to the review team overestimates the provision and not accurate in identifying areas for improvement. Notwithstanding the above, the Institute has suitable enrolment numbers, adequate repeat business and a contract has recently been made with a consultancy to improve the provision.

## **Learners' achievement**

**How well do learners achieve?**

**Grade: Inadequate (4)**

Learners' achievement is inadequate overall. While those studying IT achieve the majority of course ILOs to an appropriate level and gain adequate hands-on IT skills, learners' attainment

in the General English courses, which comprise 69% of the total enrolment, is not up to course level. Scrutiny of learners' work shows that learners develop limited skills and knowledge specifically in writing, spelling and grammar across all levels. For instance, learners enrolled in Pre-intermediate, Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate levels do not acquire essential writing and reading skills, including word decoding, fluency and word recognition to aid appropriate reading comprehension.

Evidence supports learners' claims that assessments used in the English courses are generally not aligned to course content, objectives and levels. Skills in reading and speaking are not assessed appropriately in all levels. However, progress data, stakeholders and learners' feedback show that learners in English courses do progress to the higher level courses. From the sessions observed, learners are attentive and have positive attitudes towards their learning. In a few cases the better learners are able to self-correct their own mistakes and discuss their answers with teachers to support their understanding.

Generally, learners demonstrate appropriate ability to work independently across all courses on assessments and during class observations. Learners in the English courses are able to work in small groups and in pairs. They attend regularly. However, in few cases learners are reported absent for different reasons. Punctuality is an issue in a few of the sessions observed, though the institute has a policy of 15 minutes' tolerance for lateness.

## **The quality of provision**

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

#### **Grade: Inadequate (4)**

The effectiveness of teaching and assessment is inadequate overall. Although the majority of teachers have relevant qualifications and appropriate teaching experience, actual lesson plans are not always informed with learners' prior and continuous assessment to accommodate learners of different needs. English teachers keep template lesson plans that lacks the necessary details to allow for proper classroom planning and help learners reach the set objectives. Nevertheless, in a few cases teachers do customise their delivery in line with learners' continuous assessment outcomes. On the other hand, IT teachers use sufficiently detailed lesson plans that contain ILOs, the learning resources to be utilised and the method of teaching. Both IT and English lesson plans lack proper time allocation and are inconsistently used.

The majority of the sessions observed are managed well enough. They start with sharing the objectives or topic to be covered. However, in a few cases time management is an issue

particularly during class activities. Teachers utilise appropriate teaching methods such as question and answer, games, role plays and individual and pair work to engage and motivate the majority of learners throughout the session. Teachers use the available learning resources appropriately. However, the overhead projector used by teachers during the observed sessions is not clear. In a few cases teachers stimulate learners' self-learning abilities by encouraging them to challenge their own understanding and find out the answer for themselves. Teachers in general provide learners with instant verbal feedback and accommodate the slower learners' needs sufficiently. However, limited written feedback is provided. In the IT classes learners are at different proficiency levels and their needs are not sufficiently accommodated.

Teachers keep records of the majority of learners' work and assessments. Learners' understanding is checked through a number of formative and summative assessments. This include checkpoints, final examinations and class activities. The IT teachers assess learners work appropriately by using practical assessments, which are graded using a set rubric. However, the rubric used is not well structured and grading is subjective. On the other hand, scrutiny of learners work in the English courses reveals that assessments and correction of learners' works is not rigorous in the majority of cases and the awarded marks do not reflect the level of students' work causing grade inflation. Assessments are not at adequate levels to assess all English skills accurately, grade distribution is not clear with the same assessment tool is being used for different levels and age group of learners without catering for level requirements and expectations. Speaking skills are not fully catered for.

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

### **Grade: Inadequate (4)**

The effectiveness of the courses offered in meeting the needs of learners and stakeholders is inadequate overall. The institute offers short courses in Information Technology (IT), private school level tutorial courses such as mathematics, Arabic, English and French along to certificates from Cambridge Training College Britain (CTC). Although the courses are based on sensing the local market needs, and in response to parents' request specially in relation to tutorial courses, the course level offering to enhance the productivity of the learners, particularly in English, lacks clear rational and logic.

