



Directorate of Vocational Reviews

Review Report

Resources Training Centre (RTC)

Sitra

Kingdom of Bahrain

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VO114-C3-R057

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Introduction

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over three days by a team of five 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 centre and met with learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

It is worth mentioning that this is the first review for this centre. This Report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what the provider should do to improve.

Grading scale

Outstanding	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Inadequate	4
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Table of review judgements awarded

Main Question	Judgement
Learners' achievement	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of programmes	Good (2)
Quality of support and guidance	Good (2)
Leadership, management and governance	Satisfactory (3)
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory (3)
Overall effectiveness	Satisfactory (3)

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

While quality of programmes and the support and guidance provided to learners are evaluated as good, learners' achievement, quality of training, and effectiveness of leadership and management are evaluated as satisfactory.

The majority of learners develop effective knowledge and vocational skills in the fields of insurance, health and safety, and leadership and management and make appropriate progress considering their prior attainment throughout their course of study and over modules in the long externally accredited courses. In these courses, which comprise two third the total enrolment, only around half of the learners pass their modules on their first attempt. However, a minority of learners in both the external and the local courses do not achieve as expected.

Resources Training Centre (RTC) trainers have theoretical and practical command of the fields in which they train. They use appropriate training methods and activities which engage the majority of learners. However, in some cases training is trainer-centred, giving few opportunities for learners to contribute to session. Although learners are well assessed in the externally accredited courses, the effectiveness of assessment in the local courses varies. Sessions are adequately managed and trainers use structured session plans, although these are not informed by learners' prior or continuous assessment.

The courses offered are based on an effective understanding of the market needs. RTC offers a range of externally accredited and local completion courses, which effectively meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. The externally accredited courses are well planned, structured, and regularly updated. while the local courses are appropriately structured, the outlines do not always indicate the assessment methods. Although the Centre has recently developed a programme review and monitoring policy, it is not yet implemented.

Learners receive effective support and guidance to help them achieve better outcomes, with cases of learners progressing in their career as a result of attending the courses. The learning environment is fit for purpose, with sufficient facilities, and learners and stakeholders have access to well-informed advice and guidance on programmes. Suitable communication is

maintained with stakeholders to keep them informed of learners' achievement, though the reports provided are not detailed enough to reflect learners' performance.

A SWOT analysis was carried out in 2013 and appropriately used to set the centre's strategic direction, though this is not done regularly. The strategic plan includes priority areas with general Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), but timescales are not specified and the centre has not developed a clear operational plan to monitor implementation and there are no clear accountabilities. Learners' achievement in the externally accredited courses is closely monitored and benchmarked to the international pass rates, while learners' achievement in the local courses is suitably monitored. Quality trainers are recruited and their performance is sufficiently monitored, though the recently introduced class observations system is not always critical.

Capacity to improve

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

RTC was licensed in 2014 and has carried out improvements to the provision that include obtaining more external accreditations in 2016, such as the Chartered Institute of Insurance (CII), Cisco Networking Academy, and the Institute of Supply Chain Management (IoSCM). The Centre has also developed a training management system (PowerVista) that records achievement data and produces useful reports, in addition to facilitating communication between learners and trainers, although it is not yet fully operational. There are plans to open another branch in the Seef areas and RTC management has clear strategic direction which is focused on expanding the range of externally accredited courses. This is based on an informed decision-making process, though the Centre has not developed a clear operational plan to ensure timely achievement of the set priorities. Appropriate quality assurance arrangements are in place, although the policies and procedures are only recently developed and not yet fully implemented. RTC has sufficient human and physical resources to enable improvements to be carried out; members of the management team are qualified and some have considerable relevant experience. In addition, the Centre utilises a pool of professional trainers. The number of enrolments has increased between 2014 and 2016, with 88 learners in 2014, 222 in 2015, 378 in 2016 and 13 in 2017 up to the date of the review. Repeat business is reasonable and comprises around one third of the total enrolment.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

