



هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب  
Education & Training Quality Authority  
KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN مملكة البحرين

# ANNUAL REPORT

EMPOWERING PROGRESS  
INSPIRING CHANGE

2022

# TABLE OF CONTENT

**03**

Chairman's  
Message

**04**

Chief Executive  
Officer's Message

**05**

BQA Overview

**07**

Board of Directors

**08**

Senior Management

**09**

Our Team

**10**

Annual Strategy  
Review

**16**

A Year at A Glance

**17**

BQA Operations

**19**

Schools,  
Kindergartens and  
Special Education  
Institutions

**21**

Vocational Education  
and Training  
Institutions

**22**

Higher Education  
Institutions

**23**

National  
Examinations

**26**

National  
Qualifications  
Framework

**29**

Corporate Services

**33**

Local and  
International  
Engagements



## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA) has demonstrated exemplary leadership in 2024, diligently translating strategic vision into tangible outcomes that support the Kingdom of Bahrain's aspirations for a world-class education and training system, under the vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the directives of the government, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

This year, BQA carried out 286 institutional reviews and National Qualifications Framework (NQF) operations, launched refreshed review frameworks across schools, vocational training, and higher education, and expanded quality assurance into early childhood and special education needs sectors for the first time. These milestones reflect the Authority's ability to innovate, adapt, and elevate standards nationally and internationally.

The Board is proud of the Authority's role in successfully integrating BQA's review outcomes across regulatory processes, strengthening the link between quality assurance and licensing, accreditation, and funding decisions in education and training.

Looking ahead, the Board's vision remains focused on building robust, trusted, and sustainable education and training systems that serve the Kingdom's development goals and empower Bahrain's learners for the future.



**H.E. Hamad bin Faisal Almalki**

*Minister of Cabinet Affairs  
Chairman of the Board of Directors*

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

This year, the Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA) has strengthened its track record of achievements, continuing its 16-year journey to enhance the outcomes of the education and training sectors in the Kingdom of Bahrain. This aligns with the vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the directives of the government, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

In 2024, embodying the spirit of "Team Bahrain", the BQA successfully delivered around fifty percent of its 2023–2036 strategic goals. Eight key initiatives were implemented to support the development of Bahrain's education and training sectors, reflecting the Authority's continued commitment to improvement and innovation. The BQA's refreshed brand identity also underscored our emphasis on clear and effective communication with strategic partners.

We updated the review frameworks for schools, vocational institutions, and higher education institutions, reinforcing effective partnerships with stakeholders across the sector. A significant milestone was the development of the new framework for higher education institutional review, in collaboration with the Higher Education Council (HEC), which is now used by the HEC for awarding accreditation.

2024 was also a pivotal year in establishing the BQA as a regional and international centre of expertise in quality assurance. The Authority was selected to deliver a training programme for school reviewers and review leads by the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education—further demonstrating BQA's leadership and expertise in performance reviews. We also became the first quality assurance body in the region to conduct a joint school review with Penta International UK, for schools accredited as British Schools Overseas (BSO).

At the BQA, we remain steadfast in our mission, acting as a key partner in shaping a future-focused investment in education and training for Bahrain and its people.



**Dr. Maryam Hasan Mustafa**  
*Chief Executive Officer*



# BQA OVERVIEW

BQA plays a critical role in providing learners, parents, employers, education and training institutions, policy makers and relevant stakeholders with an objective assessment of the quality of education and training in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

## **BQA PERFORMS THIS CRITICAL ROLE THROUGH THREE KEY FUNCTIONS:**

1. Carrying out reviews of education and training institutions and academic and vocational programmes.
2. Conducting National Examinations.
3. Administering and maintaining the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

## **BQA HELPS IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN BY:**

- Helping all institutions to identify areas of success so that they can build on them, and to identify areas for improvements, so that they can address them.
- Providing information on the quality of education and training in Bahrain to policy makers, and the public, enabling them to set better policies to improve both sectors and make informed decisions.
- Setting clear standards and indicators that describe the characteristics of a good educational practices, ensuring that all institutions are aware of high standards.
- Providing greater accountability among educational and training institutions on their performance.
- Enabling students/learners and parents to make informed choices about which institutions/ programmes to enroll in, based on an objective independent assessment of the quality of those institutions' performance and the qualifications they award.
- Promoting good practices and innovation by reporting on successes and providing blueprints for replication.

BQA's remit applies to all types of education and training institutions licensed to operate and award qualifications in the Kingdom of Bahrain which include kindergartens, schools, vocational institutes, special needs institutions, and higher education institutions.



## BQA OVERVIEW



### OUR VISION

To be an effective partner in driving continual quality enhancement for world-class education and training sectors in Bahrain.



### MISSION

To play a critical role in advancing quality and raising trust in the education and training sectors, by providing reliable insights in a timely, responsive, and transparent manner.



