



الهيئة الوطنية  
للمؤهلات وضمان جودة التعليم والتدريب  
National Authority for Qualifications &  
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

# Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**Berlitz Training Centre  
Manama  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 22-25 April 2013**

VO055-C2-R044

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## The Directorate of Vocational Reviews

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The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. Established to raise standards in vocational education and training, the DVR is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the quality of vocational provision, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, establishing success measures, spreading best practice and offering policy advice to key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education.

Reviews are based on the DVR's *Review Framework*, and carried out on providers' premises by teams of carefully selected and highly trained reviewers. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the planning of the review, and to represent them during review team meetings. Reviewers examine a range of evidence before arriving at a series of judgements and awarding grades for the quality of the provision.

Review grades are awarded on a four-point scale:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
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**

Berlitz Training Centre (Berlitz-Bahrain) was established in 2001 as a language centre approved by the Ministry of Education. It was converted to a training centre in 2009 and licensed by the Ministry of Labour. It continues to operate within its scope of languages taught such as English, Arabic, French, German, Urdu, Spanish, Italian and others. As a franchise of Berlitz Corporation, the vast majority of courses are accredited and approved by Berlitz Corporation that provides ten levels in English and variety of levels in other languages. The centre provides training on languages and communication soft skills to help learners improve their communications skills. These programmes are delivered through native speakers who are trained and capable of adapting and teaching within Berlitz methodologies and techniques with zero translation policy. The centre also conducts other customised courses based on stakeholders' demands. Courses are categorised as private tutoring, total immersion, small group intensive and corporate group. Approximately 75% of learners are enrolled on English courses and just more than 11% on Arabic courses.

Most Berlitz-Bahrain learners are employed adults aged 18 and above. Since the last review, 1647 learners have enrolled in 2011, 1488 in 2012 and 179 in the first quarter of 2013. The centre is based in Adlyia and is managed by a general director reporting to a board of directors. The staff comprises a director, a local instructor supervisor, two language consultants, one client relations desk manager, two receptionists and 26 full-time trainers. It also draws from a pool of part-time trainers as needed.

### **Scope of the review**

This review was conducted over four days, by a team of five reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed training sessions, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieved, examined available learners' written and other work, studied documents and other materials provided by the provider and met with staff, learners, employers and trainers.

In the previous review, the overall effectiveness was judged as good. As was learners' achievement, training, leadership and management and Support and guidance, however programmes were judged as outstanding.

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

## Table of review judgements awarded

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

## 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**

Berlitz-Bahrain has maintained its good performance since the previous review, as all aspects are good while programmes continued to be outstanding. Most learners gain good communication language skills and are able to express themselves verbally with confidence. The provision is conducted through qualified native trainers and present learners with well-planned and structured curriculum and appropriate levels that meet their needs. The institute offers a range of highly relevant and internationally accredited programmes and a few soft skills courses. The management, staff and trainers share a common goal of providing an interactive learning experience based on Berlitz International standards and principals, which is reflected on the common practices among staff, the learning environment, the level of support provided to the learners and the effective use of a range of teaching methods and activities in most lessons. Berlitz-Bahrain provides a suitable and pleasant learning environment with appropriate facilities. However, there are some issues with class sizes, facilities and parking.

Berlitz-Bahrain's capacity to improve is outstanding, as the management team is very keen on developing the centre further through clear and relevant plans and further initiatives such as offering new courses in "soft skills" alongside with its different language courses and levels. In addition, the institute has recently designed and launched a web portal for all staff, stakeholders and learners to provide them with a comprehensive view of learners' attendance, progress and related data. The centre has an internal quality monitoring procedure which is implemented against rigorous performance criteria that ensures effective self-evaluation and a clear direction for further improvements. It is also subjected to regular audits conducted by Berlitz Corporation against pre-defined Berlitz International standards. The institute also has ambitious plans for expansion. It is planning to move to a new premises that will provide a better learning environment to all learners. The institute is well resourced by appropriate staff and a pool of full-time trainers with extensive databases that help to generate very useful performance indicators to inform further development.

## **Learners' achievement**

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

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

Most learners at Berlitz-Bahrain are enjoying their learning experience and the vast majority of them achieve the course objectives effectively, make good progress, and develop effective communication language skills particularly speaking. Generally, learners also develop writing skills and reading comprehension appropriate to their level. In most effective sessions learners reflect critically on how well they are progressing. However, in the beginner's levels a minority of learners are not making the level of progress expected from them. The institute keeps records of learners' attendance and punctuality. The majority of learners attend regularly with an average rate ranging between 77% to 82% for the last two years. However, punctuality is an issue in the observed sessions where a number of learners attend up to 50 minutes late.

