

# 2022

## Annual Report

Continue the Development Approach



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب  
Education & Training Quality Authority  
مملكة البحرين - Kingdom of Bahrain



HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS  
**PRINCE SALMAN BIN HAMAD AL KHALIFA**  
THE CROWN PRINCE AND PRIME MINISTER



HIS MAJESTY  
**KING HAMAD BIN ISA AL KHALIFA**  
THE KING OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

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# BQA Mandate

The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA) is an independent national authority governed and supervised by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and carries out its mandate and objectives with the guidance and views of its Board of Directors. It submits its reports to the Supreme Council for the Development of Education and Training for approval and ratification.

The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA) was founded in 2008 and was reorganised and renamed in accordance with the Royal Decree No. (83) of 2012 and the Royal Decree No. (74) of 2016 as part of the National Education Reform Project that is based on the vision of the Reform Project of His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in 2002, and a pioneering initiative of the Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030. The main aim of the Education Reform Project is to fundamentally improve the provision and services provided in education and vocational training sectors in the Kingdom of Bahrain, which will, in turn, ensure the professional advancement of Bahrain's high-calibre human capital.

## Vision

To be leaders in fostering sustainable quality enhancement for world-class education and training sectors in Bahrain.

## Mission

Sustainable improvement of quality and competitiveness in performance of education and training sectors through independent, fair and reliable evaluation that contributes to national capacity-building.

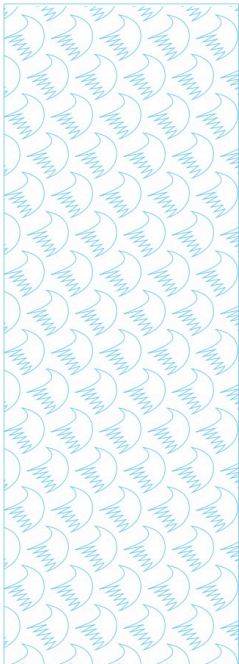
## Values

➤ Fairness ➤ Sustainability ➤ Competitiveness





Chief Executive's Statement  
**HE. Mr. Ayman Bin Tawfeeq Almoayed**  
Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs  
BQA Chairman



Since its establishment, the Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA) undertook the responsibility for developing education and training and enhancing everybody's right to access comprehensive education and training as the gateway to sustainable development that, in turn, ensures sustainable and continuous improvement. The world was stormed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely impacted the economic and education sectors in each and every country. However, some countries managed to sustain their educational achievements, owing to their solid economic and educational infrastructures.

Under the wise leadership of His Majesty the Great King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and the attention and guidance of HRH Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the Kingdom of Bahrain was able to develop the infrastructures of all its vital facilities, which played a major role in being one of the earliest countries that managed to overcome the pandemic and its challenges.

Bahrain has charted its course with qualitative education development initiatives through the Education and Training Development Project, which launched a series of comprehensive initiatives, the ideas of which started to formulate in 2005 leading to a finalized vision three years later, specifically in 2008, based on which the BQA was established, to assess and review the performance of, and systems adopted by, education and training institutions, and ensure their compliance with international best practices and quality standards, in terms of the quality of curriculums and subjects and efficiency of education and management frameworks; all of which aimed to the formation of a comprehensive and flexible evaluation that can be adapted to all changes and challenges, while adhering to the requirements of transparency and sustainable development.

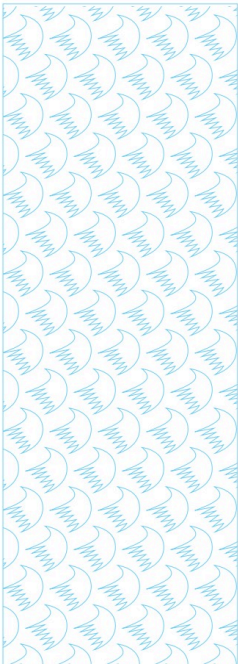
BQA's digital transformation, and process and review automation plans are merely parts of the development approach that focuses on improving and increasing the quality of processes that drive an educational renaissance, which supports the goals of the National Vision 2030 of protecting achievements and building a generation of graduates who excel in education and the labour market alike.

This annual report reviews BQA's achievements, in terms of the reviews of government and private schools, universities, institutes and national frameworks, which managed to overcome all challenges and achieve significant improvement in performance. BQA has completed the digital transformation process, which included moving to 100% cloud computing, automation of processes and facilitation of communication with all education and training partners.

Finally, I would like to commend the continuous support the education and training processes in the Kingdom have been receiving from the Special Representative of His Majesty the King, HRH Sheik Mohammad Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to the national experts and competent staff of BQA, including its executive management, Board of Directors and employees. We are determined to continue the journey of developing education and training in the Kingdom of Bahrain, with our eyes on the future, in order to enhance our scientific and practical abilities and competencies, so that our beloved Kingdom can take its rightful place in the world.



Chief Executive’s Statement  
**Dr. Tariq Alsindi**  
BQA Chief Exective



Since its establishment in 2008, the Education and Training Quality Authority, with all its competent, experienced, and highly qualified staff, has shouldered the responsibility to fulfil its great national mission of shaping the future of Bahrain's education and training sectors in order for our beloved country to achieve the leading regional and international status it deserves. Hence, sustaining development was our fundamental approach.

During its relatively short 14-year journey, BQA has managed to keep pace with regional and international education and training quality systems, and has signed several memorandums of understanding and cooperation agreements with specialized local, regional and international organizations and bodies, to share their experiences and expertise in the field, while focusing on qualifying and developing the skills and knowledge of BQA's teams through constant engagement and communication with their regional and international counterparts.

By continuing to grow and build up its experience, BQA moved onto another level of outstanding professional work in assessing education and training quality and became a regional and international consultant for development and improvement. Recognition goes to the competence of its national reviewers in assessing the quality of education, reviewing the performance of education and training institutions and operating the National Qualifications Framework and national examinations.

This international status deservedly achieved by BQA was the result of the accumulated experience upon completing over 1800 reports evaluating the performance of government and private schools, as well as universities and institutes, including the results of education and training institutional listing, national qualifications placement and foreign qualifications alignment.

Furthermore, the authority was able, in a qualitative leap that outperformed its regional and international counterparts, to design a new framework for evaluation to overcome the challenges imposed by COVID-19. This was made possible due to the creativity of its staff in the digital transformation of reviews and assessment activities in line with distant learning requirements. Additionally, conducting national examinations in a smooth gradual transformation will commence from 2023 as a new challenge BQA is addressing in collaboration with teams from the Ministry of Education in order to shape the safe and secure future we all aspire to, and add a new chapter to BQA's success story.

BQA has succeeded in developing outstanding relations with its education and training partners, beyond reviewing and assessing their performance, to achieve mutual understanding and coordination and build external consultation teams from both the government and private sectors that can assist BQA in various review activities. Additionally, BQA was able to achieve the target of graduating the necessary experts to propel the quality of education and training in various sectors in Bahrain. This goal was further supported by various projects, such as the BQA Ambassadors initiative through which BQA seeks to reach the largest possible group of society in order to ensure a prosperous future driven by education and training of the desired quality.

Finally, our slogan will always be "Continue the Development Approach", and our successes at the local and international levels will continue to reflect our persistence. that is supported with the continuous and genuine guidance of our wise leaders, in line with the roadmap developed by HM King Hamad Bin Issa Al Khalifa and adopted by the Crown Prince and Prime Minister HRH Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa. This is coupled with the constant follow-up of the Supreme Council for the Development of Education and Training, and the support of BQA's Board of Directors, executive management and competent and experienced national staff throughout various phases of development.

The Education and Training Quality Authority will continue to support, protect and ensure a bright future for education and training in our beloved Kingdom.

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT



**HE. Mr. Ayman Bin Tawfeeq Almoayed**  
Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs - BQA Chairman



**HE. Mr. Qusay Ali Alarayedh**  
Chief Operations & Customer Engagement  
Officer Labour Fund - Tamkeen



**HE. Mrs. Yara Redha Faraj**  
Coordinator - International Engagement  
Prime Minister Office



**HE. Mr. Munther Abdullatif Almudawi**  
Head of Education and Healthcare Investments  
Economic Development Board



**HE. Mrs. Sara Ishaq Hasan**  
Acting Under Secretary  
Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs



**HE. Ms. Dalal Iqbal Sangoor**  
Senior Legal Counselor  
Deputy Prime Minister Office



EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT



**Dr. Tariq Alsindi**  
Chief Executive



**Dr. Hasan Alhammadi**  
Acting General Director  
General Directorate of  
Education & Training Institutes  
Reviews



**Esmat Jaffar**  
Acting General Director  
General Directorate of National  
Qualifications Framework and  
National Examinations



