



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

Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**Safety Training and Consultants Centre
Salmabad
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 8-10 June 2015

VO011-C3-R008

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Introduction

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA), conducted this review over three days, by a team of four reviewers. For this review, reviewers observed training sessions and other related activities, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and the materials provided by the provider and talked with learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

In the previous review, Safety Training and Consultants Centre (STC) overall effectiveness was judged as good, as were all aspects of the provision including its capacity to improve.

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	Good (2)
Effectiveness of teaching/training and assessment	Satisfactory (3)
Quality of programmes	Good (2)
Quality of support and guidance	Good (2)
Effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	Good (2)
Capacity to improve	Good (2)
Overall effectiveness	Good (2)

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: Good (2)

The overall effectiveness of STC is good, as are all aspects of its provision except the effectiveness of teaching/training and assessment which is satisfactory. Learners develop very useful, vocationally relevant practical skills across the well-structured range of the externally-accredited as well as the internally-designed courses that meet learners' and stakeholders' needs well. These courses are facilitated by qualified trainers who use useful vocationally-related real-life cases with a focus on hands-on practice through practical training depicting workplace scenarios. Learners are effectively engaged in practical exercises, while the training methods used during some of the theoretical parts of the sessions observed were less effective to motivating and engaging learners fully. Nevertheless, learners are effectively assessed through written and practical tests and provided with useful verbal feedback. Learners are well supported to achieve better and have good access to very informative website and helpful staff and trainers. Generally, the pass rates of the externally-accredited courses are better than or comparable with the international pass rates except two courses had low pass rates. The management has a clear vision focused on offering relevant courses that meet learners' and stakeholders' needs with emphasis on monitoring the set targets, including learners' achievement, through useful periodic internal and external audits.

Capacity to improve

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

Grade: Good (2)

STC has good capacity to improve. The management has a clear vision and implements measures to enhance the provision further by setting realistic targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are periodically monitored. Detailed quality management system is in place with continuous enhancement of forms and practices leading to ISO certification by end of 2015. Since the last review, the management introduced a range of improvements such as the shift to a new improved premises with appropriately equipped site for practical

work, the installation of smart boards in classrooms and the revitalizing of the centre's website, and the improved record keeping and analysis of data with approved plans to set-up an integrated data management system. STC has also expanded the range of its offerings including the externally-accredited courses and maintained strong links with awarding bodies and stakeholders. While the enrolment has declined, the centre retains good repeat business with a range of major employers. Although, the submitted SEF is not critical enough, transparent periodic internal and external audits and informative reports by stakeholders provide useful feedback to the management to inform improvements.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Good (2)

Learners' achievement at STC is good overall. The vast majority of learners gain good practical skills through the hands-on training, demonstrations, and work based assignments in the fields of health and safety. Learners, in general, gain useful knowledge and usually score higher grades on their practical tests. Reliable formative and summative assessments are used in the majority of courses accompanied by a practical test to measure learners' individual progress against course objectives. Overall, learners show good progress on these assessments. Most learners on different courses achieve the qualifications and course objectives in a timely manner. Employers and learners are keen to attain the required qualifications to meet safety regulations in the Kingdom of Bahrain. However, few learners do not do well on the externally-accredited courses.

More than two thirds of the learners are enrolled in local completion courses and around 27% in the externally-accredited courses. On the non-accredited local completion courses, the pass rate is very high reaching 100% for many courses which is acceptable in these types of courses. Similarly the pass rate, on the externally-accredited courses, such as the Emergency First Response (EFR), the National Safety Council (NSC) courses, the Chartered Institute for Environmental Health (CIEH) level two and three, and the Highfield Awarding Body For Compliance (HABC) courses are above or comparable with the international pass rates. However, the pass rates on CIEH level 4 and the National Board Examination for Occupational Health and Safety (NEBOSH) Environmental Management and International General Certificate for 2013, which represent less than 3% from the total enrolment, were low.

The majority of learners are attentive during sessions and perform well during group tasks and individually, on courses such as confined space, firefighting and first aid. Nevertheless,

few learners do not reflect critically on their learning during sessions. STC has a clear policy on attendance and punctuality that is communicated to learners and stakeholders and reliable records are always kept. Generally, learners attend regularly and the overall attendance rate is high at 98% to 100 % for the last three years which is expected for short and very short courses.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

STC trainers have relevant theoretical and practical command of their vocational specialisms and a number of them are members of reputed international professional bodies. They are knowledgeable, provide accurate explanations, respond appropriately to learners' questions and use useful vocationally-related examples and real-life cases. The majority of observed sessions are timely managed and usually start with appropriate recapitulation and sharing course objectives. Trainers use standardised and detailed lesson plans which have clear course objectives. Generally, the outcomes of the assessments are used in adjusting the delivery of the sessions and the course content. Trainers sufficiently accommodate the needs of individual learners during sessions by simplifying the language used in the delivery of the courses, including the use of bi-language, where required, as the majority of learners have lower level skills and English language standards. Generally, trainers use suitable training methods such as presentations, group discussion, videos and demonstrations as well as adequate number of practical activities and exercises to attract and engage learners. However, in a minority of the sessions observed, the training methods were insufficient to motivate and engage learners, particularly in the theoretical aspects of the course.

