



# Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**ILC Training  
Adlyia  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 7-9 February 2016**

VO097-C3-R024

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## Introduction

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The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training (QQA), conducted this review over three 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, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

In the previous review, the overall effectiveness of ILC Training (ILC) was judged as good as are other aspects of its provision.

This Report summarises 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	Good (2)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Good (2)
Quality of programmes	Good (2)
Quality of support and guidance	Good (2)
Leadership, management and governance	Good (2)
Capacity to improve	Good (2)
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good (2)</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: Good (2)**

The overall effectiveness of ILC Training (ILC) is good, as are all other aspects of its provision. Most learners complete their courses successfully and the vast majority of them develop good general English language skills and knowledge, enhancing their performance and daily interactions at their workplace; yet learners on the soft skill courses although develop useful skills and knowledge relevant to their courses levels, a few do not progress as expected. The vast majority of the learners take responsibility for their own learning and are highly motivated and engaged during sessions. Learners benefit from the effective support and guidance provided by trainers and staff during the course, which helps them with their learning journey. Courses are delivered by qualified trainers who are highly knowledgeable and have relevant years of vocational experience in the subject they teach. They use a wide range of vocational examples during sessions to stimulate effective learning such as role-play, educational games and interactive individual and group work. However, in less successful sessions teaching methodologies are not effective enough to engage and motivate learners; whom remain passive. ILC offers a wide range of general English language and soft skill courses based on a thorough understanding of the local market needs and is highly responsive to stakeholders' and learners' specific needs and aspirations. Courses are well-planned and structured with relevant objectives and learning outcomes.

ILC leadership and management have effective strategic and operations plans to drive the provision. The Centre conducts self-evaluation reviews on regular basis to identify areas that needs to be improved further; the outcomes of these are used to enhance its operation plans that have positively impacted learners' achievement. The management maintains a clear quality assurance policy and procedure manual, including moderation and verification processes, programme design and update as well as adequate procedures to assess learners' prior learning and various sub-procedures. However, the verification and moderation processes are not effectively implemented across all courses to ensure positive impact on the learning outcomes, particularly in the soft skill courses.

## Capacity to improve

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

#### Grade: Good (2)

ILC has good capacity and resources to expand and improve the quality of its provision. The leadership and management has taken a number of improvement initiatives to address the previous QQA's review recommendations such as improving the Centre's approach for seeking the views of learners and employers, and developed an effective operation plan that covers all aspects of its operation with suitable links to the strategic plan.

The Centre has sufficient resources to implement its improvement plans; staff are competent in the field of training and employs qualified trainers with suitable vocational experience and background. The management maintains effective quality assurance system with systematic approach to promote continuous improvement. Effective course files are maintained which include standardised forms to closely monitor learners' achievement and progress on various courses. Achievement across most courses and enrolment over the past three years are maintained at a high level. ILC management team has good understanding of the local market needs and responds promptly to learners' and stakeholders' requirements, as such it maintained effective repeat business with a number of major clients and enrolment has increased significantly on 2015 in comparison to 2013 and 2014. The current premise is fit for purpose with reasonable resources and recently additional office space was rented to cater for the expansion in the enrollment. The submitted Self-Evaluation-Form (SEF) is detailed and provides very useful information about its operation and identifies relevant areas for improvement. However, the grades provided are overestimated.

## **Learners' achievement**

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

#### **Grade: Good (2)**

The vast majority of ILC learners in the General English programmes develop good language skills and knowledge. Feedback received from various group of learners and employers confirm that training at the Centre match their needs, have positively improved their skills and enhanced their daily life interactions at their workplace. This represents the vast majority of enrolment. Moreover, learners on the soft skill courses gain useful knowledge that is relevant to their work place and their profession. However, a few learners do not progress as expected.

The majority of learners make good progress in attaining the four main English language skills. An analysis of various learners' progress on a number of English language courses revealed that the majority of learners progressed well throughout the course and over levels in terms of achieving the course objectives and the expected language capabilities. Yet a few learners do not progress as expected. Whilst, the majority of learners on the Women's English and Entrepreneurship Program progressed to good standards, in a few of soft skill courses learners do not reach their full potential and do not progress as expected.