RTC offer courses that provide the majority of learners with effective knowledge and vocational skills which are very useful to their workplaces. The externally accredited courses such as those of the British Safety Council (BSC), the Life Office Management Association (LOMA), and the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) have practical projects and work-based assignments where learners are provided with the opportunity to practice and implement what they learn in their workplace. These courses make 67% of the total enrolment, with around half of the learners passing their course modules on the first attempt and around 20% passing on the second or third attempt. These courses include LOMA which represents 46% of the total enrolment where the overall pass rate is 85%, and the International Diploma in Occupational Safety & Health (IDIPOSH) which makes 15% where the pass rate is 62%, BSC which makes 4% where the pass rate is 78% and ILM which represents only 2% where the pass rate is low at 46%. However, a minority of learners do not achieve as expected. The vast majority of the learners and stakeholders interviewed are highly satisfied with the acquired skills and the extent to which the courses impact their performance in the workplace.

In the local courses, which make around one third of the total enrolment, learners are awarded certificates based on a minimum attendance rate and their class participation. Although the Centre implements well-structured pre- and post-course assessments, the results of the post-course assessment are not considered when granting the certificate. Analysis of the post-course assessment results shows that a minority of learners score lower than the minimum pass mark set by the centre, which means that they are not achieving all course objectives. Records of assessments show that learners are making sufficient progress within their course of study and over modules in the long externally accredited courses, which consist of several modules, such as the LOMA course which comprises five modules and IDIPOSH which comprises three modules.

The majority of learners are attentive, self-motivated, willing to learn and interested in their subject. A considerable minority of learners reflect appropriately on their level of attainment when given the opportunity. However, they are not necessarily able to plan how to improve their performance or set themselves achievable targets. From the observed sessions and scrutiny of learners' work, most learners are able to work well independently and collaboratively.

The overall aggregated attendance rate is high, though the attendance in a minority of courses, particularly the insurance courses, is generally low and punctuality is not always recorded.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

RTC trainers are qualified and have theoretical and practical command of their specialisms. They provide accurate explanations of concepts and knowledgeable responses to learners' questions and use relevant vocational examples to link theory with practice. They also encourage learners to provide relevant examples from their own work experience. Trainers use lesson plans that have a clear structure and detailed learning outcomes and assessment criteria, although these plans are not informed by prior and continuous assessment of learners, and occasionally the formative assessment included in the plans are insufficiently detailed. Sessions are appropriately structured and managed, usually starting with a quick recapitulation of the previously covered material and sharing of the topics of the current session with learners.

An appropriate range of teaching methods and activities are used by the trainers, which succeed in engaging the majority of learners. These include lectures, questions and answers, debates and group discussions. However, part of the sessions tend to be more trainer-centred, with minimal engagement of learners. Accommodation of learners' individual needs is appropriate, as training targets the average level of learners who make up the majority. Nevertheless, trainers occasionally use challenging case studies and further questioning techniques to stimulate learners' higher order skills particularly, in the LOMA course modules.

In the externally accredited courses learners are properly assessed through a range of formative and summative assessments methods. These include pre- and post-course assessment, work-based assignments, mock examinations, practical work and revision tests which are clearly mapped to the course outcomes. On the other hand, although pre- and post-course assessments are used in the local courses, the rigour of these varies. Clear marking schemes and detailed assessment criteria are accurately implemented in the externally accredited courses, although in a few cases the correction is inconsistent. During sessions, trainers assess learners' understanding through a range of practical activities and open-ended questions and group work. Learners' performance records are maintained in most courses. Very useful instant verbal feedback is provided to learners during the sessions. However, records on formative assessments are insufficiently kept and written feedback on learners' work is insufficient.

The available learning resources are effectively used to promote learning, including data show projectors, flipcharts, learning games and textbooks and materials.