It is evident from the observed sessions that trainers normally check individual learners' understanding through relevant in-class activities and follow-up questions. Learners are also assessed through a post-course test, a practical assessment, work-based assignment and externally-accredited final examinations, where applicable. These assessments measure learners' individual attainment well, and are accurately marked with clear rubrics. However, in a few cases, the rubric for the practical assessment is insufficiently detailed.

Trainers always maintain records on learners' performance. Learners are provided with suitable feedback, however, in a few courses, the written feedback is not constructive enough and do not precisely indicate where learners can improve further. The available learning resources and materials are appropriately utilised to facilitate the delivery of the sessions. This includes the proper use of data show, clear and informative PowerPoint

presentations, whiteboards, flipcharts, learning manuals, videos, activity papers and equipment such as those for firefighting, first aid and confined space. Trainers occasionally use training methods that encourage self-learning practice to enhance learners' higher order and critical thinking through follow-up challenging questions and further exposure to real cases and scenarios.

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

Grade: Good (2)

STC offers a good range of health, safety, and environmental courses in response to the demand and needs of its' stakeholders. The externally-accredited courses are offered in affiliation with a number of recognised international certification bodies such as NEBOSH, HABC, CIEH, EFR and NSC. These, and a wide range of local completion courses on offer, highly meet learners' needs and stakeholders' requirements. Furthermore, courses are effectively customised to meet specific needs of stakeholders.

STC course offerings are based on useful analysis and understanding of market needs. The centre appropriately uses the periodic reports produced by Ministry of Labour on type and number of accidents, input received from current learners and stakeholders, response to social media and website hits to inform the range of courses to be offered. Courses are well-planned and structured with clear and informative course outlines. High quality training manuals from the awarding bodies are used, which are well-supported by illustrations, examples, and practical exercises and activities. The locally designed PowerPoint slides are detailed and supplemented with cases relevant to Bahrain market needs. Courses are well-resourced to meet learners' and stakeholders' needs. A good range of relevant and useful extra-curricular activities are provided to learners to enrich their learning experience and enhance the courses, such activities include work-based and on-site activities as the case for confined space and fire prevention courses.

The externally-accredited courses are reviewed and updated on a regular basis as per the international partners' requirements and standards. The locally-designed courses are reviewed and updated periodically in terms of course content, assessment methods and slides. The centre has recently introduced a policy and procedures to design, update and review the courses. The centre has clear access and entry-level requirements for courses. The targeted audience for all courses are clearly specified, and where needed, the course content and language are adjusted to meet the specific needs of learners and stakeholders. Additionally, the level of the pre-requisite requirements is checked thoroughly for the confined space courses where a form is used and signed by employers to ensure that the enrolled learners are fit for such courses.

How well learners are supported and guided?

Grade: Good (2)

STC has good support mechanisms. A clear policy on support and equality is in place and accessible to all learners. Learners are provided with a useful learner's guide that has relevant policies and regulations, expected standards of learners' conduct during a course along with staff contact details. This manual is available on STC's informative website and to all learners during induction. Moreover, the institute shares with learners and employers information about programmes on offer and their progression, assessments, examinations, and the associated certification. The administrative staff are highly responsive and always follow-up on absenteeism and any emerging requirements. Trainers and support staff are accessible via emails and social media; they offer learners sound support and advice regarding career progression and available opportunities in the fields of health and safety. They also share with learners useful information about examinations' regulations and techniques and when needed communicate with the awarding bodies in case learners request to postpone examinations or enquire about their certification.

Furthermore, STC provides learners with translated course material, revision classes, access to relevant Ministry of Labour's health and safety regulations and useful current accident reports, support reading material, and revision booklets. Learners and stakeholders have access to well-informed advice and guidance about programmes' selection and receive course outlines in advance. In addition, STC shares with employers and relevant stakeholders learners' progress report at the end of each course, and individual learners are always made aware of their progress, achieved grades and their licensing status, where applicable.