### VALUES

- Fairness
- Competitiveness
- Sustainability

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Board of Directors includes distinguished members from both the public and private sectors. Their guidance supports our Senior Management team in delivering BQA's strategy effectively.



**H.E. Hamad bin Faisal Almalki**

*Minister of Cabinet Affairs  
Chairman of the Board of Directors*



**Shaikh Hamad bin Mohammed Al Khalifa**

*Chairman of Naseej B.S.C  
Chairman of Hope Ventures  
Deputy Chairman*



**Mrs. Yara Redha Faraj**

*Coordinator - International  
Engagement, Prime Minister's  
Office*



**Mrs. Sara Ishaq Hasan**

*Coordinator, Prime Minister's  
Office*



**Dr. Faisal Isa Hammad**

*Assistant Undersecretary,  
Competitiveness & Economic  
Indicators, Ministry of Finance &  
National Economy*



**Mr. Munther Abdullatif Almudawi**

*Executive Director of Tourism,  
Education and Healthcare  
Investments, Economic  
Development Board*



**Mr. Amer Hasan Marhoon**

*Managing Director, Skills Bahrain*



**Mrs. Dalal Iqbal Sangoor**

*Director of International Relations,  
National Communication Centre*

## SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Our senior management team is committed to BQA's vision and mission. They bring wide-ranging experience in education, quality improvement, and strategy. Their leadership ensures that BQA continues to grow, perform strongly, and deliver value to all stakeholders.



**Dr. Maryam Hasan  
Mustafa**

*Chief Executive Officer*



**Esmat Jaffar**

*General Director, National  
Qualifications Framework &  
National Examinations*



**Gayle Gorman**

*Advisor, Chief Executive Office*



**Dr. Sh. Lobna Al Khalifa**

*Director, Higher Education  
Reviews*



**Dr. Hasan Al Hammadi**

*Director, Private Schools &  
Kindergarten Reviews*



**Dua'a Abdul Wahab**

*Director, Vocational Reviews*



**Dr. Khaled Al Baker**

*Director, Directorate of  
Government Schools Reviews*



**Ameera Al Balushi**

*Director, National Examinations*



**Ameera Jaffar**

*Director, Human Resources &  
Financial Affairs*



**Danah Rabeea**

*Acting Director, National  
Frameworks Operations*



## OUR TEAM

Our team is made up of skilled professionals from different backgrounds, all dedicated to improving education and training in Bahrain. With expertise in quality assurance, the National Qualifications Framework, and national examinations, we work together to raise standards and support learners and institutions to succeed.



**100**

Total Number of Staff



**96%**

Bahrainisation



**71%**

Women in BQA



## WE TAKE PRIDE IN THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS



**Dr. Sh. Lobna Al Khalifa**

Dr. Sh. Lobna Al Khalifa, Director of Higher Education Reviews, was awarded the National Action Medal of Efficiency (First Class) by His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the field of education and quality assurance.



**Ms. Nayla Mohammed Al Kaabi**

His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Representative of His Majesty the King for Humanitarian Works and Youth Affairs, recognised Ms. Nayla Mohammed Al Kaabi, Head, Educational Review in the Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergarten Reviews for her participation in the third edition of "Lamea," the Advanced National Leadership Programme. This recognition highlights her exceptional leadership skills and dedication to advancing educational standards and quality assurance in the Kingdom of Bahrain.



**Ms. Latifa Al-Doseri**

Ms. Latifa Al-Doseri, Programme Administrator General Directorate of Educational & Vocational Institutions Review was honoured as the "Exceptional Youth" as part of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs' initiative, which was launched in celebration of Bahraini Youth Day 2024. This recognition highlights her remarkable achievements and contributions to the community, showcasing her dedication and commitment to excellence.

# ANNUAL STRATEGY REVIEW

BQA's 2023–2026 Strategy builds on past achievements and lessons learned, identifying seven priorities under three strategic objectives to enhance the national education and training system. These priorities position BQA as an adaptive, value-driven organisation focused on strengthening regulation, building internal capacity, and increasing engagement.

## OUR STRATEGY

Our 2023 - 2026 Strategy builds on our previous achievements and the lessons we have learnt. We identified **7 priorities** that translate into **3 strategic goals**.

### Strategic Objectives

#### Priorities

#### Create a High Impact on National Education & Training Policies

**Adaptive Organisation:** We will develop a sustainable plan to enable our growth and expansion.

**Streamlined for Value:** Our frameworks and processes will be streamlined to deliver value for the government and our partners in the education and training sectors.

**Outputs that improve regulation and quality:** Our reviews, exam results and NQF operations will form a critical part of regulation and will support the systemic improvement of education and training.

#### Build Enabling Structures

**A skilled workforce:** We will ensure we have the knowledge and expertise we need through a flexible recruitment strategy, a talent retention programme and capacity building activities.