**Dr. Khaled Albaker**  
Director  
Directorate of Government  
Schools Reviews



**Wafa Alyaqoobi**  
Director of National Examinations



**Dr. Sh. Lobna Alkhalifa**  
Director  
Directorate of Higher Education  
Reviews



**Duaa Sharafi**  
Media Consultant



**Ameera Jaffar**  
Acting Director of Human  
Resources & Financial Affairs/  
Chief of Financial Resources



**Duaa Abdul Wahab**  
Acting Director  
Directorate of Vocational Reviews



## General Directorate of Education and Training Institutes Reviews

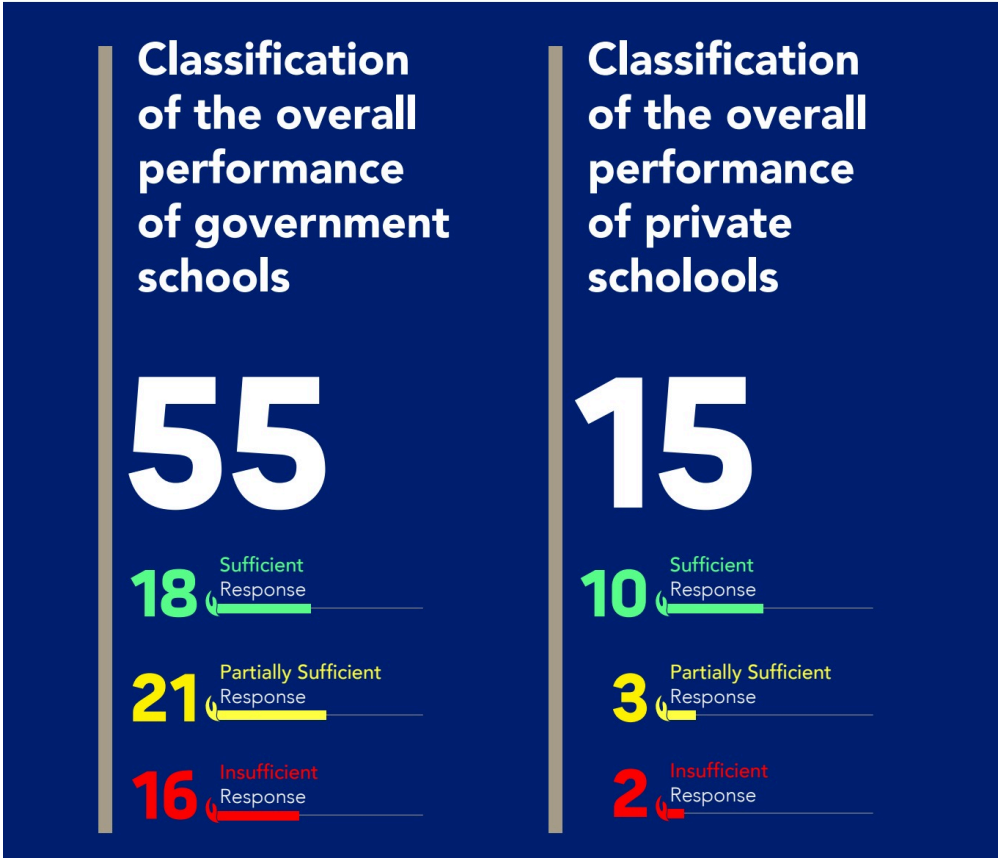
The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), represented by the General Directorate of Education and Training Institutes Reviews (GDR), through its four directorates, is responsible for evaluating the quality of provision of all education and training institutions through conducting reviews on their performance in accordance with the criteria and indicators of the endorsed review frameworks. These review frameworks were developed to be fit-for-purpose bearing in mind the status of these institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain, alongside being benchmarked against internationally recognized best practices, and steered by feedback received from all concerned partners.

Performance reviews aim to determine the level of performance of education and training institutions across the Kingdom of Bahrain, and to disseminate the review findings that provide adequate information, both to institutions and decision-makers, through detailed and summative review reports, via identifying key positive areas as well as areas for recommended improvement. These, in turn, contribute to the continuous improvement, whether this is within institutions or externally reflected in the legislations and the regulations of decision-makers, for the purpose of sustainable development and towards the achievement of national aspirations.

The academic year 2021-2022, under the circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, marked a new turning point. The General Directorate of Education and Training Institutes Reviews (GDR), through its four directorates, has been able to develop and update its frameworks and policies to evaluate the quality of schools and vocational institutes' practices during exceptional circumstances in order to determine the ability of these institutions in providing appropriate educational and training services. During the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022, the regular reviews of vocational training institutions were resumed according to the approved review framework, while the quality of government and private schools' practices during the exceptional circumstances continued to be evaluated throughout the academic year 2021-2022. As for the higher education institutions, BQA has continued to conduct the academic programme reviews as per the endorsed plan.

## Government and Private Schools

The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), represented by the Directorate of Government Schools Reviews (DGS) and the Directorate of Private Schools and Kindergartens Reviews (DPS), evaluated (55) government schools, and (15) private schools in accordance with the 'Framework for Evaluating the Quality of School Practices During Exceptional Circumstances in Government & Private Schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain' (Second Edition) in the academic year 2021-2022. The Figure below shows the classification of schools according to the evaluation findings:



The following is a review of general positive areas, areas for improvement and recommendations upon analysing the visits outcomes for evaluating the quality of government and private school practices during exceptional circumstances as indicated in their reports.

### Key positive areas of schools with 'Sufficient Response' performance

- Awareness of school leaders and the use of the school's self-evaluation in drawing up the operational plans to cope with exceptional circumstances.
- Adopting precautionary measures during exceptional circumstances to ensure the security and safety of school staff members.
- Providing students with appropriate academic and personal support through a variety of enrichment, remedial and induction programmes.
- Employing educational and digital resources in the majority of learning situations, particularly in government primary girls schools and majority of private schools.
- Effectiveness of learning procedures in all modes of learning situations.
- Students' positive contribution in school life, through participation in non-academic activities and events.

### Key challenges facing schools with 'Partially Sufficient Response' performance and schools with 'Insufficient Response' performance

- Inaccurate self-evaluation and poor use of its results in identifying the schoolwork priorities, as well as ineffective school planning as it lacks the measures to cope with the requirements of exceptional circumstances and the follow-up of its implementation.
- Students' poor acquisition of skills, knowledge and concepts, and sharp variation in their progress in the majority of core subjects.
- Inconsistent use of effective teaching strategies, with ineffective learning time management in all modes of learning situations.
- The effectiveness of assessment methods is inconsistent with limited use of their results in addressing the needs of students of different categories, especially in virtual lessons and digital tasks.
- Students' low motivation and ineffective participation in virtual learning situations, and irregular attendance and punctuality.

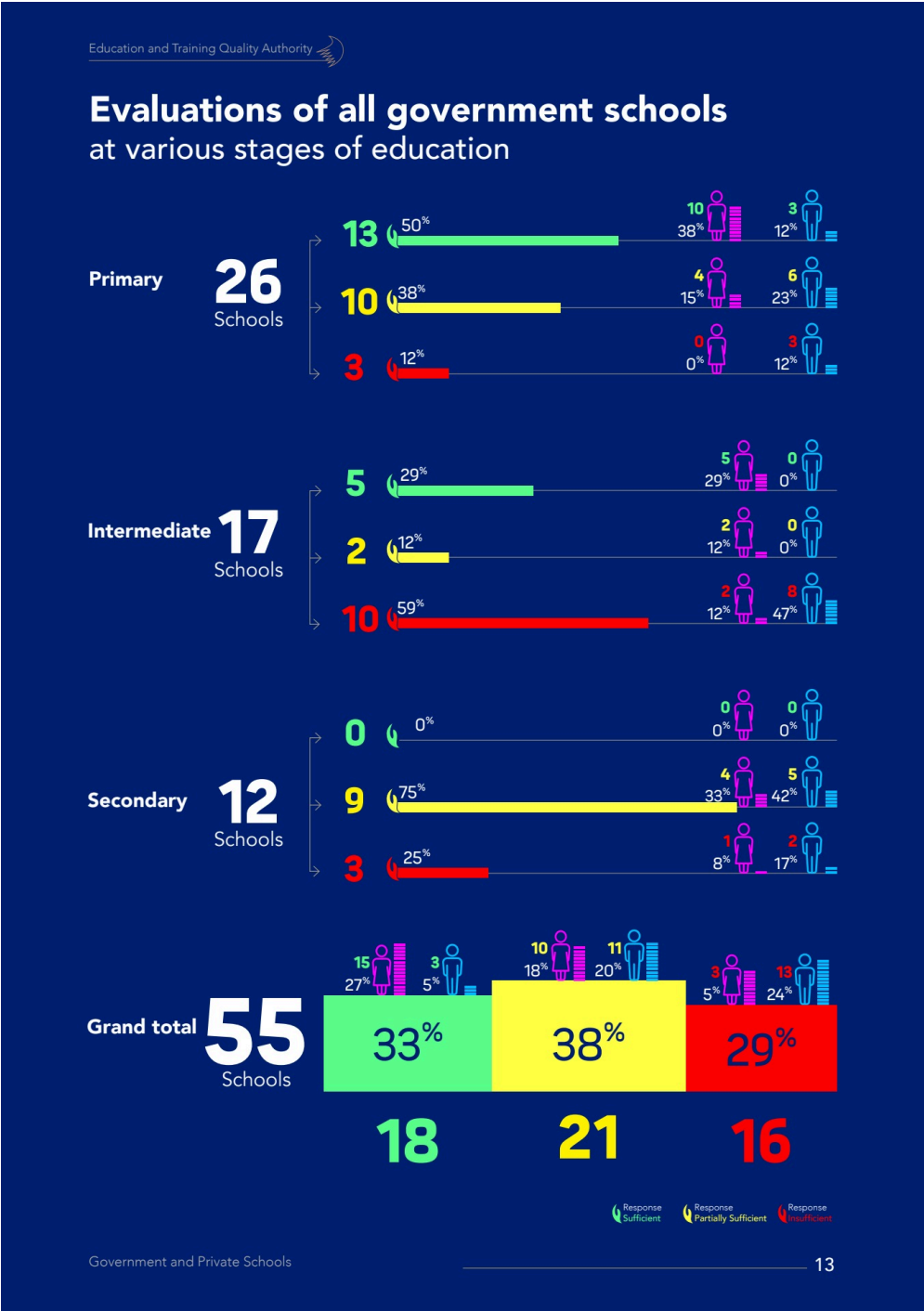
- Provision of poor academic, remedial and enrichment support programmes to address the needs of students of different categories, particularly low achievers, and failing to follow up the progress they achieve in such programmes.
- Declining of performance effectiveness of virtual classrooms with a high density of students owing to the use of a virtual learning mode in which more than one division is included in one virtual classroom. This is the case in government intermediate and secondary schools, along with Cycle 2 classes in some primary schools. This has impacted students' participation and the way their learning needs were addressed. This was coupled by the lack of teachers' training to meet the challenges of the virtual learning mode with a high density of students.
- Shortfall of middle management that is reflected in the ineffective monitoring of the implementation of the operational plans of school departments; the limited effectiveness of teachers' professional development programmes that affected their performance in virtual lessons.
- The internet interruption and the inconsistent viability of technological devices which impacted the effectiveness of learning situations and students' learning.
- Variance of the education system during the academic year, such as the transition between the approved COVID-19 Alert Levels Traffic Light System in coping with the pandemic, prospects for students returning to schools, the consequent rearrangement of school schedules and the distribution of classrooms, as well as the fluctuation of students' attendance based on health conditions and parents' changing decisions.