Most learners achieve their certificates in a timely manner and only a few discontinue their courses. According to the analysis of the Learners' Performance Data (LPD) provided by ILC for the last three years, the overall achievements are high, around 97% for most courses with only a few learners that pass from their second attempt; this is well reflected in the level of learners' standards and on their active participation during the observed sessions.

Most ILC learners are able to work independently during class activities; in addition, learners are able to work in groups as required. During sessions, learners are engaged, motivated and have positive attitude towards their learning. The vast majority of the learners take responsibility for their own learning and are able to reflect critically during class discussions, activities and the end of course evaluation. For example, learners on Women's English and Entrepreneurship and ACCESS programmes reflect well on how they are progressing through pointing out areas for further improvement in relations to their own projects and social activities. ILC encourages learners to fill a personal development

plan to reflect on the gained skills and indicate improvement plans. Yet the Centre does not always follow up on these forms.

ILC has a clear attendance and punctuality policy that is shared with learners and stakeholders prior to the start of a course. Attendance and punctuality records are well maintained and the overall attendance rate is high for the last three years. However, a few learners arrive late to class as noted during the observed sessions. The Centre takes the necessary follow-up actions in case of absenteeism or frequent lateness.

## **The quality of provision**

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

#### **Grade: Good (2)**

The effectiveness of teaching, training and assessment at ILC is good overall. Trainers are knowledgeable and have relevant years of vocational experience in the subject they teach. The vast majority of English trainers have a globally recognised 'Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages' (CELTA). They use a wide range of vocational examples during sessions and are able to respond well to learners' questions. Trainers use a range of effective training methods to engage and motivate the vast majority of learners such as role-play, educational games and interactive group work. However, in the less successful sessions, teaching methodologies are not effective enough to engage and motivate learners; whom remain passive. From the observed sessions, trainers use a well-structured lesson plan with clear objectives for each day, derived from the course main objectives and informed by prior assessment of learners. The lesson plans are thoroughly detailed with timing, the role of trainer and learner, as well as list of activities and resources needed for each session. The majority of the observed sessions are managed well and start with sharing of course/lesson objectives that are linked to the course's Intended Learning Outcome (ILOs) and to the previous session. Furthermore, in better sessions, trainers succeed to stimulate self-learning and higher order and critical thinking of learners by extended questioning technique and challenging learners. Trainers utilise the available learning resources and materials to capture learners' interest effectively during sessions such as formative PowerPoint presentations, white board, data show, flip chart, and relevant audio and videos.

In order to assess learners and measure achievement of ILOs; trainers use a range of effective assessment tools. For the English language courses, a well-constructed placement test is used to assess learners' prior learning and background in order to place them at the correct level. During the course, a relevant range of formative and summative assessment that include test, projects and post-course assessment are used to evaluate learners' understanding. These are well linked to the achievement of course objectives and ensuring the acquisition of skills in a gradual manner by learners. ILC implements a useful assignment marking scheme based on a clear rubric. Notwithstanding the above, on the soft skills courses although relevant pre- and post-course tests, in addition to a range of in-class hands-on practical activities are utilised to assess learners' achievement and progress, the assessment is not sufficiently rigorous across all courses and limited records are kept on learners' performance. On most courses, trainers check individual learners' understanding through extra questioning techniques and homework and provide learners with useful verbal feedback to guide them on how to improve further.

From the observed sessions, learners' different needs are sufficiently accommodated for and learners are provided with detailed written performance report at the end of a course. Additionally, constructive written, verbal and instant feedback is provided during sessions and when a need arises.

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

#### **Grade: Good (2)**

ILC has effective policy and mechanism in place to analyse the market needs to advise its offering of English language and soft skills programmes. The management has conducted a comprehensive research from different perspectives about the training needs in Bahrain to be able to cater to the current industry needs. The existing English language skills gap in the work sector is suitably addressed through the different levels of English language courses offered at ILC. Moreover, the marketing department periodically meets with existing and new clients and conducts a detailed Training Needs Analysis (TNA) in order to meet the stakeholders' specific needs and to be able to offer appropriately customised courses for their company associates.