**Sustainable Growth:** We will develop a sustainable plan to enable our growth and expansion.

#### Increase Engagement & Accessibility

**Outreach & Engagement:** We will be open and accessible to our different audiences, understand their needs and respond to them through improved client-facing communications.

**Insights that improve national policies:** We will utilise the rich database we have acquired over the last 15 years, going beyond technical reporting, to support national education and training system development.



# ANNUAL STRATEGY REVIEW



The priorities are delivered through 17 key initiatives, some of which were added later to address evolving national needs and maintain alignment with strategic directions.

In 2024, BQA made significant strides in advancing its strategic objectives, focusing on building an adaptive organisation that responds to national needs while streamlining frameworks and processes to deliver value to the government and education partners.

This year marked the second phase of our Strategic Plan 2023-2026, with substantial progress and operational refinement. Through a structured approach, we successfully implemented eight key initiatives and continued to advance nine active initiatives aligned with our long-term goals.

## **EIGHT INITIATIVES REACHED FULL IMPLEMENTATION:**

- Integration of school review results into the Ministry of Education's (MoE) regulations
- Integration of higher education review results within the Higher Education Council's (HEC) processes
- Integration of Vocational Training and Education review results with licensing and funding processes
- Conducting Grade 9 and Grade 12 National Examinations
- Linking National Qualifications Framework (NQF) operations with HEC, Ministry of Labour, and Labour Fund's (Tamkeen) processes
- Development of a sustainable financial plan
- Strengthening BQA's brand
- Enhancing reporting and information accessibility



# ANNUAL STRATEGY REVIEW



While **Nine strategic initiatives remain active**, with quarterly reviews ensuring alignment with long-term objectives and allowing for necessary adjustments:

- Development of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Pathways frameworks
- Launch of Kindergarten (KG) reviews
- Launch of Special Education Needs (SEN) reviews
- Introduction of flexible recruitment strategies
- Development of a skilled and satisfied team
- Utilisation of technology for operational efficiency (AI integration)
- Increase in regional and international partnerships
- Development of an improved approach to higher education programme reviews
- Capacity-building through professional training and certification (BQA Academy)

# ANNUAL STRATEGY REVIEW

## KEY FOCUS AREAS IN 2024

In 2024, we focused strategically on key areas vital for our growth and impact. Recognising the importance of adapting to emerging trends and challenges, we are committed to sustainability, technological advancement, stakeholder-centricity, and workforce development. These commitments will guide our efforts to create lasting value for our stakeholders:

### EXPANSION OF BQA'S OPERATIONS

In 2024, BQA expanded its operations by developing two new frameworks for Kindergarten (KG) and Special Education Needs (SEN) reviews. These frameworks aim to strengthen quality assurance in early childhood and special education settings.

Their development involved collaboration with key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education's Early Childhood Education (ECE) team, Bahrain Teachers College (BTC), and private school and kindergarten owners.

As part of this initiative, pilot reviews were conducted using the new KG framework, yielding valuable insights that will inform the full rollout in 2025. This milestone marks a significant advancement in improving education quality from the earliest stages of learning.

### TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION FOR ENHANCED EFFICIENCY

BQA prioritised the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation to streamline processes and enhance efficiency. AI has been implemented across various administrative and operational functions, improving decision-making capabilities and reducing manual workloads.

### STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

National collaboration was significantly strengthened in 2024 through the establishment of advisory committees and working groups in partnership with our stakeholders. These initiatives were designed to improve coordination and ensure policy alignment across the education and training sectors.

Through this collaborative approach, BQA has reinforced its role as a key contributor to national education and training policy development. By engaging actively with government entities, regulatory bodies, and industry stakeholders, BQA helps shape policies that enhance education quality and align national practices with international standards.



# ANNUAL STRATEGY REVIEW

## 2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2024, BQA made major strides in our strategic initiatives:

### PROCESS REDESIGN & FRAMEWORK LAUNCHES

We redesigned core processes to better support education institutions and regulators, launching 3 new review frameworks for schools, vocational institutes, and higher education. By integrating National Qualifications Framework (NQF) operations with licensing processes, we more than doubled NQF outputs compared to 2023.

### QUALIFICATIONS SELF-VALIDATION PILOT

To align with global best practices and support high-performing institutions, we piloted a Self-Validation Project with two providers. These institutions can now internally validate qualifications prior to NQF placement.

### FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY MILESTONE

We introduced a sustainable financial model, generating service-based revenue for the first time. In Q2 alone, this covered 10% of our annual operating budget.

### BRAND IDENTITY & REPORTING ENHANCEMENTS

Our refreshed brand identity and new reporting formats improved BQA's visibility and accessibility within the education sector.

