The Performance of the Education and Training Sectors in the Kingdom of Bahrain

for the Academic Year 2024-2025

هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب
Education & Training Quality Authority

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Executive Summary

The Education and Training Quality Authority's operations include reviewing educational institutions, administering the National Qualifications Framework, and implementing national examinations. These efforts aim to evaluate the performance levels of academic and vocational programmes, providing stakeholders with insights into quality and areas for improvement. The report highlights successful practices and recommendations for enhancing education quality across various sectors for the academic year 2024-2025.

BQA Operations (2024-2025)

Institutional Reviews

76 Government Schools

23 Private Schools

19 Vocational Institutions

22 Kindergartens

Higher Education Institutions

15 Academic Programmes Reviews

10 Institutional Reviews

National Qualifications Framework

20 Institutional Listing

105 National Qualification Placement

25 Alignment of Foreign Qualifications

National Examinations

Grade 12

12,690 Students from **38** Government schools and **16** Private schools

Grade 9

12,839 Students from **62** Government schools

Schools, Kindergartens, and Special Education Needs performance

The performance review results of 76 government schools and 23 private schools during the academic year 2024-2025 showed a significant improvement in performance standards. Of these schools, 24 government schools improved by one grade, including 6 schools that improved from "Good" to "Outstanding", 7 schools from "Satisfactory" to "Good", and 11 schools from "Inadequate" to "Satisfactory". Additionally, 45 schools maintained their previous grade, while only one school experienced a decline. Six newly established government schools underwent the review process for the first time. As for private schools, 11 of them improved by one grade, 7 maintained their current rating, with varying performance among the remaining schools.

The best-performing schools, especially government primary girls' schools, demonstrated a high ability to manage lessons effectively and provide differentiated educational content that meets students' needs, alongside effective administrative processes. There was also a noticeable improvement in student's behaviour standards due to the activation of positive behaviour reinforcement programmes and various extracurricular activities that enrich their different experiences, in addition to effective community participation and the efficient use of educational resources, especially the use of technological resources in private schools.

On the other hand, some government schools still encounter challenges in enabling students to acquire basic skills, particularly in English and numeracy skills, and the need for greater support for low achieving students, improving the efficiency of academic support programmes provided, enhancing teachers' professional development, and continuously monitoring its impact, in addition to improving the quality of education and learning in classrooms. Moreover, the results showed that private schools need to develop students' Arabic language skills.

To enhance the quality of early childhood education, a framework for reviewing the performance of kindergartens was launched. Reviews of 22 independent kindergartens revealed effective practices, most notably the provision of a safe environment for children and support for their social and emotional growth. Key areas for development were identified, including guided dialogue between teachers and children, applying play-based learning approach, and developing teachers' targeted professional training.

In line with the strategic plan initiatives of the Authority, the experimental phase of the "Special Education Needs Review" initiative was launched to improve the quality of educational services for learners with special needs. Pilot reviews were conducted for 6 institutions, highlighting effective practices in policy clarity and resource availability, while identifying the need to develop curricula and individual plans.

The national examination results for Grades 9 and 12 revealed that students showed a good understanding of key concepts in mathematics, as well as strengths in identifying and processing similar data in mathematical skills. They also demonstrated strengths in basic skills, such as recalling scientific concepts and comprehending Arabic and English reading and listening texts. However, most students struggled with more challenging tasks that required critical and analytical reading, understanding implicit meanings, and effective writing skills in both Arabic and English. They also faced some challenges in problem-solving, decision-making and applying scientific knowledge. Girls continued to outperform boys in most subjects.

Vocational Training Institutions' Performance

During the academic year 2024-2025, the results of 19 vocational institutes were published. These institutes were reviewed as part of Cycle 5 of Vocational Reviews, which began in March 2024. Additionally, one Monitoring Visit was conducted.

Proactive engagement with stakeholders facilitated the alignment of various entities' processes within this cycle. This was accomplished by linking the outcomes of the BQA's review reports with licensing and funding decisions. Moreover, the alignment of the BQA's processes where reviews and Institutional Listing for vocational institutes were implemented jointly, resulting in more streamlined and efficient processes.

However, a major challenge that continues to persist in the sector is the limitations of specialized training programmes with most remaining at basic levels, making it difficult to diversify offerings and respond to evolving market demands. Furthermore, scheduling reviews have been particularly challenging for some institutes, especially those underperforming in previous cycles due to lack of or limited training activities. However, the review findings show that most reviewed institutes including newer ones demonstrate a stronger awareness of quality culture, which has led to better performance and improved compliance with review requirements.

