



هيئة ضمان جودة التعليم و التدريب  
Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training

# **Vocational Review Unit**

## **Review Report**

**Berlitz Training Centre**  
**Manama**  
**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 8-11 November 2010**

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## The Vocational Review Unit

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The Vocational Review Unit (VRU) is part of the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET), an independent body set up under Royal Decree No.32 of 2008 amended by Royal Decree No. 6 of 2009. Established to raise standards in vocational education and training, the VRU is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the quality of vocational provision, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, establishing success measures, spreading best practice and offering policy advice to key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education.

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

Review grades are awarded on a five-point scale:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1: Outstanding	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all or nearly all aspects and is/are exemplary or exceptional in many.
2: Good	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are better than the basic level. Practice will be at least sound and there may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
3: Satisfactory	This describes a basic level of adequacy. No major areas of weakness substantially affect what learners, or significant groups of learners, achieve. Some features may be good.
4: Below satisfactory	This describes situations where major weaknesses in some areas affect the outcomes for learners and outweigh any strengths in the provision.
5: Very weak	This describes situations where there are major weaknesses in all, or almost all, areas and where, as a result, learners are very poorly served.

## **Introduction**

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### **Description of the provision**

Berlitz is a franchise training center; it was established in 2001 and was licensed from the Ministry of Education. In 2009 it converted into a training centre licensed by the Ministry of Labour to provide training programmes in the area of languages such as Arabic, French, English, Spanish, Italian, German, Russian, Farsi and others. All courses are accredited by Berlitz International. Courses are taught by native speaking instructors. Most courses go up to eight levels, each level has up to 60 units and duration of each unit is 45 minutes. The centre conducts workshops on e-mail and business writing and business body language on request. Courses are offered to business and personal learners. These are categorised as consumer private, institutional private, private intensive, private tutoring, total immersion, small group intensive and corporate group.

Most Berlitz learners are adults aged 18 and above. Since January 2010, 655 learners have enrolled on various courses. Berlitz is based in Adlyia and is managed by a general director. The staff comprises a director, a local instructor supervisor, two language consultants, one client relations desk manager, a receptionist and 26 full time trainers. It draws from a pool of 3 part-time trainers who work on demand.

### **Scope of the review**

This review was conducted over four days by a team of six reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed training sessions, analysed data about the qualifications learners achieve and the courses they complete, and talked with the managing director, trainers, administration and support staff, learners and employers.

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

## Overall judgement

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### Effectiveness of provision

#### Grade 2: Good

Berlitz offers good provision overall. Learners' achievements, the quality of training, support provided to learners and the effectiveness of leadership and management are all good. The extent to which programmes meet stakeholders' needs is outstanding.

The vast majority of learners acquire and develop good communications skills in the languages they enrol for. Success rates for the past three years remain high at 80 per cent plus among all courses. Learners are achieving even better at the higher level and become more confident in the application of their acquired language skills. The centre's approach to monitoring learners' progress and achievements is systematic starting with a thorough initial assessment and measurement of individual learners' attainment. Examples were cited where learners have progressed well across levels and their skills have improved significantly. Final assessment (a 'level' check) is consistent and standardised for all languages. Berlitz maintains detailed and effective progress reports that take place twice during a course. The majority of learners observed in sessions are self motivated and really enjoy their activities. Although attendance and punctuality are closely monitored by the centre, learners do not always arrive to sessions in a timely manner.

Most trainers at Berlitz use a variety of effective training techniques and activities to engage and motivate learners during sessions. These techniques include direct questioning, group work, open discussions, mind mapping and body language. Trainers use a skills-based approach in delivering their sessions which is highly dependent on learners' participation.

Most trainers monitor and evaluate learners' progress during sessions. Most lessons start on time with an effective recapitulation and good linkage with the previous session. Well structured lesson plans are in place and are used well by the majority of trainers, detailing a range of practical and theoretical activities and methods of training. Although trainers are able to modify their training approach to accommodate the needs of the less able learners, the needs of those with higher ability are not always met well as they are not always challenged robustly enough.

A good range of internationally accredited programmes are on offer. These have a broad range of progression levels, ranging from proficiency to functional and advanced, that meets the requirements of learners and employers very well. The vast majority of employers sponsor their learners to progress to higher levels; the repeat business is 40 per cent. The centre enhances course materials very effectively and uses plenty of enrichment activities to

enhance the learning experience. Berlitz added levels to three languages to Arabic and English to meet learners' specific needs. The centre arranges special trips to shopping malls as part of their extracurricular activities.

Berlitz' utilisation of the 'Pedagogical' card is very effective. The card keeps track of learners' progress during a learning cycle. Learners at Berlitz receive good counselling support by different levels of staff. For instance, the Local Instructor Supervisor (LIS) has an effective follow up mechanism to each case and ensures that difficulties are overcome; a report is kept for each case. Learners receive useful information about course levels, packages, placement tests and a helpful indication session is conducted for learners at the start of a course. The centre is very effective in meeting and accommodating learners' various requirements such as providing them with flexible timing and location. Although health and safety measures are in place and the learning environment is safe and healthy, the centre does not always communicate these policies to learners at the start of a course.