### STAFF ENGAGEMENT & CAPACITY BUILDING

Staff engagement was a priority, with strategy workshops conducted across the organisation to build understanding and ownership. We also focused on training staff on the new frameworks and reengineered processes.





# ANNUAL STRATEGY REVIEW

## 2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

### ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

The second year of the new BQA strategy transformed the organisation through agile governance, streamlined structures, and aligned operations.

### AI & AUTOMATION INITIATIVES

We launched 5 AI-driven automation projects, improving internal efficiency and decision-making.

### KINDERGARTENS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS REVIEW FRAMEWORKS

We completed pilot reviews for kindergartens with promising results and developed a new framework annex for Special Education Needs (SEN), promoting inclusivity in quality assurance.

In 2025, BQA commits to advancing strategic objectives to raise educational performance, enhance operational efficiency, and strengthen stakeholder engagement. The lessons learned and achievements made in 2024 lay a strong foundation for further progress in the years ahead, ensuring that the strategic vision continues to drive impact across the education and training landscape



# A YEAR AT A GLANCE

## JAN

- Rollout of 2024 Operational Plans
- Launch of the Self-Validation Pilot

## FEB

- Endorsement of the Schools and Vocational Review Frameworks
- Celebration of BQA's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

## MAR

- Publication of the 2023 Annual Report

## APR

- Grade 12 National Examinations conducted

## MAY

- Grade 9 National Examinations conducted
- BQA delivered reviewer training for Oman's QAAAQA
- Conducted the first Joint British Schools Overseas (BSO) Review

## JUN

- Launch of BQA's refreshed brand identity

## JUL

- Pilot of the Eduscribe AI Project
- Publication of the Systems Performance Report

## AUG

- Development of training materials and guidance for KG reviews

## SEP

- Commencement of KG Pilot Reviews
- Induction of the Second Batch of MoE Secondees

## OCT

- Finalisation of the SEN Pilot Review Framework

## NOV

- Conclusion of KG Pilot Reviews
- Drafting of the SEN Review Framework Annex

## DEC

- Organisational Restructure of BQA





# BQA OPERATIONS

Guided by our newly developed review frameworks, BQA has continued to assess the performance and quality of education and training institutions across the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Since our establishment, BQA has conducted over 2,396 reviews and National Qualifications Framework (NQF) operations, along with 263 National Examination papers. These efforts have supported institutions in identifying their strengths and addressing key areas for improvement.

In 2024 alone, BQA carried out 286 reviews and NQF operations across public and private institutions, spanning all levels of education and training. This included:



## BQA OPERATIONS

BQA encourages the sharing of good practices and recognises high-performing institutions. In 2024, **31 Institutions** received our Gold and Silver Seals of Quality:



# SCHOOLS, KINDERGARTENS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## SCHOOLS

### NEW SCHOOLS REVIEWS FRAMEWORK

In response to rapid local and global changes, identifying essential learning skills has become crucial for preparing students for their post-graduation paths, whether in higher education or the workforce. The newly introduced **Schools Reviews Framework** places a strong emphasis on improving educational outcomes by embedding 21st-century skills into the learning experience.

To raise awareness and support implementation of this framework among stakeholders, BQA has initiated several measures, including training sessions for our reviewers and targeted workshops for principals across government and private schools. In parallel, webinars were delivered to teachers and trainee teachers at the primary, intermediate, and secondary levels, in both Arabic and English, alongside a special session designed for parents.

These efforts aimed to foster a shared understanding of the framework and ensure readiness for its effective application in schools.

To further support implementation, BQA developed a comprehensive performance training toolkit, available on our website, to assist school leaders and teachers in grasping the framework and applying quality assurance tools for improvement requirements.

### TRAINING & AWARENESS SESSIONS

7

BQA  
Reviewers

3

School Chiefs and MoE  
Specialists

4

Government schools'  
leaders

4

Private schools'  
leaders

5

External  
Reviewers

2

Bahrain Teacher's  
College

4

Teachers

2

Parents

# SCHOOLS, KINDERGARTENS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## KINDERGARTENS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN) INSTITUTIONS

As part of our commitment to systematic improvement and a comprehensive approach to quality education, we have broadened our focus to encompass all education and training institutions. Understanding that a high-quality education system must be inclusive and responsive to diverse needs, we have directed our efforts toward quality assuring Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Special Education Needs (SEN) institutions in Bahrain.

### KINDERGARTEN REVIEWS FRAMEWORK

In 2024, BQA developed the Kindergarten Review Framework, establishing clear criteria for evaluating the performance of kindergartens in Bahrain. Rooted in global best practices, the framework promotes child-led, play-based learning and supports the holistic development of children in nurturing, inclusive environments.

To validate the framework's effectiveness, BQA launched pilot reviews in September 2024 across 15 kindergartens. These reviews aimed to assess the quality of ECE provision and support kindergartens in enhancing their internal self-evaluation processes.

