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National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

Capital Institute
Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain

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The Directorate of Vocational Reviews

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:

Grade description	Interpretation
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 strength in the provision.

Introduction

Description of the provision

The Capital Institute (Capital) was established in 1993 and is licensed by the Ministry of Education. The institute mainly offers accredited English language courses. This includes general English language for young learners (17 levels) and adults (22 levels), English for specific purposes (ESP), business English communication and preparation courses for international certificates such as the First Certificate of English (FCE), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The institute is an approved TOEFL test centre.

The institute has enrolled 457 learners in 2011, 1068 learners in 2012, 1205 learners in 2013 and 541 learners in 2014 up to the date of review. The vast majority of learners were self-sponsored and under the age of 18 years. The rest were sponsored by a number of employers.

Capital Institute has one centre located in Al Mahooz, Manama. The institute is operated by a chief executive officer, a managing director with responsibility for quality, a head of department, a senior moderator, a curriculum designer, a marketing officer, a learners' counsellor, a public relations, an IT specialist, a first aider, a graphic designer, a receptionist and transportation coordinator with a number of drivers. The institute utilises a pool of fifteen part-time teachers.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over a four days period, by a team of five reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons, analysed data about the courses, examined learners' written and other work, studies documents and materials provided by the institute and met with staff, learners, parents, employers and teachers.

In the previous review, the overall effectiveness and all other aspects of the provision were judged as good.

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

Table of review judgements awarded

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

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The overall effectiveness of the Capital Institute is outstanding, as are the other aspects except for the quality of teaching and training, which is judged as good. Learners' success rates are high on almost all courses and levels. Most learners are highly motivated, enjoy their learning experience, and develop highly significant skills and knowledge relevant to their level. Capital teachers are well qualified and have relevant experience in their specialisations. The courses taught provide learners with a wide range of activities to engage and motivate them and to enrich their learning experience. Most of the lessons are timely managed and start with clear lesson objectives that are shared with learners.

Teachers assess learners' progress effectively and records are well maintained. Capital courses match learners' needs and abilities and are responsive to stakeholders and learners specific requirements and aspirations. A very wide range of English language courses are offered with good progression levels. The courses are well planned, structured, resourced and regularly reviewed and updated in response to the changing of the markets and stakeholders' needs. Capital enriches these courses with effective and relevant additional activities. Learners on almost all courses receive effective and well-structured support and guidance to help them achieve better outcomes. At the beginning of each course, learners are provided with a very useful and informative learners' manual. The teachers are friendly, supportive, and approachable and attend to learners as required. The institute's environment is pleasant and safe. Leadership and management are guided by a well-articulated three-year strategic plan, which is translated into a very useful and detailed operational plan on a yearly basis. The institute has a highly effective approach to assess and evaluate learners' prior attainment and place them at the right level. The institute maintains effective links with different stakeholders and relevant part of the community locally and internationally.

Capital has an outstanding capacity to improve. Since the last QQA's review, Capital has taken significant improvement initiatives to address the previous review recommendations such as improving the process of collecting, analysing and acting on the stakeholders' needs and introducing awareness sessions to all learners at the start of any course about health and safety. The institute has recently broadened the range of its courses by adding new courses to its offering such as English for Special Purpose (ESP), tourism, French and German

languages. Modern and up to date learning resources are available, where all classrooms are equipped by e-boards which are utilised very efficiently by teachers and learners.

The institute has a user-friendly web site and free of charge E-learning library accessible to all. Recently, the institute introduced an effective online registration system. The institute is an approved TOEFL Test Centre. The institute has a comprehensive and useful database, which contains all the information related to the learners and their achievement. Capital has an effective quality assurance system in place. The institute has capable human resources and sufficient physical resources to carry out its improvement plans. It has a good repeat business and enrolment numbers. Its Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) is detailed, informative and critical and identifies a range of improvement actions.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Learners' achievement at Capital is outstanding. Most learners develop highly significant skills and knowledge relevant to their level. The remarkable results of the different assessment methods used by the institute reflected the high level of knowledge gained by the learners. The success rates are high and ranges from 89% to 94% across almost all courses and different levels, with well-structured and effective examination process, which is very relevant to the level and type of course. The grading system for different courses is standardized and systematic and the system of data recording is robust and accurate.