The centre uses highly effective strategies to run their provision. These plans are detailed, robust and based on Berlitz' international standards. The institute has localised an effective operation plan which includes an effective monitoring process which is appropriately focused on learners' achievements. The management maintains weekly reports for groups and individual learners to check on their progress and attainment.

The centre's arrangements for selecting, recruiting, training and monitoring the quality of training is highly effective. The LIS frequently observes training sessions, with the outcome of these visits discussed with individual trainers and action plans put in place to improve their performance. Comprehensive measures are in place to gather and action learners' feedback and this feedback is aggregated and analysed by the management. Berlitz' self-evaluation form is comprehensive and has plenty of useful supporting evidence, the management has effectively measured their strengths and where they need to improve; most grades were similar to those of the review team.

## **Capacity to improve**

### **Grade 2: Good**

Learners' achievement is good across most languages for the past three years at 84, 80 and 84 per cent respectively. Management maintains records and monitors learners' achievements closely; these records are analysed and used as a trigger for improvements.

The centre is highly responsive in meeting learners' and employers' needs; it systematically seeks learners' and employers' views and uses them well; and to improve this further in

2009 Berlitz introduced a new function called Client Relation Desk (CRD). Links with employers and learners are effective. The majority of learners enroll for more than one level with the centre's overall repeat business during 2010 at 40 per cent, a similar figure to 2009, which is higher than Berlitz' international rate.

The centre has broadened the range of programmes on offer during 2010 by introducing four new courses. All courses are accredited by Berlitz International; a plan is in place to add one more during 2011 to their portfolio.

Physical resources at the centre are fit for purpose. The centre recruits qualified staff to run its operations. The management has a plan to open another centre in Budayia.

Self-evaluation prepared for the review is very informative and useful with relevant evidence provided for each main question. Grades provided are very similar to those of the review team.

## Summary of grades awarded

Overall Judgement	Grade
Effectiveness of provision	Grade 2: Good
Capacity to Improve	Grade 2: Good
Review Findings	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade 2: Good
How effective is training?	Grade 2: Good
How well do programmes meet the needs of learners and employers?	Grade 1: Outstanding
How well are learners guided and supported?	Grade 2: Good
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade 2: Good

## Main judgements and recommendations

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### Strengths

- **Most learners' achieve well and progress well over the levels; they acquire and develop good communication skills.** Learners' Performance Data (LPD) for the past three years indicates good overall success and retention rates for Berlitz' internationally accredited courses. For example, retention and success rates are at 100 per cent for the German and Russian courses across all levels. Learners at the higher level in all languages are able to communicate in the target language and become more confident in speaking it.
- **Most trainers effectively engage and motivate learners and provide critical feedback.** Trainers use a variety of training techniques and activities to engage and motivate learners, such as direct questioning, language related pair and group work, open discussions, brain storming, mind mapping, body language, tone of voice and language simplification. Trainers ensure that learners receive appropriate verbal and written feedback on their homework and class activities.
- **A good range of internationally accredited communication courses with clear progression and useful enhancement of selected course materials that meets employers' and learners' needs.** Berlitz' internationally accredited courses meet learners' and employers needs exactly. Eight different major communication languages are covered across a broad range of progression levels from proficiency to functional and advanced.
- **Effective use of the institute's 'Pedagogical' card.** Berlitz' trainers use Pedagogical cards ('Ped' cards) very effectively to keep track of learners' progress throughout their learning cycle. These can be sent to any Berlitz international centre to enable learners to continue his or her studies even when travelling abroad.
- **Effective counselling of learners.** Staff offer helpful guidance and assistance to learners before and during a course. Learners having difficulties with their achievements or learning receive good counselling support from the Local Instructor Supervisor (LIS). The LIS has an effective follow up mechanism for each case and ensures that issues are dealt with effectively.
- **The operation plan is detailed and based on Berlitz' international standards and a SWOT analysis that was undertaken locally.** The plan includes an effective monitoring process and focuses appropriately on learners' achievement and progress from one level to another.

- **Learners' feedback is effective and thorough.** Effective measures are in place to gather and action learners' feedback. Learner's first impression feedback is taken after a couple of weeks of the start of a course and an exit feedback is also collected at the end of a course. These feedbacks are aggregated and analysed and identified issues are swiftly addressed by the LIS and management team

### **Areas for improvement**

- **Poor punctuality in the observed sessions.** Punctuality was inconsistent at the start of training sessions; the majority of learners were attending either on time but a few were five to ten minutes late and although they were challenged their lateness was not recorded.
- **Insufficient accommodation of the different needs of high ability learners.** Although trainers are able to modify their training to accommodate the needs of the less-able learners, the higher ability learners are not always accommodated or challenged enough.
- **Insufficient communication of health and safety measures.** Berlitz has an appropriate health and safety policy in place but learners are not always briefed at the beginning of a course on relevant health and safety matters.

### **Recommendations**

In order to improve provision, Berlitz should:

- devise a system to improve punctuality to sessions
- ensure that the different needs of learners with high abilities is accommodated
- ensure that health and safety measures are effectively communicated to all learners.