From the observed sessions and meetings with groups of learners, most learners are enjoying their learning experience at Berlitz-Bahrain. Also learners are self-motivated and participate effectively in class activities. They demonstrate good level of confidence when practicing the language independently and collaboratively as pairs. The Learners' Performance Data (LPD) for the past two years and the first quarter of the current year indicates overall success and retention rates for the Berlitz accredited courses at 80% and 90% respectively. For the Arabic and English courses, the overall success rates are at 78.45% and 77.54% respectively, with higher success rates in the higher levels. Learners' achievement is well measured through a final test called level check and class activities which are focused on the learning outcomes. According to the learners' marks, the learners achieve the course objectives well except a minority in the beginner levels. The institute's main focus is on spoken communication skills. However, it also aims to develop the writing and reading comprehension skills of the learners. Scrutiny of learners' work and from the sessions observed revealed that learners develop writing skills and reading comprehension appropriate to their level. The institute has detailed individual progress reports which are issued twice per a course and the analysis of random samples of these reports shows that learners are progressing well and that learners advancing through the levels tend to maintain their levels of progress.

## The quality of provision

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

Grade: 2 Good

Berlitz trainers are qualified and have practical command of the subject taught and use a variety of training methods and activities that succeed in engaging and motivating learners to participate fully in most of the sessions observed. They attract learners' attention by utilising techniques such as direct questioning, pair and group work, open discussions, role playing and well organized simulation activities held either within the institute's premises or outside. The trainers also use learning resources such as DVD player, original textbooks and Berlitz passport magazine effectively. As part of the Berlitz strategies, trainers joining the institute need to follow Berlitz methods of teaching and accordingly are provided with Berlitz Instructor Training (BIT) manual and undergo on-line training (blended teaching) enabling them to provide learning experience that concentrates on the core business of spoken communication.

Teaching is tailored to meet the learners' language needs and provide them with effective support to master the specific skills they aim to develop. In the lessons observed, learners are assessed and verbal helpful feedback is provided. Trainers use learner-centred and activity-based approach in the majority of the lessons observed, and check learners' understanding and their progress through different group and pair activities and homework, which is discussed at the start of each session. From the documents provided, the assessment used is thorough, and the progress reports produced provide very constructive feedback on areas to improve. Most trainers ensure that learners receive adequate verbal and written feedback on their homework and class activities while receiving detailed constructive feedback in their progress reports.

Records of learners' progress are kept and regularly maintained by all trainers, either through the two progress reports issued during a course or through a register called *the pedagogical cards*. The trainers follow up and monitor learners' progress well and evaluate learners' proficiency level, participation and other aspects and give appropriate feedback. Furthermore, in more effective lessons, learners are enabled to further their understanding through challenging follow-up questions and being pursued for more elaborations. Most sessions start on time with appropriate recapitulation and linkage with the previous sessions, objectives are normally shared and most trainers use the lesson plans embedded in the text books and some include their own activities. Yet, in a minority of the sessions observed, classes are not well managed and Arabic language is used by some learners in their side talks despite the zero translation policy of the institute.

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

### **Grade: 1 Outstanding**

Berlitz-Bahrain offers a broad range of internationally accredited language programmes with levels that are aligned to the Common European Framework. The institute uses relevant national market surveys, regular clients inquiries and trend analysis using the institute management information system to inform the programmes offering and meet the needs of current local market accurately. The programmes are supported by additional resources and activities such as worksheets, off-site activities and well-designed simulation sessions which are useful and relevant. Programmes on offer are planned and structured well and, when needed, are carefully customised to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. The English language programmes are updated regularly by Berlitz Corporation. The Arabic language programmes, on the other hand, are currently being updated. Berlitz-Bahrain created the Classical Arabic Language programme to meet the needs of learners. Course materials are well designed by Berlitz Corporation and all learners receive original textbooks.

The institute offers its programmes with ten proficiency levels for languages and in a broad range of languages. The programmes are delivered using different modes such as total emersion, individual instruction, semi-individual instructions and intensive courses. Currently Berlitz-Bahrain is still piloting some relevant short soft skills courses. All offered language programmes are well structured and resourced to meet the requirements of the defined levels. Furthermore, the institute customises its programmes and its delivery to suit using the specific clients' needs such as the use of particular templates and terminologies. The simulation sessions mimic real life situations such as dealing with banks and visiting a restaurant. Within class communication and during breaks the language programmes allow zero translation to encourage learners to practice the language.