The learners' progress is outstanding. When comparing learners' total grades of middle and final-examinations with the entry level (pre-course assessment), it is found that most learners make significant progress. In addition, comparing individual learner's progress over different levels show that learners are progressing and in a few cases maintaining their level.

Almost all learners are enjoying their learning experience highly and are self-motivated. Their performance is successful during classes as well as when they answer the teacher's questions or when preparing an open presentation to present it in front of the class and defend their ideas assertively. From the large sample of learners' group work performed in the classes, the learners benefit from gains in knowledge and skills as well as the development of their self-confidence in presenting their views and work, which is reflected in learners' highly effective ability to work independently and collaboratively.

Most of learners are able to reflect on how well they are progressing. This was seen in some of the lessons observed where learners presented arguments and corrected their answers and the answers of other learners. This is also evident from the learners' feedback to the institute's and QQA's questionnaires, where each learner evaluates his/her proficiency at the end of each course. These feedbacks highlight what each learner needs to do or enhance to become better, however, only a few learners set targets and plan for themselves on how to improve.

The institute has very clear attendance policy and it is effectively implemented. The attendance rate is predominantly high overall and it is between 81 and 94%, with an average of 90%. Attendance and punctuality is recorded effectively with follow-up calls conducted to absent or late comers.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: 2 Good

The effectiveness of teaching at Capital Institute is good. Teachers are well qualified and have relevant experience in their specialisations and the courses they teach. From the observed lessons, the majority of teachers engage and motivate learners through a wide range of appropriate activities, which results in better learning outcomes. Also, during the lessons, most of the teachers used various and effective teaching methods such as brainstorming, role-play and presentations which are presented through oral and written differentiated activities that widen learners' knowledge, skills and understanding. Moreover, most teachers focus on learners, challenging them continuously and encouraging them with oral and written motivational expressions and stars, assuring that they are continuously engaged throughout the lessons. Learners are given opportunities to participate in the class activities enabling them to build self-confidence and make significant progress. The institute has a useful policy and procedure for the lesson plan, which is effectively implemented by all teachers. In addition, most lessons are well planned, with effective class management, however in a few lessons; teachers did not assess learners' written work effectively.

Most lessons are timely managed and start with clear objectives that are shared with learners. Teachers maintain an effective focus on less able learners through "verbally or written" activities while more-able learners are not sufficiently challenged. In most successful lessons, teachers used highly effective and attractive learning aids such as e-board, PowerPoint presentations, relevant pictures and videos. Furthermore, in the lessons observed, most learners were using the smart board effectively.

The institute is using a rigorous policy of assessing every learning process from the start to the end (pre-course assessment, middle and final examinations). Learners' work is corrected with constructive verbal feedback. All learners are provided with written feedback which is mostly motivational; however this is not a comprehensive feedback that helps the learners to overcome mistakes and errors. Although the correction of the learners' written work is rigorous, teachers assess learners' written work without clear rubric. All learners' work is moderated by a moderation committee, which is responsible for the verification and moderation process.

Standardised and regularly updated records of learners' achievements is maintained which include examination results and attendance. All these records are fed in to a useful system,

aggregated, and analysed by the management. The institute provides this information when it is requested by the parents, employers or learners.

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Courses offered by Capital are outstanding. The institute delivers courses that match learners' needs and abilities and are highly responsive to the stakeholders and learners specific requirements and aspirations. A very wide range of English language courses are on offer with good progression levels which suits learners' ages. The general English courses are divided into three main categories, adults, junior and senior for young learners. The provider also offers business English, English for specific purpose (ESP), speaking and report writing courses and a number of preparations courses for international certificates such as FCE, TOEFL and IELTS. Capital, also delivers customised courses developed based on clients' needs and analysis.