All English language courses are developed, well-planned and structured with relevant objectives, learning outcomes, assessments and fit for purpose supporting resources. Presently ILC offers four levels of General English courses, beginner, elementary, low

intermediate and high Intermediate. Resources and course outlines are available for all levels. Nevertheless, currently there are no learners at the advanced level. Additionally, ILC offers two levels of Communicative English language courses. Soft skills courses on offer are mostly short and attendance based.

Course outlines are sufficiently detailed with course outcomes, assessments and hours of study and shared with learners prior to starting the course. For the English courses, ILC sources the curriculum from international recognised publishers. Learners' progress in the English language courses is monitored through relevant range of formative and summative assessments; additionally, ILC has effective moderation and verification processes for ensuring the accuracy and appropriateness of the final tests. However, for the soft-skills courses, the curriculum is developed locally by the trainers and assessments are not consistent across all courses.

Fit for purpose learning resources are available to deliver programmes to meet learners' and clients' needs; the English courses are adequately supported with practice worksheets, relevant range of educational CD and DVDs. From the evidence seen in the observed sessions, video recordings of sessions and learners' questionnaires, trainers bring useful resources to the session that help learners relate to the topics. Moreover, learners are also advised with appropriate websites by their trainers. Whilst, the learning experience in the ACCESS and Women's English and Entrepreneurship which comprises of marketing with social media, goal setting and general English language programmes are supported with useful and relevant extra-curricular activities to expose learners to wider learning opportunity beyond the standard course materials, enrichment activities in the general English courses to enhance learning, however are not sufficient.

At all levels in different English language courses, learners are placed based on the outcomes of a placement test, which is administered under careful supervision and timings adhered to. For the English courses, the placement tests are of good standards and sourced from the Cambridge University Press. The tests comply with the requirements for access and entry to the English courses at ILC, which are aligned to the Common European Framework Referencing (CEFR). The placement rubrics are clearly stated and effectively applied. Moreover, for the soft skills courses, depending on the duration, learners complete a customised evaluation test and a Personal Development Plan (PDP). However, learners' prior attainment is not always adequately assessed.

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

### **Grade: Good (2)**

ILC learners have access to effective support mechanisms to help them achieve better outcomes during their learning journey. A useful 'student code of conduct' document is in place that outlines learners' rights, responsibilities and indicates the available support and learning resources. Additionally, trainers at ILC are friendly and supportive; they provide essential support for individual learners as required, such as providing a range of useful extra assignments to improve learners' literacy skills. Trainers are available for supporting revisions sessions for examination's preparation and make-up classes for learners who miss sessions.

Upon joining a course, the management ensures that learners are provided with sufficient induction on courses objectives, health and safety arrangement and support procedures. Learners on Women's English and Entrepreneurship and ACCESS programmes are provided with comprehensive details as they enroll on the programme such as success criteria, programme structure, outlines and the required projects. Although, ILC has no explicit policy to identify and support learners with special needs; cases are supported when the need arises.

Learners and stakeholders have access to clear information on courses and progression through ILC supportive staff. Course outlines documents, durations and attendance requirements are current and shared in advance with stakeholders. Nevertheless, ILC website has basic information about courses, such as contact details and access to some frequently asked questions. The Centre staff follows-up on learners' absenteeism as required.

ILC is highly flexible in delivering programmes that suit the needs of stakeholders and maintain highly effective communication channels with stakeholders before the course to ensure that programmes offered meets their business requirement; in terms of language, course timing, duration and choice of venue. Moreover, ILC shares with stakeholders well-defined performance reports at the end of a course. Reports reflect learners' achievements and progress made during the course. Moreover, individual learners are made aware of their own progress through trainers' very useful written feedback on classwork and tests; and areas that they need to improve further. The Center premises and learning environment is fit for purpose and equipped with the necessary learning resources. ILC keeps a small library with relevant books and a list of current publications.