## Recommendations

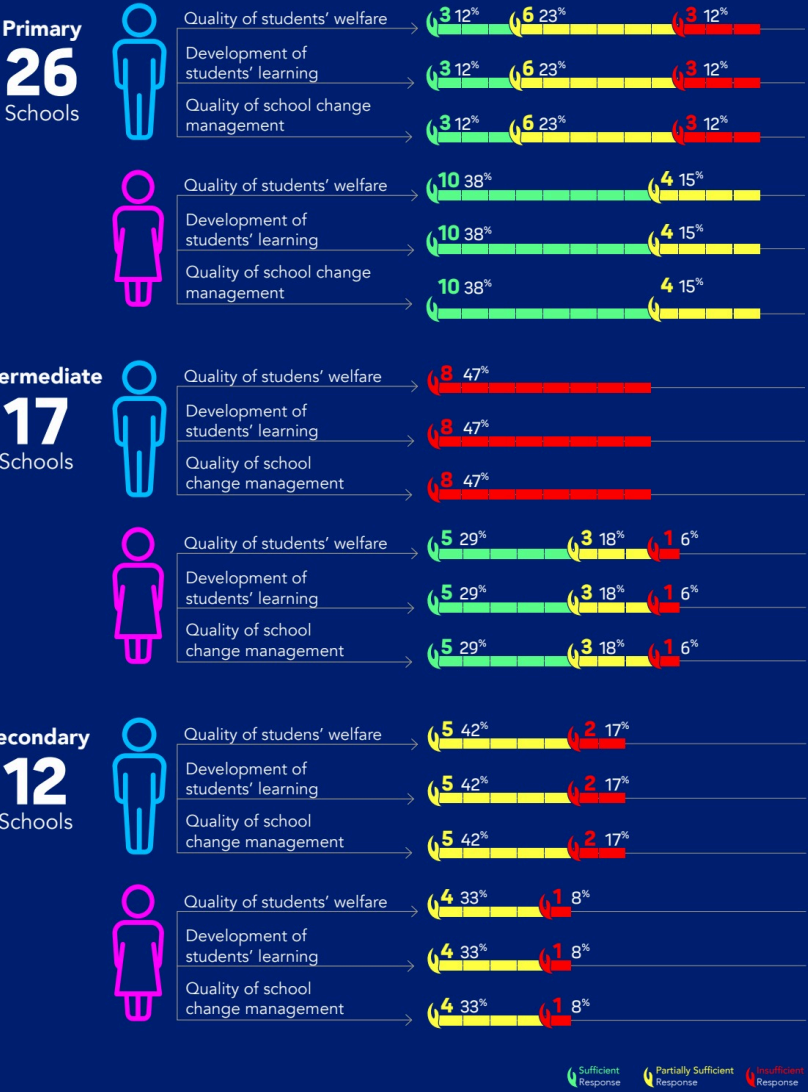
In order to develop and improve the performance of schools, efforts should be made to provide them with the necessary support and monitor the implementation of the recommendations of BQA evaluation reports on the quality of government and private school practices during exceptional circumstances. In general, attention must be paid to addressing the following recommendations:

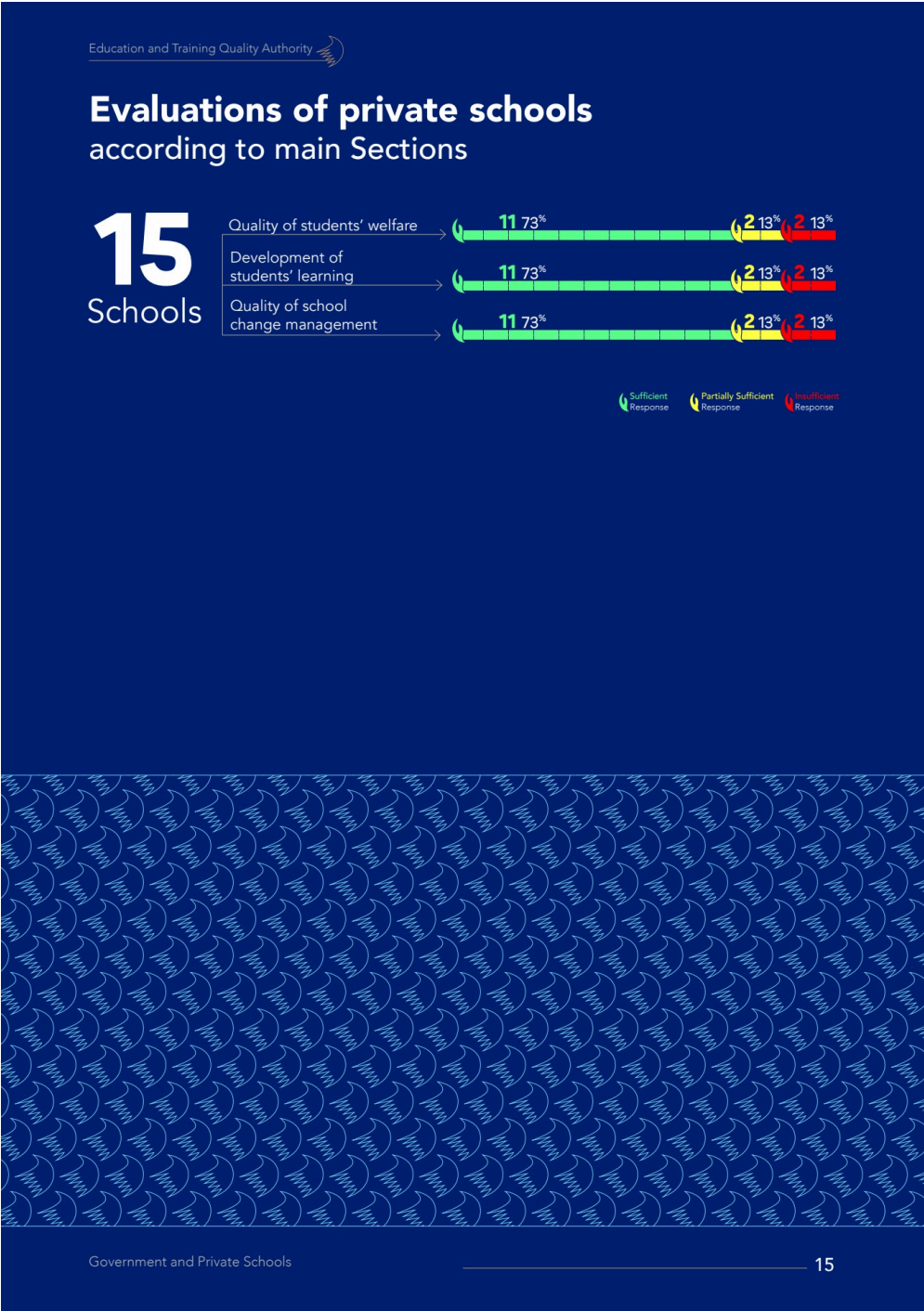
1. Conducting an accurate self-evaluation and use of its results to identify priorities and draw up operational plans commensurate with the exceptional period, informed by effective operating procedures and clear mechanisms to monitor the quality of implementation.
2. Improving teachers' professional training and monitoring its impact on the effectiveness of virtual lessons, ensuring the management of learning time and employment of teaching strategies that contribute to raising students' motivation and acquiring skills in core subjects.
3. Effective implementation of assessment mechanisms and use of their results to support the needs of various categories of students, particularly low achievers in virtual classes and digital tasks.
4. Adopting effective approaches to diagnosing students' standards, and providing effective academic and enrichment support programmes that are tailored to meet the needs of the various categories of students, especially low achieving students, and monitoring their progress in such programmes.
5. Implementing effective measures to monitor students' regular and punctual attendance of academic programmes and virtual learning situations.
6. Reorganizing and addressing shortfalls of human resources to ensure the reduction of students' numbers in the virtual learning classes with a high density of students.
7. Taking the necessary measures to improve the quality of the Internet, and fill the gap in the technological resources (computers) shortage to meet the needs of distance education requirements.