Most courses are well planned, structured and resourced to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. The course curriculum used in general English and FCE are attractive, comprehensive and highly relevant to the age of the targeted learners which also includes practice and support materials. While the TOEFL and IELTS curriculums are in the form of practice tests, the institute has a pre-examination lessons based on individual learners' requirements. Overall, the offered courses have a clear scheduling of tasks where the assessments are manageable and the information is delivered and taught in a sequence that encourages a progressive acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding. The time allocated for teaching each unit is highly effective to cover the course objectives. Additionally, the institute has an effective and reliable system for planning, delivering, assessing, moderating and verifying learners' achievement. Also, an extensive range of resources are used to address learners' needs which include learning books, software CDs for audio and video materials, stories, educational games and flash cards. Furthermore, courses are regularly reviewed and updated in response to the changing of the markets and stakeholders' needs. The institute has a procedure for course curriculum selection where the curriculum developer in-charge regularly upgrades the course books if new versions are published.

A comprehensive analysis of local market needs is conducted. It is carried out through the distribution of questionnaires to different levels of learners and teachers from different educational institutions within the surrounding community. The feedback of these questionnaires are aggregated and analysed by the management of the institute and skills

gap are identified, which show clear understanding of their needs. The outcomes have been used effectively to improve the provision. Examples of the implemented outcomes of the survey are e-library and 2013 project “we speak only English at the institute”. Also, supporting the courses with effective and relevant additional activities to enrich and enhance learners experience in the use of English language and communication skills. For example the contests for differentiating learners in reading, translation and other activities to encourage learners to use the library through the “book worms” activity and “back-2-book” project.

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Capital Institute has a comprehensive mechanism to support and guide learners through their learning process to achieve better learning outcomes with an effective advice on behavioural or personal matters. From the observed lessons and learners’ work and records, the support provided to learners enabled a significant number of them to make an outstanding progress. Moreover, a variety of activities are available in the institute to enrich the learning experience such as back-2-book project, book worms, the reading and translation contests and the e-library with thousands of distance learning activities for learners’ practice at different age and language levels. In recognition of learners’ achievement, a motivational reward system is in place where learners are awarded with certificate of appreciation in their participation of any contest.

Learners’ progress is well monitored by the teachers and the learners are regularly updated on their progress. From the lesson observed, the continuous feedback provided to learners enables them to be aware of how they are doing and what is needed for them to do to improve further. Learners’ portfolios indicate that they are reflecting on their own progress throughout the course. At the start of any course, a useful learners’ manual is provided to all learners, which highlights some important rules and information such as the route of their study, health and safety guidance, attendance policy, method of assessment, and to whom to proceed in case of any personal matters or the need for a counselling.

The institute maintains close communication with parents and other stakeholders. It informs them of the progress and successes of learners, and regularly updates them in case of any issues or problems arise. Regular and useful open day meetings are held after the midterm assessments where the parents are provided with a written progress report of their children. These reports include learner’s attitude, class participation and class activities and the overall final progress. In addition to that, progress update reports are maintained to follow

up with parents and learners throughout the course in cases of learners underachieving, poor performance, lack of interest in their learning, behavioural issues or absenteeism.

Highly effective advice and guidance to learners and stakeholders are always given on course selection. The institute has a dedicated learners' counsellor to provide the learners with detailed information and advice for the selection of the international certificate offered at the institute. In addition, the provider has a user-friendly website with all the relevant information about the courses. The institute keeps in touch with the stakeholders and regularly inform them with valuable information through the different social media networks such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. The course outlines, content and plans are detailed, up to date and available in advance for learners and stakeholders.

The arrangements for the delivery and scheduling of the courses are highly flexible to suit the needs of stakeholders, for example, the courses are scheduled according to MoE's calendar for schools to avoid any inconvenience time. They are also flexible with the learners to schedule their lessons so that it does not contradict with their work schedule. The learning environment of the institute is pleasant and motivational for English teaching and learning. It is well equipped and enriched by educational posters; however, some facilities such as praying rooms and toilets are not up to learners' expectations.