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

Grade: Good (2)

RTC offers a range of externally accredited courses and local completion courses in health and safety, insurance, leadership and management, information technology and soft skills which highly meet learners and stakeholders' needs. Courses are offered based on effective understanding of market needs, as RTC carries out a diverse range market surveys and utilises the outcomes to inform the provision. In addition the Centre has established an advisory committee for the insurance courses, which consists of professionals who provide recommendations on the training needs and requirements. For instance, RTC has become an accredited centre of (CII), offering more insurance courses based on the recommendations of the Insurance Advisory Committee. The Centre is also highly responsive to stakeholders' specific needs through tailoring specifically designed courses.

While the externally accredited courses are regularly updated and reviewed based on the awarding bodies' regulations, the centre solely depends on the trainers to design, update and review local courses. Recently, RTC developed a policy for reviewing and mentoring training programmes, but it is not yet implemented.

The externally accredited courses are well planned and structured, with clear detailed course descriptors that indicate the programme's summary, the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), and the teaching and assessment methods. However, the outlines of the locally designed courses do not always clearly indicate the assessment methods. Courses are well resourced to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. Learners enrolled in the externally accredited courses have access to a wide range of course materials, interactive assessments and relevant articles through the awarding bodies' portals. Lectures presentations are well designed and enriched with related YouTube links. Resources also include fit for purpose educational kits.

Courses are supported with adequate extracurricular activities which support and enhance the learning process. Most externally accredited courses include work-based assignments, while local courses are enriched by site visits as needed. Clear access and entry requirements are implemented, with prerequisites and the targeted audience being specified in the outlines for all courses. There is a clear and detailed admission and registration policy that considers learners with special needs.

How well are learners supported and guided?

Grade: Good (2)

Learners are provided with effective support and guidance which helps them achieve better outcomes. They receive a useful induction session presented by the administrative staff on the first day of their course. Aspects such as course schedule and time, attendance policy and the centre's rules and regulations are shared with learners during this session, as are the relevant forms that will be used within the courses. Each learner signs a learner's contract declaring that he/she is aware of all the above information. RTC staff and trainers are approachable, helpful and supportive. Learners and stakeholders have access to detailed course information through the website and brochures. Adequate advice is provided to learners on course selection when needed.

Learners enrolled in the externally accredited courses receive effective support and guidance, particularly in LOMA and IDEPOSH, through dedicated revision classes and a range of past examination papers and mock examinations; these reflect positively on their achievement. They are also provided with extra study time when needed during break time or at the end of a session for further discussions or to clarify any doubts. They receive extra materials and practical tests, which help them to be well prepared for final examinations. Learners also have access to an effective range of supportive tests and materials through the awarding bodies' portals, particularly in LOMA. Recently, RTC developed a support and guidance policy within the quality assurance manual, although it is not sufficiently detailed. Evidence provided indicates that a few learners have been able to improve their careers as a result of their studies at RTC.

Learners are kept aware of their performance through the continuous verbal feedback provided during sessions. The sponsoring companies are informed at course completion on their employees' attendance, marks scored and are provided sometimes with brief comments on each learner's overall performance through the learners' progress report. Occasionally, a course summary report is provided with clear statistical analysis about learners' satisfaction. However, these reports are not detailed enough to reflect on learners' performance, particularly the trainers' comments.

The Centre is very flexible with course arrangements to suit the needs of learners and stakeholders, and a few of the courses are conducted at well-equipped hospitality venues. The learning environment provided in the center is fit for purpose, with two classrooms and sufficient facilities. There is also a suitable open area for learners' refreshment and spacious reception areas where course information is displayed. The classrooms are well equipped with the necessary resources including a white-board, flip charts, data show projectors and

stationery. Although the awarding bodies have clear policy regarding learners with special needs, RTC lacks a policy that specifies the support provided to this category of learners even though the Centre has not encountered such cases so far.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

RTC's mission statement is sufficiently focused on the advantage of learners and employers. Relevant priorities are identified with general KPIs, however, the timescale is open and the Centre has not developed a clear operational plan to facilitate progress monitoring and set clear accountabilities. A SWOT analysis was conducted in 2013 and used to set the strategic direction of the Centre, however, this process is not regularly conducted to continuously adjust the strategic plan. The current organisation's structure is fit for purpose considering the type of courses offered and the number of enrolments, with roles and responsibilities being clearly identified. Nonetheless, some posts are not yet occupied and the management is planning to recruit more staff.