Although, efforts of customisation are substantial in Information Technology courses, their impact in meeting learners' needs is limited as not all learners cover all outcomes or objectives. Nevertheless, surveys and meetings with parents indicates that they are satisfied with the provision. Bahrain Institute has recently used an analysis of their phone log and meetings with parents to develop a marketing policy. This contains future plans and goals, such as

maintaining high satisfaction rates, but lacks a proper understanding of the institute's current situation in terms of course offering and its progression and marketing strategies are not fully defined to inform an effective marketing plan

Courses on offer are approved by MoE, but Bahrain Institute lacks a formal mechanism to design, approve, update and periodically review the courses. Although in the IT courses the institute offers Windows 8 and along to currently updated windows 10 to cater for learners needs. Yet, the institute still offers Microsoft FrontPage, although it is obsolete, and has been replaced by Microsoft with other web development software. The English courses lack sufficient updates. The courses on offer are not structured or well planned, IT and English courses lack detailed course outlines that indicate the ILOs, teaching and assessment methods. In English, the units of the course books in use are divided into sessions of 1½ hour each. ILOs are mentioned in Starter courses, but in the rest of the courses the topics to be taught are not always mentioned, and the course outlines do not indicate the type and details of either teaching or assessment methods. The Institute has an assessment policy. However, the assessments in English do not match the course levels and do not always aid progressive mastery of skills and knowledge. IT course outlines are mentioned but without details on delivery.

The IT courses, representing the minority of enrolment, are appropriately supported with relevant software and hardware. However, the English courses are not sufficiently resourced. The Institute offers low quality photocopied units of course books with supporting materials. The learning resources for IT include appropriate IT laboratories with satisfactory hardware and software. For example, photocopied materials for IT courses are available either in Arabic or in English, rarely in both. The courses are supported with few extracurricular activities, including games, in-class competitions, projects of self-learning and excursions. However, these activities are not linked effectively to course objectives. Consequently, the impact of these activities on the progress of learners is inconsistent. All learners can be enrolled in the IT basic courses and English. However, the placement in English courses is ineffective as the placement tests are not graded, nor are they comprehensive and consistent in assessing learners' basic English skills.

### **How well are learners supported and guided?**

#### **Grade: Inadequate (4)**

Support and guidance provided to learners to help them achieve better outcomes is ineffective overall. Although there is a policy on attendance, punctuality and discipline within the institute and classrooms, implementation is not stringent as a few learners are found using their mobile phones during classes and punctuality is an issue. The Institute also has a policy on assessment, which states that part of the teachers' role is to aid learners to achieve better, but there is no effective outline or clear functional steps on how this will be achieved or how

learners at risk will be identified. On the other hand, learners are generally provided with extra or compensation sessions when absent. Learners with results above a certain level receive certificates of excellence.

Prior to the start of their course learners have access to course information through adequate website, brief brochures and promotional posts on social media platforms. However, a few links are not working. The website contains few outdated information such as the information about the institute affiliations which currently are no longer available. Arrangements for the delivery of the courses are flexible in order to suit the needs of learners, parents and employers. The provider reschedules courses upon request from stakeholders. The Institute also conducts an annual open day, where teachers discuss learners' progress throughout a term and check parents' levels of satisfaction. Upon course completion learners are provided with a certificate of completion along with an adequate performance report which contains the learners' mark in the final exam, activities involved and behaviour. However, learners who are sponsored by their employers are provided only with a letter of confirmation which verifies that they have studied at the institute, along with information on whether they have completed their course or not. This letter is provided at the learners' request.

The Institute's learning environment is appropriate, with adequate facilities. There are a number of learners with special needs and different degrees of disabilities. Teachers and administration staff welcome all learners. However, there is no specific policy on addressing those learners' needs, cases are not well recorded, and the available arrangements and resources are not always relevant or effective.