The centre is well equipped with relevant learning resources and equipment to facilitate the smooth delivery of the offered courses, including a suitable rented site to run practical scenarios for firefighting and confined space courses. STC is highly flexible to deliver courses to suit the convenience of learners and stakeholders including choice of venue, date, timing, and delivery language. Furthermore, the registration staff obtain information about learners' background, experience, physical fitness, and the associated prerequisites specified by the awarding bodies as required. Moreover, a policy is in place on supporting learners with special needs, where needed.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: Good (2)

STC has vision, and mission statements that are clearly focused on offering continually developed courses delivered by competent professional trainers that meet learners' and stakeholders' needs. The strategic plan, although brief, sets appropriate directions for developing the quality of the provision and contains relevant objectives with specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for promoting higher learners' achievement and meeting their needs. The strategic objectives are monitored periodically through a useful operational plan and internal audits.

A fit for purpose organizational structure is in place with an internal quality function. Roles are clearly identified in detailed job descriptions and regular meetings are held with administrative staff and occasionally with trainers. STC has well defined recruitment procedure, where qualified trainers with relevant qualifications and experience are recruited, provided with guidance on their roles and appropriately deployed. Trainers' performance is monitored through periodic classroom observations on a suitable form. In 2015, the form has been improved with more critical ratings and useful comments that are shared with the trainers for follow-up. Administrative staff have detailed appraisals and provided with a range of training opportunities.

Detailed Quality Management System (QMS) manual is in place with useful procedures, processes flowcharts and forms. The majority of the forms are in use and two useful internal audits have been carried out in the last two years. A number of additional procedures have been recently introduced. The institute and a number of its programmes are occasionally audited through visits by external awarding bodies such as City and Guilds, Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) and NEBOSH and provided with useful written feedback. In addition, one frequently delivered course was also externally audited by a major employer and produced a detailed and useful report.

Learners' achievement is always recorded in a central system and regularly monitored by the management. However, the verification of these records is sometimes inconsistent. Learners feedback is systematically collected after each course and their satisfaction ratings are aggregated and useful charts produced. Feedback from employers is regularly sought.

While some actions are immediately taken based on feedback, learners' comments are not aggregated for analysis. STC maintains effective links with a number of awarding bodies and major stakeholders including professional societies.

The premises is free from obvious risks. Appropriate health and safety policy and procedures together with serviced equipment and trained first aiders are available. Staff and learners receive relevant health and safety guidance and evacuation drill is normally conducted. While occasional useful risk assessment is carried out, this is not well extended to cover the practical work. The submitted SEF is sufficiently informative with relevant range of evidence. However, the grades are overestimated.

The provider's key strengths

- The very useful vocationally-related practical skills developed by learners.
- The range of formative, practical and summative assessments used to evaluate learners' understanding.
- Well-structured range of externally-accredited and internally-designed courses that are enriched with vocationally-related examples and real-life cases.
- Access to effective support and guidance provided to learners.
- Effective links maintained with external bodies and stakeholders.

Recommendations

In order to improve, STC should:

- improve the effectiveness of teaching and training by:
 - developing more effective teaching methods to engage and motivate learners, particularly for the theoretical parts of the sessions
 - further addressing individual learners' needs and providing them with more constructive written feedback.
- enhance the effectiveness of management further by fully implementing the internal quality assurance system, particularly with respect to verification and monitoring of trainers' performance.

Appendix

Description of the provision

The Safety Training and Consultants Centre (STC) was established in 2000 in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The centre is licensed by the Ministry of Labour (MoL) to provide vocational training in a range of health, safety and environmental courses such as confined space entrant and rescue plan, first aid, general health and safety, fire prevention, food safety, defensive driving, and environmental management. The majority of STC courses are short and non-accredited. STC also offers a range of courses leading to certifications from international organizations such as the National Board Examination for Occupational Health and Safety (NEBOSH), Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance (HABC), the Chartered Institute for Environmental Health (CIEH-UK), the Emergency First Response (EFR) and the National Safety Council (NSC).

Since the last review conducted in January 2012, STC has enrolled 3347 learners; 1306 in 2012, 1021 in 2013, 770 in 2014 and 250 in 2015 up to the date of this review. Most of them are sponsored by their employers or Tamkeen. External courses make 27.4% of the total enrolment, and the remaining 67% are local completion with a small percentage of 5.4% as attendance.

STC is located in Salemabad, where it delivers some of its courses, but the majority of courses are either conducted at employers' premises, a designated site for practical training or at suitable hospitality venues. The centre is managed by a full time general director, who is also the owner and the main trainer and an administration and quality management system (QMS) manager. The centre employs a sales and marketing executive, a training coordinator assistant, a customer care staff, a receptionist, a QMS auditor trainee, an accountant and a driver on full-time basis. The centre has a pool of local and international trainers who work on a part-time basis as and when needed.