



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

Directorate of Vocational Reviews Review Report

**Training Plus Institute
Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 03-06 October 2016

VO035-C3-R038

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Introduction

The Directorate of Vocational Reviews (DVR), which is a part of the Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA), conducted this review over four days by a team of four reviewers. 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 materials provided by the provider and talked with learners, employers, trainers, management and support staff.

In the previous review Training Plus Institute's overall effectiveness was judged as satisfactory, along with learners achievement, effectiveness of teaching and/or training in promoting learning, support and guidance provided to learners to achieve better outcomes and effectiveness of leadership and management. Quality of the programmes in meeting the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders was graded as good.

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)
Quality of teaching / training and assessment	Good (2)
Quality of programmes	Good (2)
Quality of support and guidance	Good (2)
Leadership, management and governance	Satisfactory (3)
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 Training Plus Institute (TPI) is judged as good, as are all other aspects of its provision except the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance which is judged as satisfactory.

Most TPI learners are motivated and achieve the qualifications they aim for and/or the courses' intended learning outcomes (ILO) in a timely manner. Around 67% of learners enrolled in the externally accredited programmes sit for the Awarding body examination, with most being successful at the first attempt. In the majority of cases success rates are comparable to international success rates. On Autodesk Revit, AutoCAD, Cisco Certified Network Associate Routing & Switching (CCNA) and Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP) routing and switching certification, success rates are higher than international rates. Most learners progress well throughout their course compared to their starting point. Trainers are qualified and have relevant theoretical background and practical experience in the field of information and communications technology (ICT). Trainers draw on their specialist subject knowledge and experience to respond to learners' inquires and provide related vocational and work-related examples to illustrate concepts. They use well-structured daily lesson plans that are adjusted effectively to adapt and respond to learners' needs relating to the outcomes of both on-going assessment and new requirements. A relevant and effective range of assessments are used to evaluate learners' progress and measure achievement of learning outcomes throughout the course. Learners are provided with constructive verbal feedback during their work along with a useful individual 'Performance Evaluation Report'. Nevertheless, the section on that report advising how to improve further is minimal.

Courses are based on an effective understanding of market needs. The vast majority are externally-accredited, being reviewed and updated by the awarding bodies following new technology releases. Assessment is mapped accurately to relevant ILOs. Learners and stakeholders are provided with initial guidance on course choice and advice on higher level courses through various communication channels. Trainers and staff are approachable and supportive during and after a course. TPI provides technical support and advice to learners in their personal and work-related issues. Learners are also provided with access to an online learning resource and the opportunity to repeat courses within six months from the

commencement date of a course. The vast majority of learners are sponsored through Tamkeen schemes and are regularly kept aware of their performance. TPI has a strategy that focuses on business positioning and improvement of learner's achievements.

Although the management develops action plans with appropriate timeframes, with allocated resources and accountability for each objective, success indicators are not identified well. In addition, the process of measuring and monitoring performance targets and achievement of plans are not sufficiently rigorous. On the other hand, the management has an appropriate approach to quality management with a number of policies and procedures having been developed and utilised. However, while operational procedures are followed to ensure uniformity, updates are not always consistent in maintaining stability of performance. Learners' achievement is closely monitored, Data is kept and analysed to monitor trends over time and inform decision-making. TPI has an appropriate performance management system and trainers' performance is monitored through peer class observation. Even though outcomes of these observations are shared with trainers, they are not always critical and improvement actions are not always followed through to enhance performance further.

Capacity to improve

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

Grade: Good (2)

TPI's capacity to improve is good overall. The management has addressed the last review's recommendations and are currently in the process of implementing a new contingent strategic plan for 2016. This strategy focuses on improving business and expanding the range of the courses offered. Current market risks and opportunities are identified through comprehensive SWOT and PISTEL analyses, and smart targets are set with clear timelines. The provider has maintained the current international affiliations status and has expanded partnership with international awarding bodies such as London Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) and Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH). TPI is in the process of obtaining ISO 9001:2008. The management monitors learners' achievements and success rates on the local and the externally-accredited courses and results are in line with international success rates. Enrolment improved in 2015 but dropped in 2016 due to market conditions. TPI has adequate repeat business and sufficient human and physical resources to support operations. The institute plans to open a second branch and more staff are being recruited. TPI has recently launched their new website with new improved features that include personal log option and useful links. Lastly, TPI has migrated to a new customised internal IT system that serves all departments and can generate useful reports at different levels.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: Good (2)

TPI learners enrolled in the different professional certificates such as CISCO, AutoCAD and Microsoft are sponsored practitioners or students of IT or Engineering. They gain hands-on experience and standard market skills. In addition, most TPI learners' achieve the qualifications they aim for and/or their course's intended learning outcomes (ILO) in a timely manner. All learners take local examinations, in which the majority succeed and achieve well. Around 67% of the enrolled learners sit for the International Examination, in which most succeed at the first attempt. Success rates are comparable in the majority of cases to international success rates. On Revit, AutoCAD, CCNA and CCNP success rates are higher than international rates.