Achievement data is kept on all courses. Learners' achievements are suitably monitored in the local courses, and the results of the externally accredited courses are closely monitored and benchmarked against the international pass rates where available. Pass rate in LOMA are generally comparable to the international pass rates. In some cases these analyses are used to inform decision-making; for instance the management recruited a trainer specialising in finance to improve the average success rate for LOMA 307 (Business and Financial Concepts).

Appropriate arrangements are in place to quality assure the provision. Relevant assessments are used in the vast majority of courses and suitable quality assurance policies and procedures have recently been developed although not yet fully implemented. Moreover, the internal verification process is inconsistent particularly in the local courses. Learners' prior attainment is assessed in most courses and the outcomes are adequately used to customise course delivery.

Qualified and experienced trainers are recruited and deployed effectively, and are provided with sufficient induction in their roles and what is expected of them. Their performance is sufficiently monitored through informal visits and feedback from learners. In 2016, the Centre started to implement formal class observations, though these are only occasionally conducted and are not always informative or critical. Staff appraisal is in place and staff are provided with opportunities for training and development.

Learners' feedback about the provision is regularly sought, aggregated and analysed. Where needed, results are used to improve the offering. Employer's feedback is sufficiently gathered. RTC maintains partnerships with many external awarding bodies including BSC, LOMA and ILM. In addition, RTC recently added more partnerships including (CII), Cisco , IoSCM). Learners and employers are very satisfied with RTC overall.

The RTC premises are free of any obvious hazards and the essentials of health and safety are in place. The Centre has an appropriate health and safety policy and the majority of learners interviewed confirmed that they are provided with relevant instructions at the start of their course.

The provider's key strengths

- Trainers are qualified and have theoretical and practical command of the subjects they teach. They use effective assessment methods in the externally accredited courses.
- Courses are offered based on effective understanding of market needs.
- The externally accredited courses are well-structured, planned, resourced and regularly reviewed and updated.
- Learners are well supported and guided to achieve better outcomes.

Recommendations

In order to improve, RTC should:

- improve learners' achievement in all courses
- further diversify the training methods used to improve learners' engagement, and ensure that records of formative assessment are kept
- improve leadership and management by:
 - developing a clear operational plan that sets specific actions, KPIs, targets, timescales and accountabilities
 - improving quality assurance arrangements, to include improving the internal verification process and effective implementation of these policies and procedures
 - ensuring that class observations are regularly conducted and are informative, critical and identify areas for development.

Appendix

Description of the provision

Resources Training Centre (RTC) was established in May 2014. It is licensed by the Ministry of Labour to provide vocational training in the fields of insurance, leadership and management, health and safety, IT and logistics. The Center offers a range of externally accredited courses, including LOMA, CII, BSC, ILM, Cisco, and IoSCM courses.

RTC operates from a single centre located in Sitra. It is managed by Managing Director who is also the owner and a trainer as well. The Centre employs a human resources manager, who is also responsible of the posts of the assessment services, and a quality assurance manager. There is also a training programmes manager, a training project development officer and registrar and quality assurance officer who have recently been recruited. All staff are employed on a full time basis. RTC also employs a part time accountant and caretaker.

The Centre has enrolled 688 learners since it opened; 88 in 2014, 222 in 2015, 378 learners in 2016 and 13 learners in 2017 up to the date of this review. Externally accredited courses comprise 68% of the total enrolment, with local attendance courses comprising 32%.

46% of the total enrolment are enrolled in LOMA insurance courses, 19% in BSC health and safety courses where the IDPOSH makes 15% and other courses make 4%, 34% are in leadership and management courses where only 2% of the learners are enrolled in the ILM external course, and 1% are enrolled in logistics local courses.