



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

Vocational Review Unit Review Report

National Institute for Industrial Training (NIIT)

Hidd

Kingdom of Bahrain

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The Vocational Review Unit

The Vocational Review Unit (VRU) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (NAQQAET) 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 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 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 strengths in the provision.

Introduction

Description of the provision

The National Institute for Industrial Training (NIIT) was established in 2006 as a joint venture between 53 shareholders. NIIT is licensed by the Ministry of Labour. NIIT offers training in the vocational and manufacturing programmes at basic, intermediate and advanced levels, such as electrical engineering, fabrication and welding engineering, and mechanical and motor vehicle engineering. NIIT operates as an approved Edexcel Centre, and offers a range of externally approved programmes by Edexcel. Other short programmes are also on offer including corporate training in soft skills, engineering courses from Svenska Kullager Fabriken (SKF) and Tamkeen sponsored programmes.

NIIT is located in the Hidd Industrial Area in the Bahrain International Investment Park (BIIP). The institute is managed by a managing director, an assistant director and business development manager and a middle management team consisting of full-time trainers and support staff. Additional part-time trainers are used to deliver some modules and courses. NIIT has the capacity to train up to 400 learners at any one time. Most learners are graduates from technical secondary schools and some are employed and unemployed job-seekers.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over five days, by a team of five reviewers. Reviewers observed training sessions, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, scrutinised documents and the materials provided by the centre and talked with staff, learners, employers and trainers.

In the previous review, overall effectiveness was judged as good as were learners' achievement, the quality of training, the quality of the programmes offered and leadership and management. Support and guidance provided to learners was judged as satisfactory.

This report summarises reviewers' findings and provides recommendations about what NIIT 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: 3 Satisfactory
Learners' Achievement	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Quality of Provision	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
How well do programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	Grade: 2 Good
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	Grade: 2 Good
Leadership and Management	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The overall effectiveness of NIIT is satisfactory, as are learners achievement, the quality of training and leadership and management whilst the quality of programmes and support provided to all learners are graded as good. Learners develop and gain appropriate vocationally-related skills and knowledge considering their starting points although a minority of learners do not always develop sufficient English language and numeracy skills upon course completion. Trainers are qualified and knowledgeable in their vocational subject but some lack sufficient experience in training methodology to effectively engage and motivate all learners. NIIT offers a range of externally-accredited and internally-designed programmes which are based on an effective gauging of the Bahrain industrial sectors which are regularly reviewed and updated to meet the needs and aspirations of learners and stakeholders. Learners receive very useful support to meet their training needs and are provided with effective preparation sessions for job interviews and suitable guidance on course selection. NIIT's management are guided by a coherent and effective strategic plan that is focused on raising learners' achievement. Good support procedures are in place but these have not yet fully impacted on learners' achievement.

NIIT has good capacity to improve. The institute's learning environment is inspiring and meets learners' requirements well. Most classrooms and workshops are spacious. The centre is improving the learning environment further by installing anti-static tiles and adding more workshops. NIIT maintains highly effective links with a wide range of industrial employers in the Kingdom and use these links in shaping up their programme offer. In the year 2012 the institute started offering Edexcel externally-accredited programmes. The institute is highly effective in addressing concerns raised by employers and learners with improvement actions driven by this feedback. NIIT maintained good repeat business and learners' enrolment during 2012 increased by 13 per cent over the previous year.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Learners' achievement is satisfactory overall. They achieve the qualifications they aim for according to the agreed planned objectives with their employers. Learners develop and gain appropriate vocationally-related skills and knowledge which are related to their chosen field and according to their level, and practice these on the workshop floor. However, a minority of learners do not develop sufficient technological knowledge or the relevant English language skills upon course completion. From the scrutiny of learners' initial assessment, the majority of learners come with the relevant background and basic technical skills and knowledge but a low level of English and numeracy skills. Very few of them come with a higher qualification than the one they aim for at the NIIT. From the observed lessons and learners' work, learners make satisfactory progress from their starting points, however a minority of learners, especially during the theory sessions, do not make the expected progress or achieve the relevant standards.

NIIT has three types of certification: external qualifications for long programmes, with relevant assessments, which are tightly related to the programme objectives; an NIIT completion certificate with appropriate in-class activities, some with pre- and post-course assessments; and an attendance certificate based on a required number of attended hours. Learners' performance data (LPD) records the retention rates as high across all courses. The vast majority of learners on the Engineering Multi-skills programme (EMS) have successfully achieved their certificates from Wigan and Leigh College, a UK based further education college. The achievement rates for the other courses reflect a satisfactory achievement by learners of the required standards of knowledge and understanding.

Learners are attentive and show a positive attitude to their learning; their level of enthusiasm is high in completing the practical activities at workshops but they are not always self-motivated in the theory sessions. Most learners are able to work independently and collaboratively but sometimes need supervision from their trainers. A few learners on the long programmes are able to expand on what they have been taught by questioning their trainers and challenging them with their own work-related examples; trainers guide them on the required action plan to improve.

A clear attendance policy is in place for the long programmes while in the short courses a minimum of 80 per cent of attendance is required. NIIT keeps attendance records across all programmes including learners' On-the-Job-Training (OJT) and actions are taken against absenteeism. From the attendance records and the observed sessions, punctuality is not as good as it could be.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Trainers are qualified and knowledgeable in the vocational subject they teach although some lack sufficient experience in training methodology. In the more effective sessions observed, trainers use a range of teaching methods and activities to engage and motivate learners. However, a narrow range is used in the less effective ones, with a tendency towards a too trainer-centred approach and some learners remain less active, especially in the theory sessions. However, trainers generally enable learners to further their understanding during sessions. Learners are assessed and constructive verbal feedback is usually provided. However, not all trainers follow the assessment procedure carefully enough particularly with marking and feedback on learners' work. Assessment is generally more effective on the EMS and the externally accredited programmes.