Findings from the pilot stage revealed a need for targeted professional development—particularly in areas such as child-initiated play-based learning and effective communication strategies. Importantly, the reviews affirmed that children were learning in safe, supportive environments with appropriate facilities and resources.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN) REVIEWS

Preparations for the review of SEN institutions began with the collection of baseline data on SEN providers across the Kingdom. To guide the process, BQA formed an SEN Advisory Committee, comprising representatives from key licensing bodies—namely the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), and the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA)—as well as a dedicated working group.

The advisory committee helped shape a strategic roadmap for the preparation and implementation of SEN reviews. During this preparatory phase, BQA undertook benchmarking exercises and conducted exploratory visits to SEN institutions across Bahrain. These efforts informed the development of a draft SEN Review Framework annex and review handbook, in anticipation of pilot SEN reviews in the upcoming phase.

# VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

Vocational training is essential for equipping individuals with the practical skills and knowledge necessary to meet labour market demands and foster economic growth in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

## NEW VOCATIONAL REVIEWS FRAMEWORK

In 2024, BQA developed a new Vocational Reviews Framework in close collaboration with key stakeholders, including regulators, funding bodies, vocational institutions, industry experts, and trainers. This framework is designed to ensure that learners are equipped with the knowledge and employability skills required for success in a rapidly changing career landscape.

The framework focuses on three core aspects and seven specific criteria, all aimed at fostering lifelong learning and enhancing both personal and professional competencies. It emphasises continuous skill development, critical and higher-order thinking, and the application of rigorous methodologies that support practical, problem-solving-based learning.

Institutions are encouraged to actively engage learners in applying their knowledge through real-world tasks and to foster an environment that prioritises strategic direction, effective leadership, self-evaluation, and ongoing performance monitoring.

# HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## BQA REVIEW OUTCOMES LINKED TO REGULATORY PROCESSES

BQA has successfully achieved a key strategic initiative by ensuring that the outcomes of higher education institutional reviews directly influence the processes of institutional accreditation and licensing. This represents a significant improvement in aligning quality assurance with regulatory decisions.

## NEW GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONAL REVIEWS

Following the publication of the General Framework for Higher Education Institutional Reviews, extensive training was provided for the higher education sector in preparation for these reviews. This training included a capacity-building programme developed in collaboration with the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).



# NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

The National Examinations are designed to evaluate the quality of education in intermediate and secondary schools across the Kingdom of Bahrain. These assessments also play a crucial role in shaping educational policies by generating reports that analyse the skills and knowledge students have acquired at grade 9 and 12 levels against national and international benchmarks.

## GRADE 9 NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Administered to all Grade 9 students in government schools, these examinations cover **four core subjects**:



All the examinations are designed in alignment with the Ministry of Education's curriculum. They aim to assess students' achievements at the end of the intermediate education stage.

## GRADE 12 NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

The primary purpose of the Grade 12 National Examinations is to measure students' performance against the learning objectives of Secondary Education and international proficiency standards in **three core subjects**:



While all government school students are required to take these exams, private school students may choose to participate voluntarily.





# NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

## ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

In collaboration with the Cambridge University Press and Assessment, the results are analysed using cohort referencing methodology. This approach compares students' performance to that of their peers, ensuring that students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic are assessed fairly.

In 2025, BQA will implement a standard-setting approach that anchors results to an absolute standard. This process will involve establishing performance levels based on statistical data and subject matter experts' judgments to determine grade boundaries, thereby enhancing the understanding of students' progress and identifying areas for improvement.

## 2024 ENHANCEMENTS

In 2024, several significant improvements were made to increase efficiency. For instance, the reading components of the Arabic and English language examinations were transitioned from short-answer questions to multiple-choice format while preserving the core competencies of the assessments.

These changes had a positive impact on students by providing clearer and more accessible questions, allowing them to demonstrate their understanding more effectively. This shift also enhances the overall quality of education, aligning assessment methods with global standards and better-preparing students for future academic and professional opportunities.

Additionally, preparations are underway to incorporate AI-generated items into the 2025 examination papers, following thorough reviews and consultations with subject matter experts, which will lead to more creative adaptive assessments that can incorporate real-world scenarios, making the exams more engaging and relevant to students.



# NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

## AWARENESS INITIATIVES

**Engaging videos** featuring students were shared on Instagram to highlight the critical role these assessments play in their academic journeys.

**Informative leaflets** were distributed to students, parents, and schools, ensuring access to essential information about the examinations.

A **parents' session** was organised to explain the significance of the national examinations, gather feedback, and foster collaborative support for students. The session helped improve parents' understanding of the assessment process, encouraged greater parental engagement in student learning, and contributed to enhanced student motivation through reinforced support at home.