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

### **Grade: 2 Good**

Learners at Berlitz-Bahrain are effectively supported and guided throughout the courses. Prior to the start of a course learners are provided with a very useful induction together with an informative orientation pack. Furthermore, the institute monitors issues such as learners lateness, performance and attitude and provides effective counselling. Administrative staff provide good follow-up and proper actions are taken by the Local Instructor Supervisor through the effective use of the Action Request Form. In addition, the staff and trainers are supportive and friendly and take care of individuals and group needs. Trainers, always create a conducive social environment to encourage learners to communicate and to express

themselves. Additionally, learners are given the chance to practice the four main language skills through Berlitzenglish.com website after paying a nominal fee for this.

Moreover, the institute has developed and implemented a systemised process for the internal documentation and updating of learners' profile. The pedagogical cards are used effectively to monitor class progress, learner absenteeism, learners' in need of specific attention and trainer change. The institute has developed good communication channels through which stakeholders are kept informed always of the progress of their learners and whether there are any issues or problems with their studies. Likewise, learners are updated on how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. The delivery of programmes is highly flexible to meet the needs of stakeholders. Course outlines, content and plans are documented clearly and provided in advance to stakeholders. The institute's website is very informative and user friendly, yet it is only available in English language. Berlitz provides a suitable and welcoming learning environment with appropriate facilities. Nonetheless, there are some issues with classrooms sizes, facilities and parking.

## **Leadership and management**

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

**Grade: 2 Good**

Berlitz-Bahrain has a focused vision that the management, staff and trainers share. This vision is based on Berlitz international standards and principles, and is reflected in the common practices among staff and trainers, the development and delivery of courses that meet the needs of the stakeholders, and the provision of a secure and inspiring learning environment. The institute's developmental planning is detailed and based on set priorities of improvement. However, the three years strategic plan is not fully comprehensive of the year 2013 where it does not clearly present planned actions for the fourth quarter of the year. An appropriate management structure is in place with clear roles and responsibilities, and the centre has an effective system to monitor the internal quality of the learning processes and records through applying a very comprehensive and detailed quality assurance manual produced by Berlitz Corporation. The centre undergoes an annual audit by Berlitz Corporation which provides effective means of self-evaluation that informs continuous improvement. The Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) submitted by the institute is very informative with good range of references, however the grades are overestimated at some places.

Records of learners' achievement are well maintained and closely monitored. However, verification of assessments' decisions are occasionally done in an unsystematic way. Placement test is set through very clear criteria and most learners are placed in suitable

levels. The test comprises oral assessment, reading comprehension and writing skills. In addition, learners levels are re-assessed at the early stage of the course and adjusted to more appropriate level if needed. Trainers who must be native speakers are carefully selected, well inducted into Berlitz teaching and learning methodology, and effectively developed through a variety of training workshops and modules. In addition, their performance is regularly monitored through a very detailed and critical lesson observation system. Trainers are provided with effective feedback and follow-up. All staff and trainers are subjected to a useful annual appraisal process and are always kept informed through periodic meetings and memos.

Links with relevant local and international stakeholders are well established and management always attend Berlitz regional and international functions to keep abreast of the latest development. Learners' feedback data are systematically collected, aggregated and analysed quarterly and annually and the management usually takes appropriate actions where necessary. However the current analyses doesn't identify further specific issues and trends related to class level, trainer and group. Moreover, feedback from corporate clients is insufficiently collected. The premises are free from potential hazards as the management ensures that risk assessment and maintenance are properly done. Suitable safety policy and guidance are in place and communicated to learners. The institute has recently communicated with the concerned authorities to plan an evacuation drill.

## The provider's key strengths

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- The development of highly relevant communication language skills by learners
- The well qualified trainers who use a good range of teaching methods and activities effectively to engage and motivate learners
- The effective assessment of learners and the regular update of their progress records
- The broad range of internationally accredited language programmes that are well structured and supported by additional activities that are useful and relevant
- The effective support, particularly through ensuring that learners are always aware of their progress and enabled to plan their own improvement
- Trainers are carefully selected, well inducted, and their performance is monitored and effectively developed through a variety of training workshops and modules
- The effective communication and links with the relevant local and international stakeholders.

## Recommendations

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### **In order to improve, Berlitz-Bahrain training centre should:**

- devise further measures to improve attendance and punctuality
- ensure that all learners, especially those at beginner levels are developed to meet the expected standard, and further accommodate the different needs of all types of learners, specially the less and more able in class
- enhance the facilities, particularly parking and classroom sizes
- enhance the verification process further to ensure assessment decisions are always quality assured.