## **Leadership, management and governance**

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

#### **Grade: Inadequate (4)**

Management is inadequate in raising achievement and improving the quality of the provision. There is a generic mission, vision and values, and the management has a three-year strategic plan (2016/2018) that includes items related to improving learners' achievement, stakeholders' satisfaction and commutation, and improving the learning environment. Even though the strategy is cascaded to an operational plan, with list of tasks and accountability, these are not aligned to achieve expected results or to cope with dynamic changes in the market. The progress of the implementations is not always monitored and there is no time bound on some items. The self-evaluation process is not effective overall. Bahrain Institute conducts a SWOC analysis but it is not critical and elements of it are not relevant. For example, the SWOC refers

to old affiliations as strengths, 2015 and 2016 have almost the same elements, disregarding the actual situation.

An action plan is in place to address the areas identified for development. However, it doesn't address pressing issues in a timely manner. In addition, the SEF submitted to the review team overestimates the provisions and not accurate in identifying areas for further development. The institute's organisation structure is fit for purpose considering the type of courses on offer and the number of enrolments. Roles and responsibilities are identified appropriately. Suitable trainers are recruited and inducted into job requirements and expectations. They are deployed according to their specialisations and their performance is appropriately monitored through regular session observations and learners' feedback. However, the lesson observation forms are not comprehensive, even though they have relevant evaluation criteria. On the other hand, comments made by the observers are mostly general and only occasionally followed through. Teachers and administrators staff are provided with a few internal training opportunities relevant to their roles.

The institute has insufficient quality assurance arrangements. General policies with a few follow up steps are kept, though these policies are not always used to improve the provision. Learners' prior attainment is not sufficiently assessed. IT courses are open for all to join. Nonetheless, in English not all English language skills are tested and thus learners are often placed on the wrong level. Internal verification is not effective in improving learning achievement as there is no standard to compare learners work with, or what is expected as outcomes from assessments. Internal verification is done on a limited sample to check mark calculations, not to ensure fair and consistent assessment across all levels. Learners' achievement is not sufficiently monitored and information kept is not reliable.

The management of Bahrain Institute takes immediate corrective measures to deal with daily issues. The premises are adequate and regularly maintained. Health and safety aspects are adequate, though the institute lacks a first aider. Learners' and parents' feedback about the conducted courses is regularly gathered and their comments are addressed appropriately. The institute has an agreement with Cambridge Training College in Britain to offer management certifications. The institute also has few local agreements with stakeholders in terms of course offerings. Feedback about the conducted courses is inconsistently gathered.

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

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- Teachers are knowledgeable, with relevant practical and theoretical command of their subjects. They are recruited, inducted and deployed appropriately.
- Relevant teaching methods are used to engage and motivate the majority of learners.

## Recommendations

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### **In order to improve, Bahrain Institute should:**

- ensure that learners, particularly in English courses, develop skills and knowledge appropriate to their level and achieve all course objectives/ILOs
- ensure that assessments are relevant and marking is fair and rigorous in order to measure and evaluate learners' performance accurately
- ensure that courses are offered based on sufficient understanding of local community needs and that a formal mechanism is implemented to periodically review, design, approve and update courses
- devise a mechanism to support and guide learners on how to achieve better and ensure that all arrangements to support learners with special needs are suitable
- improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that strategic planning is based on the outcomes of a rigorous self-evaluation process and it is regularly monitored
  - improving the quality assurance systems
  - ensuring that learners' achievement is closely monitored and that relevant data is analysed to monitor trends over time, while outcomes are utilised to inform decision making.

## Appendix

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### Description of the provision

Bahrain Institute was established in 1970 and is located in East Riffa. It is licensed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) to offer short courses in Information Technology (IT), such as Microsoft office and basic graphic designing, and general English. It also offers private school level tutorial courses for different subjects such as mathematics, Arabic, English and French along to preparation courses for Test of English as a Foreign language (TOEFL) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examinations. Moreover, Bahrain institute offers courses from Cambridge Training College Britain (CTC).

Almost 69% of learners are enrolled in the English language courses, with the remainder being in IT. The institute is managed by a full-time chief executive and a team of finance and administration in charge, with a head of training who is also a full-time English teacher. The institute also employs a team of part-time teachers for different subjects and a full-time caretaker. Since the last review, conducted in March 2014, Bahrain Institute has enrolled 4,228 learners; 1,282 in 2014, 1,620 in 2015 and 1,326 in 2016. Learners are from different school levels and a few are adults who are working in various sectors.