These awareness initiatives not only increased stakeholder understanding of the examinations but also helped build a stronger network of support around students to better prepare for the national examinations.



# NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

## LINKING NQF OPERATIONS TO REGULATORY PROCESSES

In collaboration with its strategic partners—including the Ministry of Labour (MoL), Higher Education Council (HEC), and Labour Fund (Tamkeen)—BQA has integrated National Qualifications Framework (NQF) operations with licensing and funding decisions. This collaboration has resulted in significant increases in achievement rates - a 44% rise in listed institutions, a 28% increase in placed qualifications, and a remarkable 96% increase in aligned international qualifications compared to 2023.

## 20 INSTITUTIONS LISTED IN 2024

This year, 20 institutions were listed on the NQF register, comprising of 4 higher education institutions and 16 vocational institutes. This brings the overall total of listed institutions to 65, achieving a completion rate of 67% of licensed institutions being listed.

### INSTITUTIONAL LISTING



# NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

## 78 QUALIFICATIONS PLACED IN 2024

78 national qualifications were placed on the NQF in 2024, including 57 from higher education and 21 vocational qualifications. This raises the total number of national qualifications placed on the NQF to 352, representing a completion rate of 46% of licensed qualifications being placed.

### QUALIFICATION PLACEMENT



## 56 QUALIFICATIONS ALIGNED IN 2024

56 international qualifications were aligned to the NQF in 2024, with 35 from higher education and 21 vocational qualifications, while 3 qualifications were archived.

In total, there are now 108 aligned international qualifications, achieving a completion rate of 27% of licensed international qualifications.

### QUALIFICATION ALIGNMENT





# NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

## SELF-VALIDATION FOR QUALIFICATIONS

To enhance trust in the education sector, BQA has granted self-validation status to 2 institutions, allowing them to internally validate their qualifications through a rigorous process before they are placed on the NQF.

## RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

BQA is actively advancing the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in collaboration with regulators and key stakeholders. To support this effort, RPL guidelines have been developed and shared with the Higher Education Council (HEC) in preparation for a pilot implementation phase.

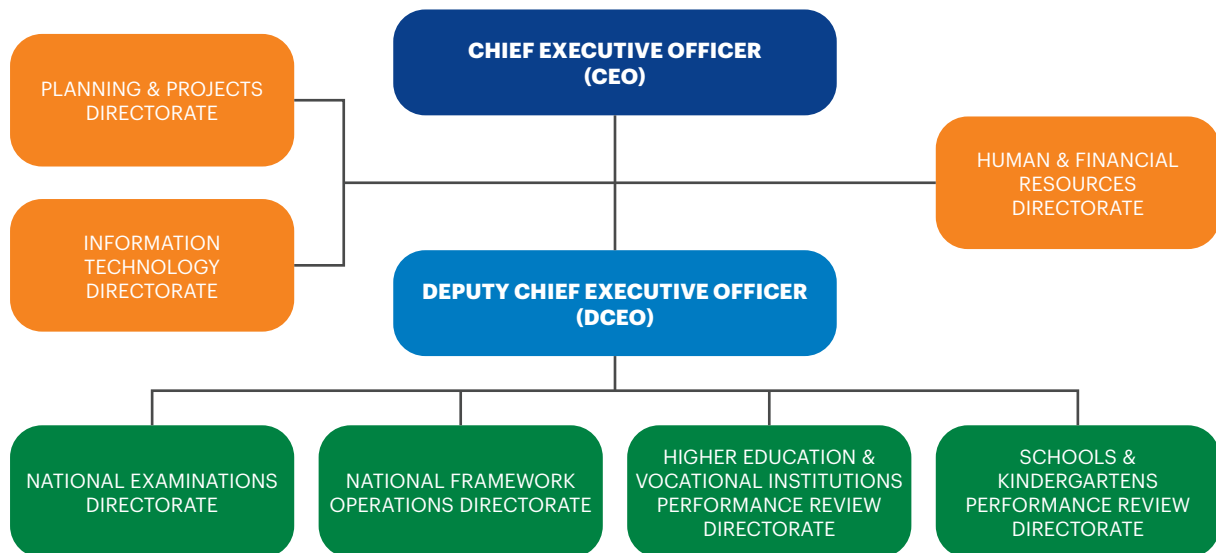
In parallel, BQA is working closely with the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) to align public sector job requirements and qualifications with the appropriate levels of the NQF. This initiative aims to ensure fair recognition of skills and competencies acquired outside formal education, with completion expected in 2025.

# CORPORATE SERVICES

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### ORGANISATIONAL RESTRUCTURE

In 2024, BQA underwent a reorganisation aimed at enhancing operational efficiency and effectiveness. The new structure is designed to streamline processes, increase transparency, and strengthen support for educational and training institutions across the Kingdom.