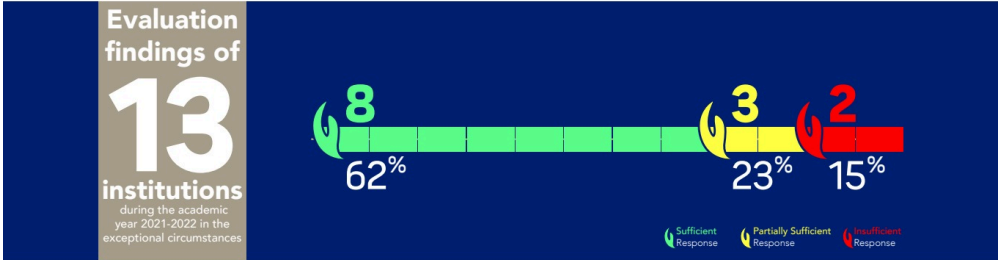
Evaluations of government schools  
according to main Sections





## Vocational Reviews Institutions

During the academic year 2021-2022, the Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), represented by the **Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR)**, evaluated the implemented practices adopted by (13) institutions in accordance with the 'Exceptional Framework for Evaluating the Quality of Teaching and Training Practices of Vocational Education and Training Providers during Exceptional Circumstances in the Kingdom of Bahrain' (Second Edition). The institutions were classified according to the evaluation outcomes as illustrated in the below Figure:



The general positive areas, areas for improvement and recommendations will be presented below upon analyzing the findings of the evaluation reports of evaluating the quality of teaching and training practices of vocational education and training providers during exceptional circumstances the outcomes of their review reports.

### Key positive areas:

- Rapid response and adaptation of the management team of the majority of providers to the needs of the emerging exceptional circumstances.
- Trainers' experience and effective adaptation of teaching and training methodologies to match with the learners' levels and enhance their achievement of qualifications they aim for.
- Effective utilization of training resources and employment of learning and digital resources to enable purposeful learning and deliver meaningful training.
- Courses/programmes are well structured, planned and supported with a relevant range of effectively implemented assessment tools.
- Learners are well-inducted and continuously supported to help them settle in quickly and confidently to further achieve Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs).
- Adoption of precautionary policies and measures to ensure safety and wellbeing of learners and staff and maintaining their records during exceptional circumstances.
- Learners' successful progression towards acquiring knowledge and skills and further achieving ILOs and qualifications they aim for.

### Areas for improvement:

- Contingency plans to respond to exceptional circumstances, effective risk assessment, and

mitigation plans to ensure long-term business retention and sustainability.

- Internal quality assurance policies, procedures and processes. This includes monitoring of quality of training mechanisms and trainers' performance during training sessions in line with the requirements of exceptional circumstances.
- Processes for documenting procedures, policies and requirements for courses/ programmes admission and enrolment and their effective implementation.
- Training strategies and training session management to meet the needs of different learners and motivate them effectively.
- Management of internal evaluation, moderation, verifications and follow-up process discreetly in a robust manner.

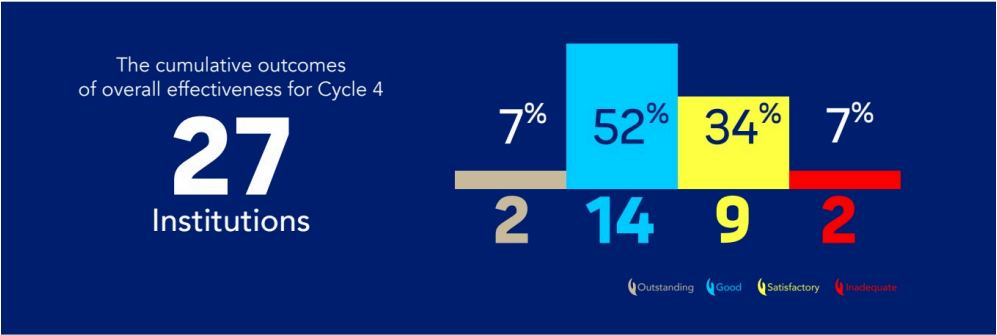
### Recommendations

- 1.Improving planning process and action plans to ensure institutions' business continuity and sustainability.
- 2.Further improvement of the adopted policies and procedures and their alignment with the requirements of exceptional circumstances to ensure the quality of provision.
- 3.Developing the evaluation management process, including internal moderation and verifications.
- 4.Improving the effectiveness of formative and summative assessment tools and their alignment with the training delivery modes.
- 5.Improving the mechanism for ensuring the quality of the training process, especially monitoring the performance of trainers during training sessions.
- 6.Enhancing the learners' participation in the training sessions and adherence towards the completion of assignments.



Cycle 4  
of Vocational Institutions Reviews

The DVR resumed Cycle 4 of education and training institutions reviews in April 2022, whereas (4) institutions, all are licensed by the Ministry of Labour, were reviewed; (3) of which received a 'Good' grade and (1) receiving a 'Satisfactory' grade. It is worth mentioning that three institutions of them maintained their 'Good' judgement compared to the previous cycle of reviews, bringing the total number of institutions reviewed in Cycle 4 to (27) institutions till the end of 2021-2022 academic year.



Below are the key positive areas and recommendations for improvement based on the outcomes of the Education and Training institutions' review reports.

Key Positive Areas:

- Clear strategic direction focusing on enhancing learners' achievement and improving the quality of the provision informed by a regular and effective self-evaluation process, particularly in the 'Good' or above institutions.
- Courses/programmes offering mechanism is based on an structured operational plan to meet the current and emerging needs of the labour market, develop and plan courses/programmes according to specific learning objectives and ILOs.
- Formative and summative assessment methods implemented to assess learners' understanding and measure the extent to which ILOs are achieved by learners.
- Knowledge, competences and professional skills achieved by the majority of learners in relation to their learning experience and labour market needs, which enable them to achieve the qualifications they aim for.
- Support and guidance provided to learners to achieve better outcomes and enhance their personal abilities and life skills.

Recommendations:

1. Ensuring learners master relevant knowledge, skills and competences to achieve the ILOs and the qualifications they aim for on a timely manner.
2. Improving the training strategies and lesson planning to enhance learners' participation and enhance their challenge and critical thinking skills in a better manner.
3. Improving training strategies and methods in the planning of training sessions and further stimulating learners' participation.
4. Implementing regular and effective self-evaluation processes, developing strategic planning processes and follow-up mechanisms to improve the institution's overall performance.
5. Developing the internal quality system to include the development of detailed and comprehensive policies and procedures of all aspects and ensuring consistent and effective implementation thereof.
6. Ensuring continuous and effective monitoring of trainers and learners' performance.

Cumulative Outcomes  
of Overall Effectiveness of Vocational Institutions

Below are the overall effectiveness accumulative outcomes of (73) active institutions based on the institutions' last review.



Total of (65) institutions received a 'Satisfactory' or better grade, with (11) institutions judged 'Outstanding', and the institutions judged 'Satisfactory' and those judged 'Good' for their overall effectiveness have grown closer in judgements at (26) and (28) respectively. However, the performance of (8) institutions were not up to the level of ambition and were judged 'Inadequate'. This is due to a lack of clear strategic direction in terms of insufficient monitoring of continuous improvement processes and the lack of a comprehensive internal quality system to monitor learners' performance, teaching, training and learning and quality of provision.

## Higher Education Institutions

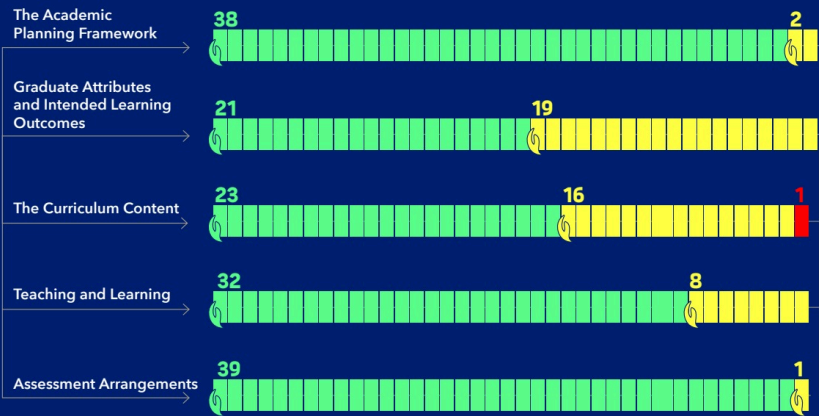
The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), represented by the **Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR)** reviewed (63) academic programmes between September 2020 and June 2022. Forty (40) review reports of the academic programmes reviewed were approved and published, while (23) review reports have not completed all review report-related procedures. These procedures include sending the reports to the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to check the factual accuracy, comment on their findings, or/and appeal against their overall review judgements. As for the review reports of the academic programmes that have received a preliminary judgement of 'Limited Confidence', their approval will be withheld and the concerned academic programmes will be subject to an extension visit in which the extent to which the HEIs have addressed the areas that need improvement in relation to the review standards will be assessed by DHR review panels. The extension visit may result in a change of the preliminary judgment of the review from 'Limited Confidence' to 'Confidence,' or making it a summative judgement according to the level of progress achieved by the institution, and in accordance with Cycle 2 of the Academic Programme Review Framework.