Whilst all sessions have relevant lesson plans, some are not informed well enough by prior assessment of learners. The majority of sessions start on time, generally with recapitulation and with the sharing of objectives and most are timely managed. In the better sessions, accommodation of learners' different needs is catered for, with appropriate support given to both the less and more able learners including the more able being asked to help the less able ones. However, a very small number of the less able are sometimes left unsupported. Learners' progress is recorded for the long courses and the majority of the short courses. Learning resources in the workshop and classrooms are used appropriately to enrich the learning experience.

Learners' progress reports for the long programmes, and the majority of short courses, are updated and well maintained. However, on a minority of courses, progress reports are written for the whole group rather than for individual learners.

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

Grade: 2 Good

NIIT offers a good range of externally-accredited and internally designed programmes, that provide progression opportunities and are well planned and structured to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. NIIT effectively gauges labour market needs by identifying the required vocational, technical and soft skills courses needed for the Bahrain industrial sectors. Through their business development team, NIIT conducted a comprehensive feasibility study to identify the required programmes for stakeholders. These customised

programmes are proposed and designed and based on these outcomes. Externally accredited programmes are verified and approved by the international awarding bodies. Programmes on offer are regularly reviewed and updated to meet the changing needs and aspirations of learners and stakeholders.

Course materials for internal courses are developed in-house to ensure their local relevance and these are internally reviewed and verified and approved by NIIT's management. All long programmes are supported with a range of intensive practical hands-on workshop activities. NIIT classes and computer laboratories are well spaced and equipped with the required training resources. However, the size of some workshops and their related resources are not always enough to cater for the numbers of learners. NIIT's programmes are enhanced and supported with a relevant range of additional activities, for example where arrangements were made for senior employers to meet NIIT's learners to familiarize them with some personal and technical aspects of their programme. In another example, NIIT sent group of learners from the automobile programmes to attend specialised practical workshops and presentations provided by local car dealers.

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

Grade: 2 Good

Learners receive very useful support and guidance. A learners' handbook is provided which contains a detailed and clear attendance policy and general health and safety instructions. Learners are provided with an induction week at the start of the long programme which is delivered by staff and trainers. Two types of tutorial sessions are provided to all learners. The first one is compulsory and the other is optional, but learners do not always take advantage of these, and as such the impact is minimal on raising learners' achievement. NIIT has effective communication procedures with stakeholders and provides a useful progress report and detailed course outlines in advance. Most learners are provided with effective preparation for job interviews and receive suitable guidance on course selection.

NIIT trainers are generally approachable and supportive during and after a programme. Learners are given the opportunity to reflect on what they have learnt or what they need to do to improve. On the long programmes, learners are provided with an effective progress report and action plan. On the other hand, the progress reports for some short courses are not always sufficiently detailed and these are generally provided for the group and not for individual learners. NIIT provides inspiring premises that ensure a pleasant learning environment which is quiet, safe, comfortable and suitable for the needs of all learners.

Leadership and management

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The management team are guided by a coherent and effective strategic plan that is cascaded amongst all staff and is focused on raising learners' achievement. NIIT has a useful process to monitor learners' achievement and trends which is based on the aggregation and analysis of data; however, the assessment data on which they base their analysis is not as robust as it could be. Learners' results are viewed further by the examination board and the management committees. Other committees have been formed to assess the impact of management activities, holding regular meetings and having clear accountabilities and deadlines. Whilst arrangements are in place to assess learners' prior learning for the long and short programmes, it does not always measure learners' essential skills well enough.

Management recruits full-time trainers with different experiences and background and are deployed according to their area of learning. However, the process is not sufficiently rigorous as some selected trainers do not have sufficient training experience. Trainers are though provided with some development opportunities based on their specialisation requirements. The quality of their training is verified and assured by two levels of lesson observation schemes but there are no rigorous follow-up actions from these visits to improve trainers' performance.

Major employers' views are taken after a group of learners complete a training programme, using an appropriate questionnaire; comments are summarised and trigger actions for improvement. Feedback from learners is collected and summarised at the end of each semester, with the management team taking improvement actions based on learners' concerns. Highly effective links are maintained with the main clients, the major shareholders of the institute. Effective health and safety measures are in place; the premises are well equipped with modern smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and with sufficient emergency exits. A risk assessment is carried out on a periodic basis. The institute self-evaluation is comprehensive, self-critical and identifies a range of improvement actions but the grades provided in the SEF overestimate the provision.

The provider's key strengths

- The effective gauging of the local labour market needs
- The detailed learners' progress records that are maintained for the long and the majority of the short programmes
- The inspiring premises and facilities
- The highly detailed strategic plan and the closely monitored action planning
- The highly effective links with relevant industry stakeholders.

Recommendations

In order to improve, NIIT should:

- ensure that all learners develop knowledge and skills according to their level and make the required progress
- improve the effectiveness of training methods to engage and motivate all learners
- ensure that programmes are sufficiently resourced
- enhance initial assessment practices and ensure effective use of the outcomes on session planning.