### SPECIALISED TRAINING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

BQA remains committed to empowering its workforce and partners through innovative training and development initiatives that align with our strategic vision.

In 2024, BQA staff completed 4,700 hours of training across key areas such as quality assurance, artificial intelligence, data analysis, project management, and report writing.



# CORPORATE SERVICES

## HUMAN RESOURCES

To further enhance the expertise of our reviewers and support high-quality evaluations across all education sectors, BQA implemented several specialised training initiatives:

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TRAINING

Reviewers received tailored training from **Dawn Larkin Education** to support the rollout of the Kindergarten Review Framework. This training equipped them to conduct insightful evaluations of early childhood institutions.

### VOCATIONAL REVIEWS CAPACITY-BUILDING

In partnership with **Penta International**, BQA delivered comprehensive training on the new Vocational Reviews Framework, strengthening our team's ability to carry out rigorous assessments.

### NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS TRAINING

Collaborating with **the University of Cambridge**, BQA provided advanced training in the design and evaluation of national examinations, ensuring our team remains aligned with international standards.

## SECONDMENT PROGRAMME IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (MOE)

The second cohort of 16 MoE secondees joined BQA in 2024—doubling the number from the previous year. Four of the secondees were assigned to vocational reviews team, while 12 were assigned to the school reviews team.

The secondees received extensive training in evaluation methods, combining theoretical foundations with practical application.

## REVIEWER ACCREDITATION

**11 BQA reviewers**, including two secondees, earned the Accredited Reviewer Certificate in partnership with **Education Development Trust (EDT)**.

With this achievement, **all BQA reviewers are now officially accredited**, reinforcing our commitment to nurturing future leaders in quality assurance locally and internationally.



# CORPORATE SERVICES

## TECHNOLOGY

BQA continues to leverage technology to streamline operations, enhance service quality, and support its strategic goals. In 2024, the “Utilising Technology for Efficiency” initiative focused on digitising internal processes and external services to reduce manual tasks, increase accuracy, and boost operational performance.

### KEY SYSTEM LAUNCHES

**Review Management System (RMS):** Automates aspects of the institutional review process, making it simpler for institutions to manage their administrative load, and improving transparency.

**Qualifications Management System (QMS):** Digitises processes related to the listing and placement of qualifications within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

### AI-POWERED PROJECTS

In 2024, BQA successfully piloted several AI-powered tools to streamline processes, improve accuracy, and support data-informed decision-making:

**Self-Assessment & Evidence Evaluation:** This platform automates data extraction, synthesis, and analysis for institutional self-assessments. It increases accuracy and reliability, helping institutions more effectively identify improvement areas and take targeted action.

**Report Generation:** This tool consolidates and analyses multiple documents to generate clear, concise reports—saving time, and reducing manual effort.

**Draft Item Generation for Practice Papers:** AI is used to generate high-quality draft questions for national exam practice papers. These items are aligned with required competencies and difficulty levels, helping enrich question banks and support student preparation.

**Smart Planning & Scheduling:** This AI tool improves how BQA schedules activities, significantly reducing planning time and minimising conflicts. It ensures more efficient resource use and better service delivery to institutions and stakeholders.

**AI-Powered Data Analysis:** AI accelerates the analysis of large datasets, allowing BQA to uncover insights faster and make more informed decisions. This supports continuous improvement and more responsive strategy development.