Most learners progress well throughout courses in comparison to their starting point. Learners enrolled in Microsoft and CISCO professional courses represent 42% of total enrolment, and they progress well at module level and in few cases progress even further to obtain higher level certification, for example progressing from Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate (MCSA) to Microsoft Certified Solutions Expert (MCSE). Most learners are self-motivated and have a positive attitude towards their learning. They are generally able to reflect on their level of attainment and take responsibility for their own learning by requesting assistance and extra support sessions.

TPI learners on different courses are able to work well both independently well and collaboratively when given the opportunity on different assignments and projects. Attendance is high for the last two years, and absences is being monitored through follow-up calls. Learners who miss classes are compensated with extra hours or watching recorded videos in the resources laboratory. Although punctuality is not recorded, it was not an issue during the classes observed.

The quality of provision

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

Grade: Good (2)

The effectiveness of training and assessment in promoting learning at TPI is good overall. Trainers are qualified and have relevant theoretical knowledge and practical experience in the

field of ICT. Trainers draw on their specialist subject knowledge and experience to respond professionally to learners' inquiries. They also use a range of relevant vocational and work-related examples to illustrate concepts. Trainers motivate and engage learners throughout sessions through a variety of training methods such as demonstrations, direct questioning, group discussions and brainstorming.

TPI trainers use well-structured daily lesson plans that are derived from the vendors' specific course plans. These are adapted effectively to address the outcomes of learners' on-going assessments and requirements. The lesson plans also map out assessment tasks and how they align with the ILO to measure learners' achievements. Sessions are well-managed and a daily ILO is shared, with useful summary of the session's coverage in majority of cases. A range of summative and formative assessment methods is constantly used to assess learners' understanding and measure the achievement of learning outcomes throughout the course. During the sessions trainers frequently assess learners' understanding, using hands-on guided and independent practical activities and different questioning techniques. Learners are also assessed through pre- and post-course tests, practical tests, and externally-accredited online examinations. Records of learners' performances throughout the course are maintained. Learners are provided with constructive yet mostly verbal feedback on their work in.

Upon course completion, learners are provided with an individual 'Performance Evaluation Report'. However, the section on how to improve further in that report is minimal. Trainers effectively address learners' varying needs and capabilities by assigning extended activities to advanced learners while providing more support and explanation to the less competent learners. The trainers also stimulate learners' higher order thinking skills by using relevant scenarios, further questioning and pursuing more elaboration during discussions. To enrich the learning experience and extend learners' interest, trainers utilise the available learning resources and materials effectively.

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

Grade: Good (2)

The quality of programmes is good overall. The courses offered are based on realistic understanding of market needs determined through a survey of local businesses, the provider's marketing plan, national studies, networking with stakeholders and guidance from the TPI Board of Directors. The vast majority of the courses offered are externally accredited, being reviewed and updated by the awarding bodies following new technology releases. TPI follows a set of procedures for course approval, linked to an appropriate procedure for

designing customised courses that include both theoretical and practical modes of delivery and assessment.

Courses on offer have clearly structured and detailed plans that follow the awarding bodies' requirements. Assessments cover the ILO and include pre-and end-course tests, guided and independent activities, and the final online test from the vendor. Courses are resourced well to meet learners' and stakeholders' needs. Course-books are authentic and learning resources are updated to meet the requirements of the vendor.

The provider has a clear access and entry policy and procedure. Entry requirements and prerequisites for all courses are clearly identified in all module plans. Learners' entry levels for the majority of courses is measured through pre-training questionnaire forms which captures information about learners' background, qualifications, occupation and work experience. TPI provides a range of enrichment activities, including access to the resource laboratory where learners can get a range of external resources in the areas of IT and design.

How well are learners supported and guided?

Grade: Good (2)

Learners at TPI are well supported and guided throughout their learning experience. They and stakeholders are provided with initial guidance on course choices, including informed advice on higher level courses, through various communication channels. These include the Institute's informative website, social media accounts and direct contact with the sales and marketing team. Prior to the commencement of a course, learners receive detailed course outlines and plans that provide them with relevant information about the course. They are also formally inducted on the first day of their course to familiarise them with aspects related to their learning. Trainers and staff are approachable and supportive during and after a course. They provide technical support and advice to learners on their work-related issues. One-on-one and small group sessions are provided to learners who miss a session or are in need of further support to improve their achievements. Learners are provided with access to an online learning resources laboratory for additional tutorials, references and mock examinations to prepare them well for their external online examinations. They are also provided with the opportunity to repeat their course within six months from the starting day of the course if needed.