### Cumulative findings of academic programme reviews – (Cycle 2)

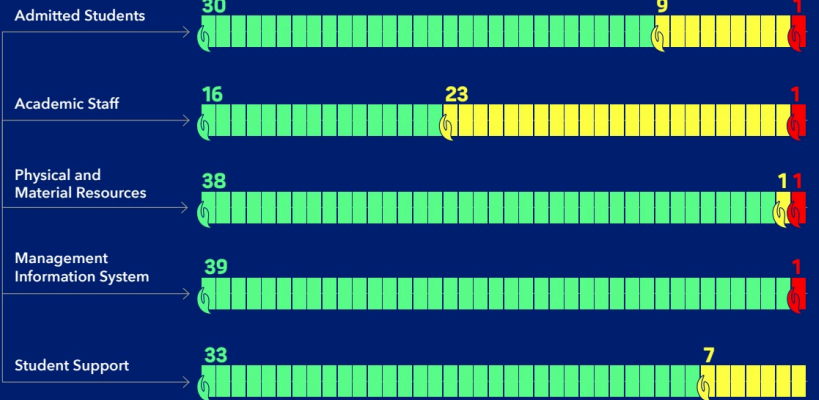


During the academic year 2020-2021, the reports of (13) academic programmes in the fields of Information Technology and Law were approved and published, and all these programmes received a judgement of 'Confidence', except for one academic programme receiving a judgement of 'No Confidence'. During the academic year 2021-2022, the reports of (27) academic programmes in the fields of Information Technology, Law, Health Sciences and Business Administration were approved and published; three (3) of which received a preliminary judgement of 'Limited Confidence'; however, all of them received a summative judgement of 'Confidence' upon being subjected to an extension visit. Thus, a total of (39) academic programmes out of the (40) programmes reviewed during the academic years 2020-2022 received a judgement of 'Confidence' accounting to (98%) of the total number of academic programmes for which the review reports were approved and published, as illustrated in Figure (1). The findings of each of the four Standards are summarized below. This is followed by a brief presentation of the follow-up visits to the HEIs that had been reviewed between October 2018 and January 2020 in accordance with Cycle 2 of the Institutional Review Framework.

Findings of Standard 1 of academic programme reviews - Cycle 2

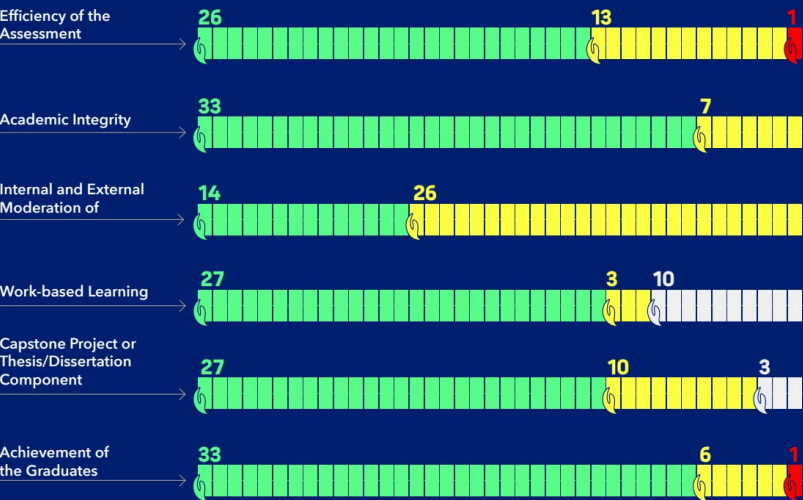


Findings of Standard 2 of the academic programme reviews - Cycle 2

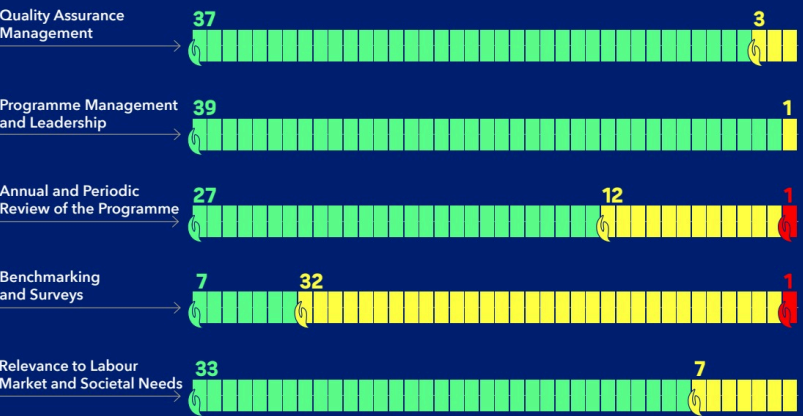




Findings of Standard 3 of the academic programme reviews - Cycle 2



Findings of Standard 4 of the academic programme reviews - Cycle 2



Addressed partially addressed not addressed not applicable

**Areas of Strength:**

- There are appropriate assessment policies and procedures in place that are rigorously implemented, and are reviewed and improved regularly, thereby ensuring their effectiveness.
- There is an appropriate academic planning framework for the programme, which ensures that the programme is fit for purpose and its aims are relevant in terms of mission and content.
- There are functioning management information and e-learning systems, along with physical and material resources and various facilities that support these academic programmes, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- There are clear policies and procedures related to Academic Integrity, Work-based Learning and Capstone Project or Thesis/Dissertation, which are rigorously implemented.
- There is an effective and responsible programme management and leadership and quality assurance management.

**Areas for improvement:**

- There is a need to establish and implement formal mechanisms to ensure proper utilization of benchmarking and stakeholders' views in developing the curriculum and the intended learning outcomes, thereby ensuring that the academic programmes meet the labour market needs and the needs of the stakeholders in their respective discipline.
- There is a need to appoint more qualified and experienced academic staff in a number of important sub-disciplines of the programmes and to encourage them to engage in scientific research.
- There is a need for the admission policy to be regularly revised and modified in light of benchmarking against similar reputable programmes.
- There is a need to utilise student progression data in ensuring the conformity of the admission requirements with the academic norms of the discipline and the appropriateness of the level of students entering the programme.
- There is a need to monitor the graduates' progression, their retention rate and employment destinations. In addition, academic programmes need to conduct regular cohort analyses, and consequently utilise their results to improve the programme and ensure greater compliance with academic standards.

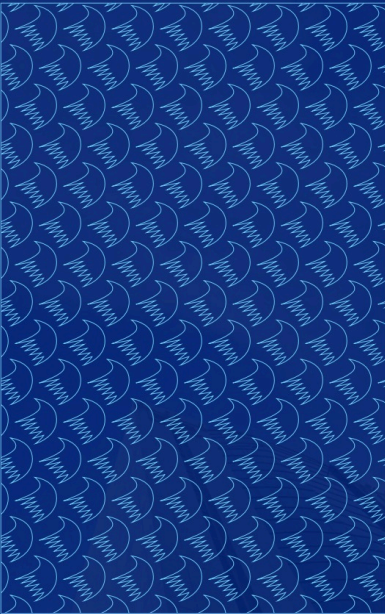
- There is a need to improve the quality of Internal and External Moderation of Assessment processes.
- There is a need to conduct benchmarking exercises in a more comprehensive manner.
- There is a need to adopt formal mechanisms for the utilization of survey results in the improvement of academic programmes; and evaluate the effectiveness of the changes implemented based on these surveys and communicate the results to the relevant stakeholders.

**Cumulative findings of HEIs follow-up visits:**

In addition to the institutional and academic programme reviews of HEIs, follow-up visits are part of the DHR ongoing review cycle to ensure the quality of these institutions and their academic programmes and to monitor their improvements. All HEIs that receive a judgement of 'Does Not Meet Quality Assurance Requirements' and academic programmes that receive a judgement of 'No Confidence' are subject to follow-up visits. A follow-up visit report assessing the level of progress achieved by the institution/academic programme in addressing the original review reports' recommendations is drafted and published.

During the academic year 2021-2022, only two HEIs that had received a judgement of 'Does Not Meet Quality Assurance Requirements' in the previous review cycle, were subject to follow-up visits; one institution achieved an 'Adequate Progress' overall judgment in addressing the original review report's recommendations, while the other institution received an 'In Progress' overall judgment, as it is still in need of more time to demonstrate the impact of the improvement procedures implemented in response to addressing some of the recommendations.

# The General Directorate of National Qualifications Framework and National Examinations



The General Directorate of National Qualifications Framework and National Examinations (GDQ) at BQA, and through its two directorates, carries out the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) operationsto provide better understanding, comparison and recognition of national and foreign qualifications, thereby deepening the understanding of employers, parents, and learners of the qualifications’ values. The GDQ also designs and conducts national examinations in accordance with good practices to measure students’

attainment and assess their acquisition of basic skills, knowledge and sciences.

The GDQ drew on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic crisis to become more flexible bytakingadvantage of benchmarks, consultations and exchange of experiences with the relevant stakeholders. It also continued to coordinate with several BQA strategic partners, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour & Social Development, the Higher Education Council, and the Labour Fund (Tamkeen), in order to achieve the common strategic objectives in an effective and consistent manner.

Undoubtedly, the GDQ continued to keep pace with the development of technology by seeking to automate its processes to ensure that it responds to the rapid changes that the world is witnessing today. It also paid great importance to supporting education and training institutions during this critical period, as they are experiencing profound transitions in education, including its modes, policies, and systems.