## **Leadership, management and governance**

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

**Grade: Good (2)**

ILC maintains a fit for purpose organisation structure to run its operation; each staff is guided with a very useful and detailed job role, responsibilities and accountability. Additionally, the management has developed detailed strategic and operational plans with specific goals and targets focused towards improving learners' achievements and the quality of ILC programme offerings that fulfills major clients' specific needs and based on the Centre self-evaluation. The Centre's vision and mission statements are sufficiently aligned towards continuous improvement and stipulated well within the strategic plan. The operation plan is detailed and comprises all of its business activities and training. ILC premises and environment is healthy and safe, all required procedures and precautions are in place and maintained to reasonable standards; and risk assessment is carried out periodically. Moreover, for conducting training in external training venues, the Centre utilises a useful check list to ensure that the venue is suitable and risk free. The management ensures that learners are provided with instructions about health and safety aspects at the start of a course.

ILC has a clear quality assurance policy and procedure manual in place, including moderation and verification processes, programme design and updates as well as adequate procedures to assess learners' prior learning and various sub-procedures. However, the verification and moderation processes are not effectively implemented across all soft skill courses to ensure positive impact on learning outcomes. For the purpose of understanding the background of learners and ensuring that courses are designed and delivered based on their abilities, the Centre carries out an effective TNA to decide on learners' starting point and to cater for their individual needs.

Self-evaluation process is detailed and systematic. Several annual self-evaluations are carried out; strengths and areas that require further improvement are precisely identified and acted upon on a timely manner by the management team. The management's arrangements to monitor data about learners' achievement and progress are effective. Accurate trend analysis is produced for various courses and groups of learners; outcomes are shared on the management's weekly meetings and used to initiate improvement actions.

ILC has a detailed and clear recruitment policy and procedure. Trainers with international vocational experience are recruited, sufficiently inducted on the ILC's teaching approach and are deployed according to their specialisation. Suitable development opportunities are provided for full-time staff. The management implements very effective and clear class observation process to quality assure, and closely monitor teaching and learning on continuous basis. Random class observations are conducted, that accurately identify areas for improvement, and feedback is shared verbally and in writing with trainers after each visit. Improvement actions are taken instantly based on the outcomes of these visits and followed up promptly.

Productive and purposeful links are maintained with relevant stakeholders internally and within relevant industry. The management systematically collects and aggregates the views of learners' and employers' after courses; and the outcomes are thoroughly analysed with trends identified, ILC has taken a few positive actions to improve based on these comments.

## The provider's key strengths

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- The vast majority of learners on the general English language courses develop effective knowledge and skills.
- The knowledgeable and experienced trainers in the subject they teach, who use a wide range of vocational examples during sessions to enrich learning experience.
- The detailed policy and mechanism to gauge the local market needs; the outcome is effectively used to design and customise courses to meet the specific needs of learners and stakeholders.
- The effective strategic and operation plans with challenging targets that are monitored closely.

## Recommendations

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### **In order to improve its performance, ILC should:**

- ensure that learners on soft skills courses develop skills and knowledge relevant to their learning and course level
- further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that verification and moderation processes are consistent for soft skill courses.

## Appendix

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### Overview of the provision

ILC Training (ILC) was established in June 2011. It is licensed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development (MoLSD) to offer English language, management and soft skills courses. The offered English language programmes include general English, business English and conversation, in addition to a range of short soft skill courses. Each level in the General English Programmes is sub-divided into A,B,C,D and the course curriculum is allocated accordingly and 30 hours are attributed for each.

All courses on offer are non-accredited and are a mixture of externally and internally designed. ILC uses the Cambridge University Press material for general, business and conversational English courses. ILC operates from a single branch in Adliya. The organisational structure consists of a general manager, academic director, business development director, quality assurance director and administrative staff. Currently, ILC employs four full-time trainers. The Center enrolled 84 learners in 2013, 155 in 2014 and 625 in 2015. The vast majority of learners are enrolled in the general English courses, and the significant minority in the soft skills courses. Learners are adults and most are sponsored by their employers.