The arrangements for course delivery and scheduling are highly flexible to suit the needs of learners and stakeholders, for instance changing the training venue or adjusting the duration and timing of the course. The vast majority of learners are sponsored through Tamkeen

schemes and are regularly updated on their performance. An individual 'Performance Evaluation Report' is issued on course completion that includes information on learner's attendance, the results of the pre- and post-course assessments, and recommendations for future courses. However, communications with employers to inform them about learners' performance and achievement throughout a course are not sufficiently structured.

TPI's learning environment is fit for purpose, with sufficient learning resources and facilities. Computer laboratories are well-equipped with up-to-date software and hardware to meet course-specific requirements.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: Satisfactory (3)

The effectiveness of leadership, management and governance in raising achievement and improving the quality of the provision is satisfactory overall. TPI has a clear vision, mission and set of values that are integrated into the strategic planning. The management use the outcomes of a SWOT analysis to develop its strategic plan and the Board of Directors contributes to strategic direction. The strategy focuses on business positioning and improvement of learners' achievements. The management develops action plans with appropriate timeframes, allocated resources and accountability for each objective. However, success indicators are not identified well and the process of measuring and monitoring performance targets and achievement of plans are not sufficiently rigorous. During management meetings, team members discuss any issues that arise, alongside current market conditions that affect daily operations at different levels. The management has an appropriate approach to quality management, with a number of relevant policies and procedures having been developed and utilised. However, while operational procedures are followed to ensure uniformity, updates are not always consistent in maintaining stability of performance. Procedures related to verification are appropriate but, though the SEF submitted by TPI is informative, grades are overestimated. Learners' prior attainment in all courses is sufficiently assessed and used effectively and their achievement is closely monitored. Data is kept and analysed to monitor trends over time and to inform decision making regarding awarding bodies' affiliations and learners placement.

TPI has an appropriate performance management system that facilitates staff appraisal and target-setting. Trainers' performance is suitably monitored through peer class observation. However, even though the outcomes of these observations are shared with trainers they are not always critical and improvement actions are not always followed through to enhance

performance further. TPI has a structured employment process that ensures that recruits have appropriate talents, so trainers have relevant experience and staff are qualified. Each is inducted on the training policy and job expectations. Training opportunities are provided for the purposes of capacity building and upgrading skills and certifications.

Considering the type of courses on offer and the enrolment numbers, TPI's current functional organisational structure is sufficient, with clear job descriptions and well defined responsibilities. The premises are free from obvious hazards and are well maintained. Health and safety procedures are shared with learners and staff. Although risk assessment is not carried out, preventive maintenance is regular.

TPI's management seek learners' feedback, which is aggregated and analysed regularly with comments being addressed. Stakeholders' feedback is sought to an appropriate degree to inform course offerings and build customer relations.

The provider's key strengths

- Most learners achieve the qualifications and/or the course learning outcomes they aim for, in a timely manner.
- Certified trainers are knowledgeable, with relevant experience and command of their vocational specialisms; they provide a range of useful vocational and work-related examples.
- Trainers use the vendor's course-specific plans which are translated into structured daily lesson plans. These are adjusted as required by the outcomes of learners' assessments throughout the course.
- TPI courses are structured and planned as per the awarding bodies' requirements. Outlines are detailed and assessments are mapped accurately to relevant ILOs.

Recommendations

In order to improve, TPI should:

- ensure that employers are informed about their learners' performance and that feedback on the courses is sought regularly and effectively
- improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that class observations are critical and outcomes are followed through to enhance performance
 - implementing a comprehensive quality assurance system that allows for suitable monitoring and evaluation practices that contributes to the continuous improvement of the provision.

Appendix

Description of the Institute

Training Plus Institute (TPI) was founded in December 1996 under the name of New Horizons, as a franchisee of New Horizons Computer Learning Centre of California, United States. Since April 2012, TPI has become an independent Bahraini company that operates from its centre in Manama. It is licensed by the Ministry of Labour and offers a range of externally accredited courses along with locally designed ones. Courses on offer are mainly in information technology, such as networking, graphics design, programming, databases and development. Soft skills, health and safety (from IOSH) and general English by London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) are also offered. The Institute is a Microsoft approved silver partner, an Autodesk authorised training and certification centre, a CISCO learning partner associate, a CompTIA partner and Adobe certified centre.

TPI is also an authorized Prometric testing centre. Since the last review, conducted in December 2013, TPI has enrolled a total of 471 learners; 201 in 2014, 234 in 2016 and 36 in 2016 up to the date of the review. Most learners are sponsored through Tamkeen schemes.

TPI has one centre located in Manama, managed by a part-time general manager who reports to a Board of Directors, along with an operational, sales and training managers. The Institute employs a group of full time and a pool of part time trainers, technicians and administrators.