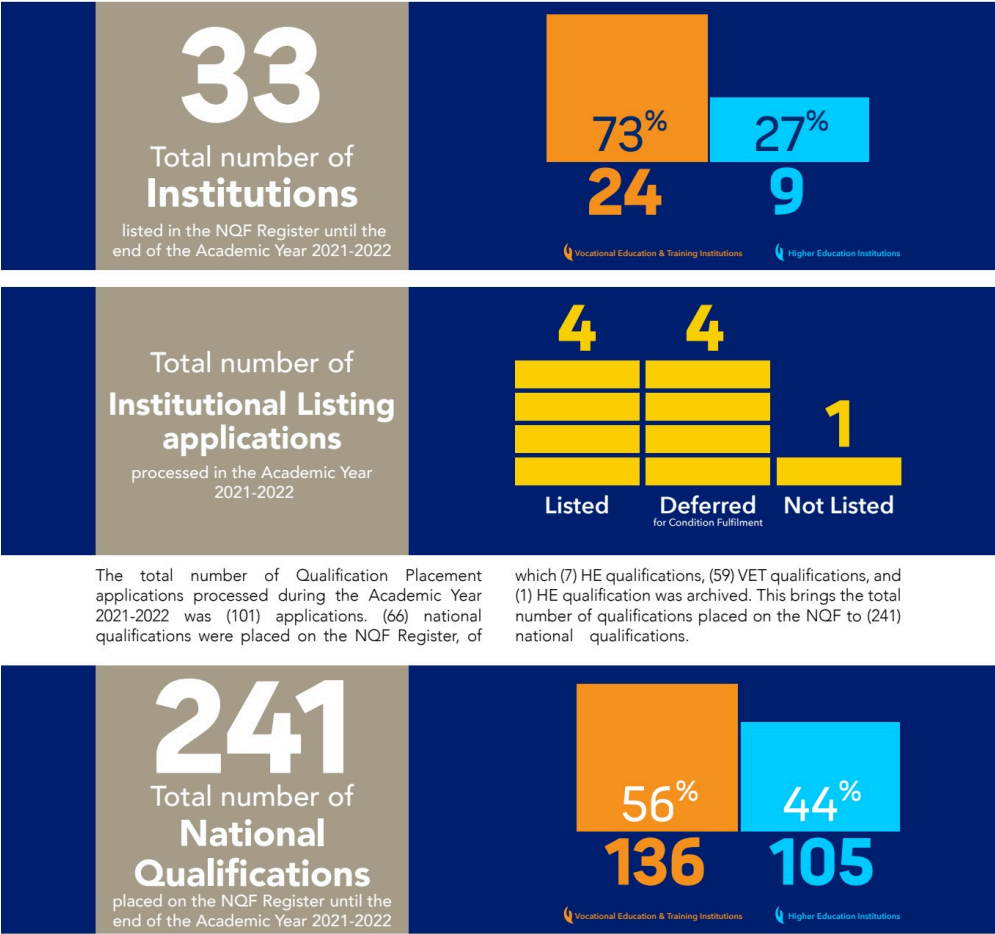
The Directorate of National Framework Operations (DFO) has witnessed a steady increase in the number of applications registered for the next Academic Year 2022-2023, as a result of strategic coordination with the relevant stakeholders. In addition, the DFO has improved the NQF Register and published the NQF Levels Comparison Guidelines on the BQA website. It has also expanded the experts’ database by giving them the opportunity to register via the BQA website and through cooperating with professional associations and societies.

Regarding the Directorate of National Examinations (DNE), the directorate embarked on updating the specifications for Grade 9 national examinations in the core subjects, including Arabic, English, Mathematics and Science, and for Grade 12 core subjects, including Arabic, English and Mathematical Skills, as well as preparing the examination papers for the pilot and live national examination, second-round national examinations and backup national examinations.

National Framework Operations

As per the NQF General Policies ratified by the Cabinet of Ministers, the NQF involves three main processes: Institutional Listing, National Qualification Placement and Alignment of Foreign Qualifications. During the Academic Year 2021-2022, the total number of Institutional Listing applications processed by the (DFO) was (9) applications. (3) Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions and (1) Higher Education (HE) institution has been listed in the NQF Register. This brings the total number of listed education and training institutions

to (33). While (4) Listing Institution applications were judged as 'Deferred for Condition Fulfilment', where a transitional period was granted to submit evidence that the institution meets the Institutional Listing standards, one Institutional Listing application was judged as 'Not Listed' as it does not meet the Institutional Listing standards, and the institution is entitled to resubmit the application at least six months from the date of receiving the final judgement.



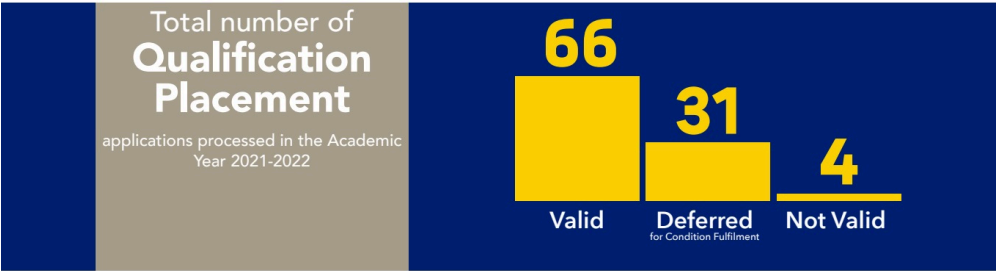
The total number of Qualification Placement applications processed during the Academic Year 2021-2022 was (101) applications. (66) national qualifications were placed on the NQF Register, of

which (7) HE qualifications, (59) VET qualifications, and (1) HE qualification was archived. This brings the total number of qualifications placed on the NQF to (241) national qualifications.



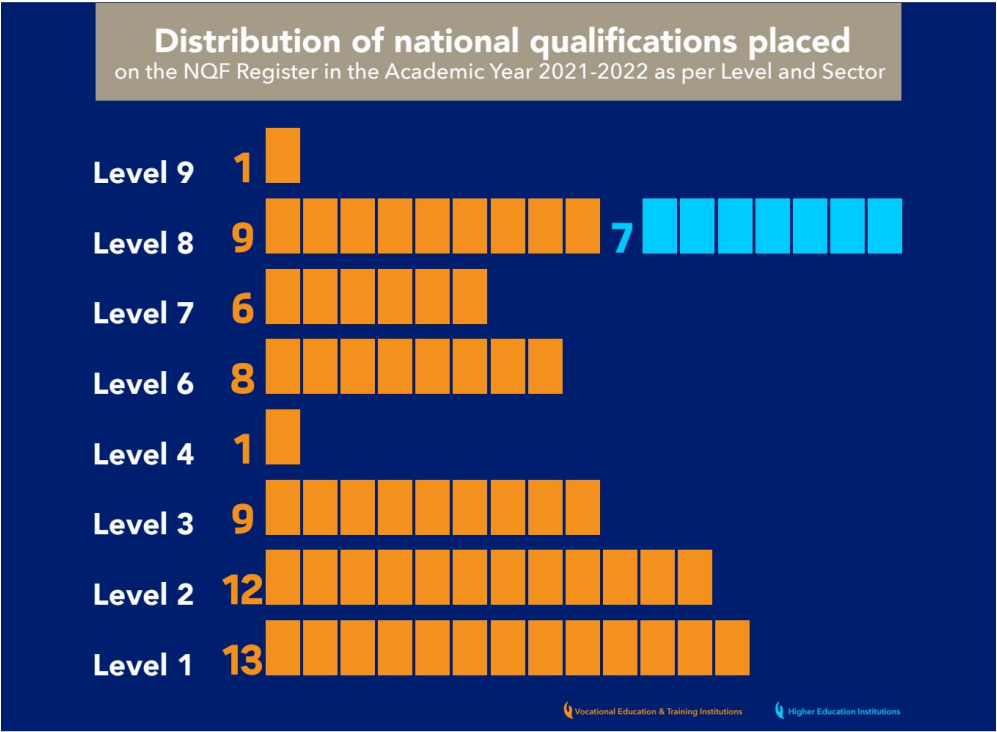
In addition, (31) applications were judged as 'Deferred for Condition Fulfilment,' and a transitional period was granted to fulfil the Validation standards. Furthermore, (4) applications were judged as 'Not Valid'; as the Validation requirements were not met.

'Not Valid' applications are entitled to be resubmitted at least six months from the date of receiving the final judgment.



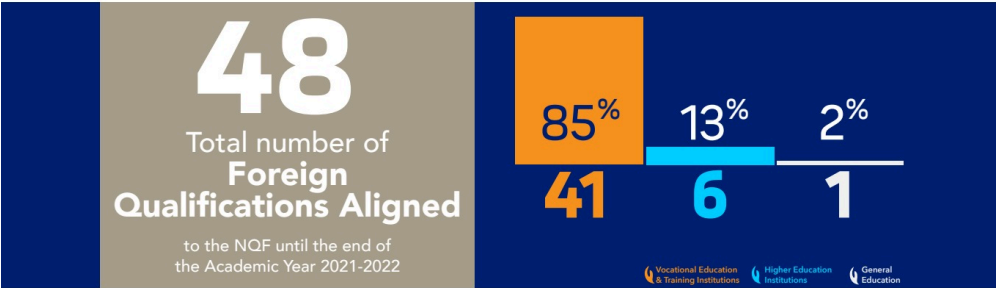
The following figure shows the distribution of qualifications placed on the NQF Register during the academic year 2021-2022. It is worth mentioning that (14) HE

qualifications were re-validated, of which (6) applications were carried out through joint visits with the DHR/BQA.

