



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

Vocational Review Unit

Review Report

Golden Trust Institute and Consultancy

Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

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The Vocational Review Unit

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:

Grade description	Interpretation
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

Description of the provision

Golden Trust Institute and Consultancy (GTIC) was established in 2007. The company has two divisions, one of which provides training and the other consultancy. Since it opened, GTIC has offered 23 courses in human resources and business management. In early 2008, GTIC started offering long courses which are externally accredited by the Cambridge International College (CIC). So far, three CIC diplomas have been run, in human resources, office management and purchasing. GTIC offers training to both company-sponsored and self-sponsored learners, most of whom are aged 18 or above, and come from private and governmental organisations.

GTIC has two full-time members of staff, a managing director and an academic affairs and operations manager. In addition, GTIC has a pool of trainers selected from amongst the company's regional and international business associates, who work on a part-time basis and offer consultancy as well as training.

Scope of the review

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

This report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations as to what GTIC should do to improve.

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Grade 3: satisfactory

Golden Trust Institute and Consultancy (GTIC) offers satisfactory provision for its learners. Learners' achievement, the quality of training, the range of programmes offered, the support and guidance given to learners and the company's leadership and management are all satisfactory.

Learners develop appropriate and useful vocational skills. On long, externally-accredited courses, standards are good, and showing an improving trend. GTICs trainers are qualified, and knowledgeable in their chosen field. They demonstrate good vocational understanding and use work-related examples effectively. However, the outcomes of initial assessment are rarely used to plan training, and a minority of learners lack the appropriate skills for the level of course they attend. Learners' attendance and punctuality are poor on some programmes.

Programmes meet learners' and employers' needs. Employers express particular satisfaction with the flexible attendance options offered by GTIC. The company showed a high level of repeat business during 2008, with six major clients taking up more than two courses over the year. The recent introduction of CIC-accredited diplomas was undertaken after a thorough consideration of the requirements of Bahrain's labour market. GTIC's courses are provided only at entry levels, offering few progression opportunities for learners.

Trainers provide particularly good support for learners on externally-accredited courses, monitoring their progress thoroughly and using the results to help individuals improve their performance. Support for learners on short, non-accredited courses is generally satisfactory, but trainers do not check sufficiently to ensure that short course learners have achieved their individual goals. The needs of less able learners are suitably accommodated, and they can attend additional tutorial sessions if they need to.

GTIC is effectively managed. The company has a strong local and international network which it uses well. Appropriate strategies have recently been implemented for observing trainers' performance, and meeting their professional development needs. Learners' feedback is systematically gathered, analysed and shared with trainers and employers. An insufficiently systematic approach is taken to the collection of employers' views.

Capacity to improve

Grade 2: good

Although a relatively new company, GTIC already has a record of appropriate and well-considered growth. Courses covered seven titles in 2007, and increased to 23 titles in 2008. The addition of longer, externally-accredited courses gives learners the opportunity to attain a formal, transferable qualification. More new courses are planned for 2009, to be offered in collaboration with international higher education and professional organisations. Learners' enrolments have increased steadily, rising from 208 in 2007 to 357 in 2008.

GTIC's management team is highly competent and will soon be strengthened further by the addition of a recently-appointed quality manager. Trainers are carefully recruited and effectively deployed. Managers communicate well with each other and with their staff, and ensure that GTIC's mission and strategy are shared and understood.

The company's strategic objectives, although clear and well researched, focus insufficiently on improving the quality of training or raising learners' achievement. The self-evaluation form was not sufficiently self-critical, and failed to identify the areas for improvement found by the review team. Overall, however, GTIC's operations are supported by thorough planning and carried out by well-selected staff, and its capacity to develop and improve is good.

Summary of grades awarded

Overall Judgement	
Effectiveness of provision	Grade 3: satisfactory
Capacity to Improve	Grade 2: good
Review Findings	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade3: satisfactory
How effective is training?	Grade 3: satisfactory
How well do programmes meet the needs of learners and employers?	Grade 3: satisfactory
How well are learners guided and supported?	Grade 3: satisfactory
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade 3: satisfactory

Main judgements and recommendations

Strengths

- **The vocational skills gained by learners.** GTIC's learners develop particularly appropriate and useful work-related skills. Ninety percent of those who completed evaluation sheets at the end of their course said that they had achieved their learning goals.
- **Standards of performance on CIC diplomas.** Learners' progress and achievement on long, externally-accredited courses is good, and improving. Of the 16 learners who started these courses, 12 completed their programme of study, with five earning distinctions and four achieving a high merit. Learners' performance improves as they go through each of the 12 modules.
- **GTIC's trainers.** GTIC's trainers are highly knowledgeable and demonstrate good vocational skills. They use a wide range of work-related examples, often drawn from their own experience. Trainers link theory with practice effectively, using team work, group activities and visual aids well.
- **Support for learners on accredited courses.** Learners on long, externally-accredited courses receive particularly good support. Their performance is monitored closely. Free tutorial sessions are offered to learners who have difficulties with the English language, well supplemented by a range of self-study English tutorials. Assessment is thorough and effective.
- **Links with professional organisations and business associates.** GTIC maintains strong links with professional organisations and business associates, regionally and internationally, and uses these appropriately to source part-time trainers.

Areas for improvement

- **Learners' attendance and punctuality.** Some learners attend irregularly. The procedure for following up absentees is not sufficiently rigorous. Learners' punctuality is poor in some cases. Instances of unpunctuality are not challenged firmly enough by trainers.
- **The arrangements for measuring learners' achievements and progress on short courses.** Trainers do not check sufficiently to ensure that learners on short, non-accredited courses are making progress towards their objectives. The company's

definition of achievement, that learners should attend 75% or more of the allotted sessions, is insufficiently challenging.

- **Initial assessment.** Except on the CIC-accredited courses, where the level of learners' English ability is tested before they start their course, initial assessment is neither systematically conducted nor used effectively to plan training. A minority of learners lack the prerequisite skills for their course. This hinders progress in some cases.
- **Progression opportunities.** There are too few progression opportunities for learners. Courses are provided at entry levels only, restricting the options available.
- **The arrangements for collecting employers' views.** GTIC's approach to gathering employers' views is not systematic enough, relying on trainers' and managers' ad hoc conversations with selected clients.

Recommendations

In order to improve, GTIC should:

- develop a rigorous system to improve learners' punctuality and attendance
- measure and monitor learners' progress and achievements on short courses
- ensure that all learners are sufficiently assessed on entry to their course and that the results of this assessment are used to plan training
- provide progression routes for learners by introducing programmes at higher levels
- ensure that employers' views are consistently and systematically gathered, analysed and used to bring about improvement.