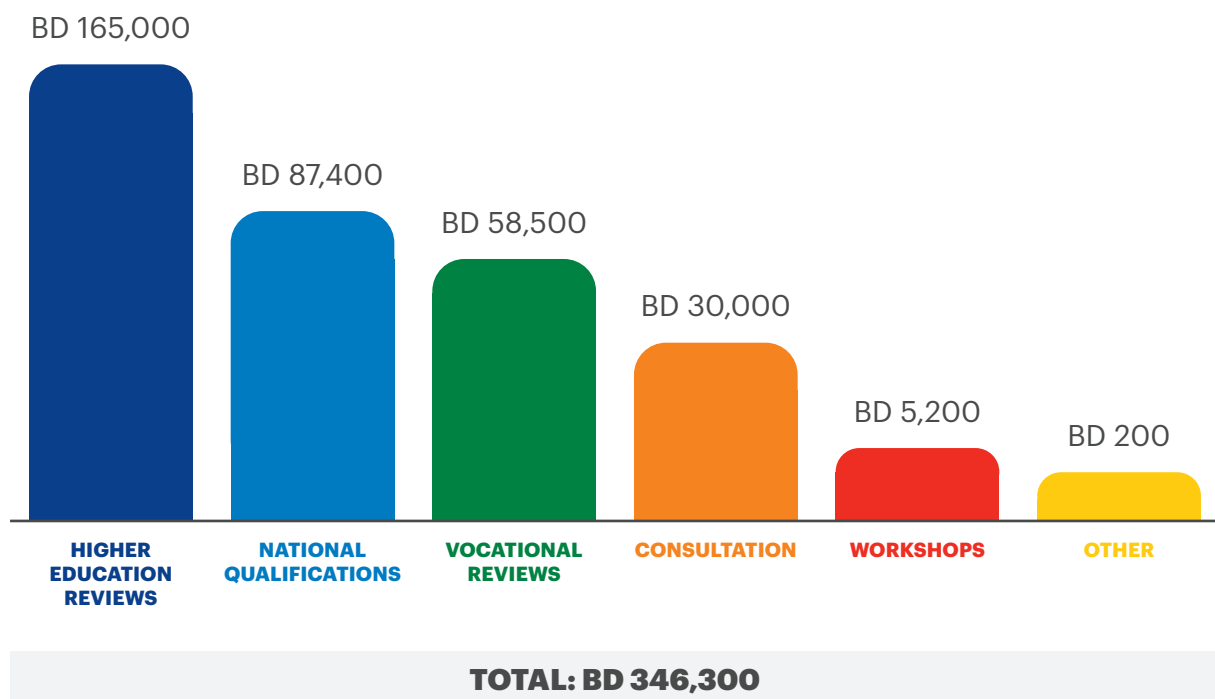


## CORPORATE SERVICES

### FINANCE

This year, we established a strong foundation for a sustainable financial model designed to ensure long-term stability, promote growth, and provide high-quality support and tailored expertise to the sector.

As part of this initiative, BQA introduced service charges for selected services starting in April 2024. This strategic decision has generated BD 346,300 in revenue from service charges, accounting for 10% of our overall budget. Notably, ninety percent of this revenue comes from providing review and national qualifications services to higher education and vocational institutions, while the remaining 10% is generated through training services, both locally and regionally.



As we prepare for the next fiscal year, we aim to further enhance our training and consultancy offerings and refine our service charges' structure to maximise value for our stakeholders.





# LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

## LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENTS

In 2024, BQA strengthened national collaboration through strategic committees and joint initiatives with regulators and education and training providers. These efforts help align quality assurance systems with national goals and improve communication across sectors.

### VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Includes representatives from the Ministry of Labour (MoL), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), the Labour Fund (Tamkeen), Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC), and Skills Bahrain. The committee provides sector-wide recommendations and aligns stakeholder efforts to improve vocational education and training.

### KINDERGARTEN (KG) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Formed with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Bahrain Teachers' College (BTC), this committee guided the creation of the Kindergarten Reviews Framework. It offered feedback during the pilot phase and helped ensure alignment with national priorities and international standards.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Includes the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA), and Bahrain Teachers' College (BTC). This committee supported the development and pilot of the SEN Reviews Annex, contributing insights to shape a comprehensive and inclusive review framework.

### NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (NQF) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Oversees the review and recommendation of NQF-related reports and initiatives, supporting the continued development of Bahrain's qualifications system.

### SCHOOLS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Established in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Bahrain Teachers' College (BTC), this committee supported the development of the new Schools Reviews Framework. It provided critical input to ensure the framework reflects national priorities, educational standards, and sector needs.



# LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENTS

BQA continues to strengthen its global presence through strategic partnerships with international organisations and quality assurance bodies. These collaborations bring global best practices to Bahrain, promote innovation, and enhance the credibility of national qualifications on the international stage.

### LEADERSHIP IN GLOBAL NETWORKS

In 2024, BQA's Chief Executive Officer was elected to the Board of Directors of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)—becoming the only Arab woman elected in that cycle.

### GULF QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (GQF)

BQA is a key partner in developing the Gulf Qualifications Framework for higher education qualifications, approved in 2024. It has also supported other Gulf countries through knowledge-sharing and is now contributing to the framework's expansion to include vocational and professional qualifications.

### ALIGNMENT WITH BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS (BSO)

The Schools Reviews Framework, published in early 2024, was endorsed by UK authorities and aligned with the British Schools Overseas (BSO) Reviews Framework.

### SUPPORT TO OMAN ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION AUTHORITY (QAAA)

BQA was selected to train and certify the first group of school Quality Assurance Managers (QAMs) for the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (QAAA) in the Sultanate of Oman.

# LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENTS

### BQA-INQAAHE CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMME

In collaboration with the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), BQA held three workshops in April 2024. These sessions equipped around 70 participants with practical knowledge on governance, strategic planning, and internal and external quality assurance systems.

### GLOBAL RECOGNITION AND MEMBERSHIPS

BQA is an active member of:

#### INQAAHE

International Network for Quality Assurance  
Agencies in Higher Education

#### ANQAHE

Arab Network for Quality Assurance  
in Higher Education

#### CHEA

Council for Higher Education  
Accreditation

#### IAEA

International Association  
for Educational Assessment