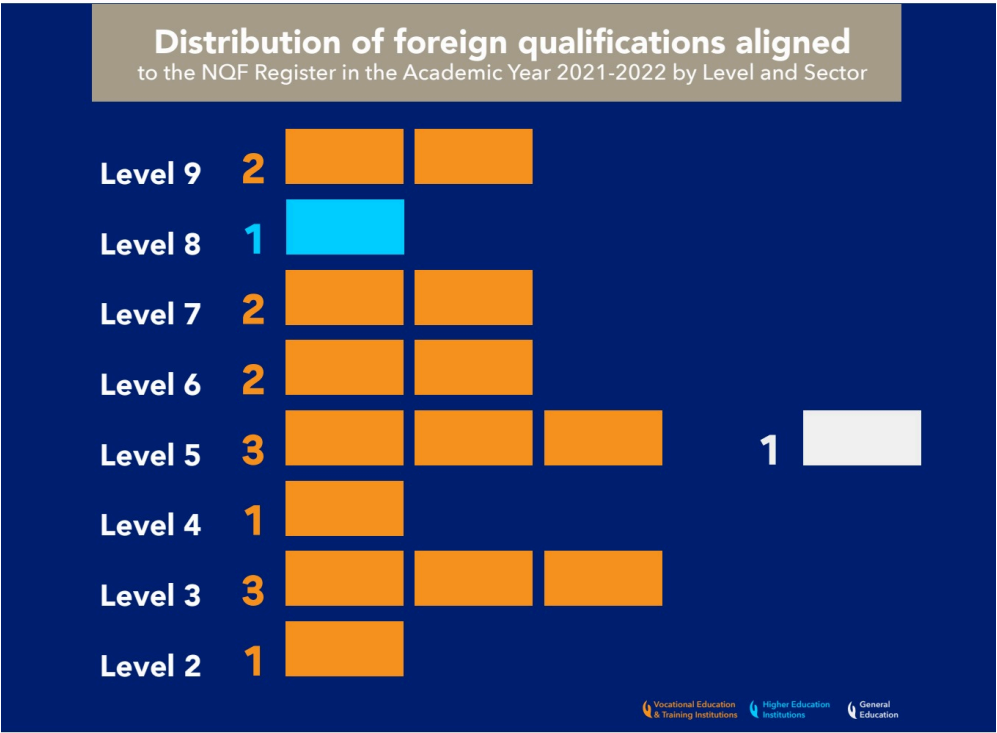


Furthermore, (16) Foreign Qualifications were aligned to the NQF. These include (1) from a HE institution, and (14) qualifications owned by foreign awarding bodies and are offered by VET institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in addition to the International Baccalaureate

Diploma Programme (IB) from the International Baccalaureate Organisation. In contrast, two foreign qualifications were archived, and this brings the total number of foreign qualifications aligned to the NQF to (48).



The following figure shows the distribution of foreign qualifications aligned to the NQF Register in the Academic Year 2021-2022 as per Level and Sector.



**During the Academic Year 2021-2022  
the following was achieved:**

- Increase in the number of Institutional Listing applications and alignment applications registered for the next academic year 2022-2023 as a result of strategic coordination with the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and the Labour Fund (Tamkeen).
- Coordination with the Higher Education Council (HEC) regarding the NQF processes and the institutional and programmatic accreditation process.
- Awarding bodies from outside the Kingdom of Bahrain were cooperative and willing to align their foreign qualifications, which are delivered in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- Holding discussion sessions with relevant stakeholders and drawing up an action plan to improve the NQF processes based on the collected feedback.
- Improving the NQF Register published on the BQA website by enhancing the search and comparison features.
- Publishing guidelines for comparing the NQF Levels with other international qualifications frameworks through the referencing of the NQF with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).
- Expanding the experts' database by giving the experts the opportunity to register themselves through the BQA website and by cooperating with professional associations and societies.
- Working on the digital transformation of the NQF processes to develop a comprehensive interactive online platform.
- Four awareness workshops were conducted on the NQF processes for several government authorities and education and training institutions, as well as Q&A sessions before submitting Institutional Listing, National Qualification Placement and Foreign Qualification Alignment applications.

**In addition,  
some areas for improvement  
were identified in relation to the NQF  
processes, including:**

- A need for the VET intuitions to review internal procedures in line with the NQF requirements, such as having learning outcomes, credit accumulation systems, progression and mobility across learning sectors and measuring the achievement of learning outcomes.
- Building the capacity of staff in some education and training institutions with regards to formulating the learning outcomes intended for the programme and its comprising units, as well as improving the mechanism for measuring the achievement of those outcomes.
- A commitment of the education and training institutions and awarding bodies to submit their Institutional Listing, National Qualification Placement and Alignment of Foreign Qualification applications as per the approved schedule.

## National Examinations

The Directorate of National Examinations (DNE) designs and implements national examinations based on good practices in order to measure students' attainment and stimulate them to stand out and compete positively, as well as to assess students' acquisition of the basic skills, knowledge and basic sciences that contribute in the knowledge-based economic society. Accordingly, the national examinations have been instrumental in improving the performance of the education system due to their validity and reliability in monitoring students' performance and analysing their results.

**The significance of national examinations is as follows:**


- Measuring students' performance in skills, competencies and knowledge.
- Contributing to the development of the education system in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- Providing information on the performance of students at the end of basic education (Grade 9) for further improvement.
- Providing information on the performance of students at the end of secondary education (Grade 12) for further improvement.

In implementing the Council of Ministers issued Resolution No. (2583-07) issued on 30 November 2020 stating: **'Approval of the Executive Plan for the transfer of supervision of Grades 9 and 12 examinations from the Ministry of Education to the Education and Training Quality Authority, which will be implemented gradually over the next three years as proposed in the memorandum (No. 003/036/2020) of His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Supreme Council for the Development of Education and Training, and to assign the concerned authorities to take the necessary legal and technical procedures,'** the BQA embarked on drawing up an operational plan for the execution of Grades 9 and 12 national examinations as follows:


### First: Grade 9

The national examinations will be carried out according to Grade 9 competencies of Cycle 3 of basic education. Students will take national examinations in four core subjects: Arabic, English, Mathematics and Science. The plan's implementation will be phased in as follows:

Grade 9

 2022/2023

Conduct of pilot national examinations in core subjects in the second semester

 2023/2024

Conduct of live national examinations in the second semester:

- replacing the MoE examinations
- representing 25% of the subject's grade

In the academic year 2022-2023, the Authority will carry out pilot national examinations in the four core subjects on a sample of students, and in the academic year 2023-2024, it will implement live national examinations to replace the MoE examinations at the end of the second semester. The BQA will continue to conduct the Grade 9 examinations in the following years. The percentage calculated for national examinations will also be increased after review based on the students' results.




Second: Grade 12

The national examinations will be implemented at the end of the secondary school according to Grades 11 & 12 competencies. Students will take national examinations in nine subjects divided as follows: (3) common subjects; (3) specialised subjects selected among (12) offered subjects; and (3) supporting subjects. The proposed subjects are:

- 1- Common subjects: Arabic, English, Mathematical Skills/Mathematics.
- 2- Specialised subjects: The students must choose 3 of the following subjects:
  - a. Scientific subjects: Chemistry, Biology, Physics.
  - b. Social subjects and humanities: History, Geography, Psychology.
  - c. Commercial subjects: Accounting, Economics, Finance.
  - d. Advanced subjects: Advanced Arabic, Advanced English, Advanced Mathematics.
- 3- Supporting subjects: to be determined in consultation with the Ministry of Education.


Grade 12 national examination plan will be implemented gradually as follows:

Grade 12

 2021/2022

Conduct of pilot national examinations

■ in Arabic, English and Mathematical skills

 2022/2023

Conduct of live national examinations

■ in Arabic, English and Mathematical Skills at the end of the second semester, representing 25% of the subject's mark

The Authority carried out pilot national examinations in the last quarter of 2022 in the three common subjects: Arabic, English and Mathematical Skills on a sample of students. In the academic year 2022-2023, the Authority will implement live national examinations in the aforesaid three common subjects for all students of general education, technical and vocational education and religious education to replace the MoE examinations. The Authority will continue to conduct the national examinations for the following years, whereas the Mathematical Skills examination will be replaced by the common Mathematics examination, in addition, 12 specialised subjects from which the student selects 3 subjects will be introduced. The percentage calculated for national examinations will be increased after review based on the students' results.

In preparation for the implementation of Grades 9 & 12, the Authority carried out the following

- 1

**National Examinations Specifications:**

Prepared Grade 9 National Examination specifications tables in the core subjects: Arabic, English, Mathematics and Science, and for Grade 12 in the three common subjects: Arabic, English and Mathematical Skills.
- 2

**National Examination Question Papers:**

Prepared pilot, live, re-sit and contingency national examination question papers.
- 3

**Coordination with the Ministry of Education:**

Cooperates with the Ministry of Education on the formation of joint working committees to discuss the NE operational plan. A set of meetings were held by the Joint Executive Committee and the Joint Coordinating Committee in order to reach agreement on the NE implementation plan.
- 4

**Analysis Mechanism:**

Cooperates with the University of Cambridge to develop an appropriate method for result analysis that will be adopted by the Directorate of National Examinations in analysing student results according to the criteria and requirements for the improvement of Bahrain's education system.
- 5

**Electronic System of National Examinations:**

Adopts an electronic system to automate national examination processes at all implementation phases from student data processing to the issuance of student results reports. Also, a supporting automated system will be adopted to correct multiple-choice questions.
- 6

**Media Plan:**

Develops a joint media plan with the Ministry of Education to motivate students to do their best in national examinations and raise the awareness of parents on the importance of national examinations.

# The Authority's Achievements



Forums

**The Directorate of National Examinations' Webinar:  
'Seamless Integration of Formative & Summative Assessment'**

The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), represented by the Directorate of National Examinations, held a webinar titled: 'Seamless Integration of Formative & Summative Assessment' via Zoom, on 25 November 2021, with the participation of more than 300 educators and related stakeholders in the education sector across the Kingdom of Bahrain. The webinar highlighted the role of assessments and integration between formative and summative assessments, from the perspective of current and future challenges; including the use of modern technologies to enhance the sustainable improvement of the performance of the education system in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

**The Directorate of National Framework Operations' Webinar:  
'NQF: Towards Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All'**

The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), represented by the Directorate of National Framework Operations (DFO), held their webinar under the theme: 'NQF: Towards Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All,' via Zoom platform, with more than 220 participants from the education, training and quality sector, and employers, on Thursday, 24 February 2022. The webinar aimed to highlight the importance of lifelong learning in light of current developments and to introduce good practices for the adoption of lifelong learning methods.