Leadership and management

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Capital Institute has developed an effective three years strategic plan (2013-2016) with specific goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) focused towards improving learner's achievements. This plan is based on the Strength Weakness Opportunities Threat (SWOT) analysis and the self-evaluation carried out by the institute during 2012 and translated into an effective and detailed operational plan on a yearly basis. Detailed and useful annual action plans with specific goals is developed, which are cascaded into specific actions with responsibilities and deadlines. The institute's vision, mission and value statements are focused on learners' achievements, shared with staff and teachers and displayed in key areas and locations at the institute. The institute's internal quality assurance is governed by useful and detailed quality assurance manual. The institute maintains a detailed and useful HR manual, which is used by the management, staff and teachers. The current organizational structure is fit for purpose and meets the aims and objectives of the institute; there are clear roles and responsibilities for all staff.

Well-qualified teachers with the right experience are recruited and deployed effectively according to the different levels of the courses. Teachers are well inducted by providing them with a useful teacher's handbook, which explains the teachers' responsibilities within the institute in general and within the classroom in specific. Effectiveness of the quality of teaching is assured through an effective lesson observations scheme. In addition, the institute has an effective procedure carried out by the head of departments in which they regularly check the learners' activities, notebook, and feedback based on the finding are provided to each teacher. Teachers are observed once every course by the managing director and sometimes by the CEO of the institute. A useful written feedback is provided to them for further improvement. Follow-up visits are carried out when it is needed. The outcomes of these visits trigger some training and development needs, although teachers are hired on part-time basis, they are provided with sufficient development opportunities.

The institute has a clear policy regarding the courses' placement and pre-course assessment. The placement tests are carried out prior to the start of any course to place the learners at the right level, while the pre-course assessment is carried out in the first lesson of any course. Learners' achievements and progress on all courses are well monitored by the institute's management. The institute has an effective learners' achievement tracking system. Records of learners' achievement are maintained and aggregated effectively. Useful analysis and comparison over years on learners' achievement is carried out by the management and the findings are put into actions in the action plan. Effective verification process is carried out by the institute, the internal verifications are carried out by the verification committee within the institute, and an external quality consultant carried out the external verifications. A rigorous policy of assessing every learner's achievement from pre-course assessment to the final assessment is available. In one instance, the verification process revealed that the teacher has to re-assess the whole set of learners' tests.

The institute has an effective link with different stakeholders and relevant part of the community locally and internationally. Learners and parents' feedbacks are systematically collected, aggregated and analysed after each course. The outcomes of these analyses are put into an action plan, where improvement actions are planned and driven by comments and suggestions from those feedbacks. In addition, a regular follow-up with the parents on learners' issues specifically those underachieving and employers are also informed of their employees' achievements and followed up with their absentees. Parents' feedback during the open day stated that they are highly satisfied with the services provided by the institute.

Effective health and safety policies and procedures are in place. Premises is safe and secure. Health and safety instructions are displayed in all classrooms and corridors and the institute has a dedicated and qualified staff for health and safety. The management carries out an appropriate and fit for purpose risk assessment and fire drill periodically. Learners' feedback stated that health and safety measures are shared with almost all of them and they are trained to deal with emergency in case it happens.

The institute conducted a self-evaluation in 2012 and 2013, all teachers were involved in the self-evaluation process, and the outcome of those evaluations were analysed by the management and put into actions in the action plan. In addition, the analyses are discussed in the teachers and management meetings. The institute's Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) submitted for the review is detailed, informative, and critical. It identifies a range of appropriate improvements actions.

The provider's key strengths

- Well-structured strategic and operational plans and effective monitoring mechanisms.
- Most learners develop highly significant skills and knowledge relevant to their level and achieve the course objectives they are aiming for
- Most learners make good progress or above from their prior attainment and maintain progress over levels
- Highly motivated learners who reflect critically and effectively work both collaboratively and independently
- Well qualified teachers who use a good range of teaching methods
- Courses on offer are effectively planned and structured to meet the learners' needs and effectively supported with a number of additional activities to enrich and enhance learning experience
- Highly effective support provided to all learners to help them achieve better outcomes.
- Learners are always updated on their progress and are aware of what is needed to do to improve
- Highly flexible courses delivery to suit the needs of different learners and the stakeholders.

Recommendations

In order to improve, Capital Institute should:

- improve the quality of learning and teaching by
 - ensuring teachers provide more feedback to learners that are constructive.
 - ensuring teachers consistently challenge the more able learners to reach their full potential
- improve the learning Environment specially the praying rooms and toilets.