**The Directorates of Government and Private Schools Reviews' Webinar:  
'Critical Dialogue: The Challenges and Opportunities for Bridging the Students' Achievement Gap,'**

The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), represented by the Directorate of Government Schools Reviews & Directorate of Private Schools and Kindergarten Reviews (DSR) organised their webinar on Thursday, 3 February 2022, under the title 'Critical Dialogue: The Challenges and Opportunities for Bridging the Students' Achievement Gap,' through the Zoom platform, with more than 330 participants including specialists, stakeholders, educators and strategic partners.

The webinar touched on a number of themes relating to the long-term changes of COVID-19 pandemic, methods to bridge the students' achievement gap and what to do with it. It also discussed the positive and negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education process, its implications on students, teachers and education institutions, along with the challenges and opportunities to support students and teachers through and beyond the crisis.





**The Directorate of Higher Education Reviews' Webinar:**  
**'Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Past, Present, and Future'**

The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), represented by the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR), held a webinar on Thursday, 26 May 2022 entitled: 'Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Past, Present, and Future,' with the participation of more than (100) academics, specialists, educators and stakeholders in the field of quality assurance of higher education. Several themes on the role of HEIs leadership and management in the smooth transition to e-learning, among various modes of teaching and learning, as well as assessment and teaching challenges and students' participation and support, were addressed. The webinar also shed light on the current challenges and initiatives of internal quality assurance.



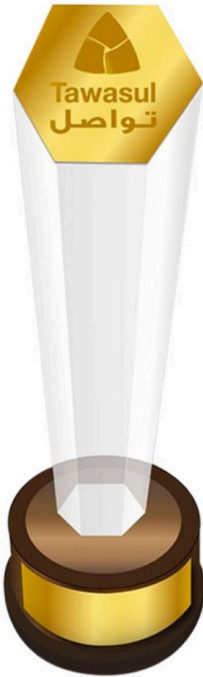
**The Directorate of Vocational Reviews' Webinar:**  
**'Promoting Vocational Education and Training for Sustainability: Opportunities & Challenges'**

The BQA, represented by the Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), held a webinar under the title: 'Promoting Vocational Education and Training for Sustainability: Opportunities & Challenges,' with the participation of nearly (80) participants from specialists, stakeholders and individuals interested in the education and training field in the Kingdom of Bahrain, on Thursday, 31 March 2022. The webinar addressed a number of key themes, including institutional experiences in achieving the principle of sustainability, through investing in human capital in education and training, and adapting the challenges of exceptional situations; to provide opportunities for development and sustainability.



Awards

The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA) achieved the Excellence Award in Communication with Customers for the year 2021, for the fourth time in a row, for being one of the best interactive government authorities in the national system of suggestions and complaints (Tawasul).



Awards



## Stakeholders Survey

Based on the Education and Training Quality Authority's (BQA) belief in the importance of transparent communication with its strategic partners, it surveyed the views of 34 education and training institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain, as well as the views of 30 BQA strategic partners, including students and parents to obtain their views on the development of its services.

The survey was carried out in several phases, where questionnaires and interviews were conducted to obtain the views of strategic partners benefiting from the services provided on institutional reviews and academic programme reviews, National Qualification Framework (NQF) operations, assessment and training operations and capacity-building.

The survey also included the evaluation of all online services provided through the BQA website and social media platforms, as well as multiple channels of communication such as 'gatherings, workshops and meetings', identifying the impact of these services on the education and training sectors in the Kingdom of Bahrain, their utilisation, and monitoring all challenges and proposals thereof.

All the above findings and responses have been analysed in a scientific manner in coordination with all the BQA directorates, whereby all the necessary areas for improvement have been identified, and appropriate plans and resources have been put forth to address and enhance them as well.



## Digital Transformation

**7 New online systems and platforms.**



**124+ E-Forms**



**5 Upgrades and improvements to existing systems.**



**95% Migration to AWS cloud computing.**



- Converting regular training into online training on the website of the NQF operations and schools.
- Adding the 'Chatbot' feature on the website to respond to the visitors' inquiries and guide them to the required information.
- Adding the 'expert' nomination form on the website to expand the database of experts engaged in the BQA operations.
- Automating the 'Request for Information' process from the Authority by activating a form on its website. The form is completed by researchers/information-seekers.
- Automating the nomination process of the 'BQA Ambassadors' project by adding the nomination form on the website and enabling the project owners to draw and analyse conclusions.
- Developing the 'Experts Register' system in which the information of the experts engaged in reviews, qualification placement and alignment of foreign qualifications processes and the National Examinations are maintained. Experts can also update their personal data to ensure its availability at the Authority.
- Updating the website to address the Authority's requirements.
- Implementing the internal asset tracking system, which facilitates asset management and tracking.
- Implementing the 'Board Meeting' system, which is used to arrange and follow up the Board resolutions and initiatives.
- Implementing the system for the contracts, memorandums of understanding and cooperation, in which all contracts and memorandums are maintained and followed up by the concerned staff to remind them of the renewal dates.
- Updating the internal follow-up procedure system.
- Updating the Authority's internal website (Intranet) to facilitate access to uploaded systems and forms.
- Implementing the internal meetings on the BQA Intranet system to organise follow-up of the Board resolutions and proceedings.
- Adopting the internal recruitment vacancy system, which allows staff to register for vacancies advertised within the Authority.
- Converting a set of forms into e-forms.
- Developing the 'Online Review Hub' platform to manage and monitor the reviews, and complete the automation of all questionnaires used in the reviews.



# Conclusion & Future Plans

The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), represented by the General Directorate of Education and Training Institutes Reviews (GDR), continued to exert many efforts to determine the status of education and training institutions through its four directorates; each within its sector.

The frameworks that have been put in place and functioned to measure the quality of provision of schools and VET institutions during exceptional circumstances have provided clear and accessible guidelines in terms of standards and criteria for all institutes. This is to ensure the preservation of the right of learners and to assess the quality of provision.

The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), represented by the Directorate of Government Schools Reviews (DGS) and the Directorate of Private Schools and Kindergartens Reviews (DPS), evaluated (55) government schools, and (15) private schools under the 'Exceptional Framework for Evaluating the Quality of School Practices During Exceptional Circumstances in the Kingdom of Bahrain' (Second Edition) in the academic year 2022-2021. The key positive areas of schools with 'Sufficient Response' indicate the awareness of school leaders and the use of the school's self-evaluation in drawing up the operational plans to cope with exceptional circumstances. A number of schools have also been able to employ educational and digital resources in learning situations, with students contributing positively to school life, through participation in non-academic activities and events. The most visible recommendations for improvement made by the evaluation teams focus on effective planning for school processes, monitoring teachers' performance development, effective employment of assessment mechanisms and use of their results. It is anticipated that the regular 'Schools Reviews Handbook' will be adopted after the recession of the pandemic, implementing a more effective review system based on the schools' last review results.

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR) also evaluated the provision of (13) VET institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain during exceptional circumstances under the 'Exceptional Framework for Evaluating the Quality of Vocational Education and Training Providers during Exceptional Circumstances' (Second Edition). The key positive areas of providers classified under 'Sufficient Response' category are trainers' adaptation of teaching and training methods and the use of diverse electronic learning platforms and appropriate learning resources in the learning process. A number of institutes still need to exert more substantial efforts to improve their level of performance and implement the recommendations of the evaluation teams. The DVR resumed the reviews of phase 4 of Cycle 4 Review Framework, whereby (4) VET institutes, all of which are licensed by the MLSD, were reviewed. This brings the total number of institutes reviewed during Cycle


4 of reviews to (27) institutes until the end of the academic year 2022-2021.

The Directorate of Higher Education Reviews (DHR) continued to conduct Cycle 2 Academic Programme Reviews, which commenced in September 2020, according to its approved plan, whereby the DHR reviewed a total of (63) academic programmes up until June 2022. Forty review reports of the (63) academic programmes were approved and published under Cycle 2 Academic Programme Reviews, with (39) of them having received an overall judgement of 'Confidence', thus, accounting to (%98) of the total (40) academic programmes. The Directorate also implemented the approved plan for the follow-up visits to the higher education institutions (HEIs), as well as the extension visits to the academic programmes having received a preliminary judgement of 'Limited Confidence'.

During the academic year 2022-2021, the BQA, represented by the General Directorate of National Qualifications Framework and National Examinations (GDQ), and through its two directorates, has made many efforts and moved forward with a number of lessons learned from the COVID19- pandemic. The Directorate of National Framework Operations (DFO) listed (4) institutions in the NQF Register, placed (66) national qualifications in the NQF Register and aligned (16) foreign qualifications to the NQF. This brings the total number in the National Qualifications Framework Register to (33) education and training institutions, (241) national qualifications and (48) foreign qualifications aligned to the NQF.

The Directorate of National Examinations (DNE) continued to take action towards achieving the executive plan for the transfer of supervision of Grades 9 and 12 examinations from the Ministry of Education to the Education and Training Quality Authority through the preparation of pilot and live examination plans for the academic years -2022 2023 and 2024-2023 and the following years, as well as working towards reviewing the examination specifications, preparing and printing the examination papers.

In addition to its core operations, the Education and Training Quality Authority will continue to implement its plans and initiatives aimed at raising the awareness of institutions and individuals of its operations, building the capacity of national competencies and promoting a culture of participation. This is aimed at promoting the internal improvement of institutions' performance, driving students and learners to do their best, and motivating them to stand out and compete positively. The Authority will pursue coordination with strategic partners to implement its operations and plans effectively and consistently. It will also continue to automate its core operations and expand the expert database, particularly with regard to the most demanding disciplines.



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