Despite this progress, there is still room to enhance the effectiveness of these institutes by placing greater emphasis on leadership and management practices and refining their self-evaluation processes to utilise results for continuous improvement.

Higher Education Institutional Reviews & Academic Programmes' Performance

During the academic year 2024-2025, the results of 15 Academic Programme Reviews were published, along with one follow-up visit. Of these 15 programmes, seven underwent an extension review visit. As part of Cycle 3 of Institutional Reviews, 12 Higher Education Institutions were assessed, with results of 10 institutions published. This cycle marked the integration of review, institutional listing, and accreditation standards and processes, effectively addressing a key strategic initiative of the BQA. The goal was to align higher education review outcomes with the Higher Education Council (HEC) processes to eliminate duplication and any potential discrepancies between the review and licensing and accreditation outcomes.

The review findings highlight a notable increase in the number of programmes receiving a 'Confidence' judgement, along with enhanced compliance by institutions with BQA and HEC requirements. Student support services, as well as teaching, learning, and assessment practices, stand out as key strengths across the evaluated institutions, demonstrating a strong commitment to fostering a quality-driven academic environment and ensuring student success. While these findings reflect notable progress, there are still areas that can benefit from further enhancement.

Strengthening strategic planning and benchmarking practices, maintaining the consistent application of policies and procedures, and leveraging data-driven insights to effectively close the quality loop will be crucial in sustaining and advancing the overall quality of higher education. By focusing on these areas, institutions can strengthen their progress and further refine their strategies, ensuring high standards and adaptability in the evolving higher education sector. This is particularly important given the 30% increase in the number of institutions between the previous and current Cycles.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

During the academic year 2024–2025, the BQA listed 20 education and training institutions in the NQF register, placed 105 national qualifications, and aligned 25 foreign qualifications. Most qualifications were at Level 8 and Level 9 of the NQF, predominantly in the fields of management and finance, engineering, sustainability and information technology.

Collaborative efforts between the BQA and its partners resulted in notable achievements, including a 20% increase in the institutional listing completion rate, a 13% rise in qualification placement completion, and a 6% increase in the alignment of foreign qualifications. Furthermore, 25 self-validated qualifications from Bahrain Polytechnic were placed, and five institutions - comprising two Higher Education (HE) institutions and three Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions - were listed based on institutional review outcomes.

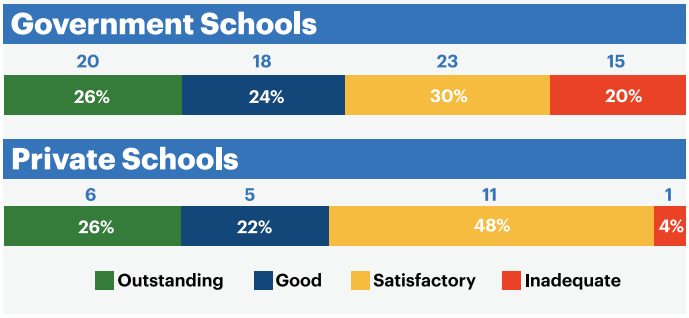
This academic year witnessed several good practices, such as greater awareness among VET institutions of NQF requirements, better alignment between qualification development and review cycles with NQF validity periods, and a good response by some higher education institutions to labour market needs by introducing specialised programmes in areas such as digital transformation, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, sustainable management, financial technology, and big data analytics. In addition, the NQF is seen as a trusted reference for recognised qualifications through the inclusion of the NQF Level in the Civil Service Bureau (CSB)'s job descriptions and the alignment of National Occupational Standards (NOS) to the NQF levels.

Schools, Kindergartens, and Special Education Needs Institutions

Government and Private Schools

During the academic year 2024-2025, 76 government schools and 23 private schools were reviewed according to the Schools Reviews Framework 2024. The overall effectiveness of the school performance of this batch of government and private schools is shown in the following figures:

Results of the overall effectiveness of 76 government schools and 23 private schools reviewed



26% of government schools received an "Outstanding" rating, 24% "Good", 30% "Satisfactory", and 20% "Inadequate". Meanwhile, 26% of private schools received an "Outstanding" rating, 22% "Good", 48% "Satisfactory", and only one school received an "Inadequate" rating at 4%.

The recent school reviews demonstrate a positive trend. Out of the 76 government schools reviewed, 24 government schools improved by one grade, including 6 schools that improved from "Good" to "Outstanding", 7 schools from "Satisfactory" to "Good", and 11 schools from "Inadequate" to "Satisfactory" rating.

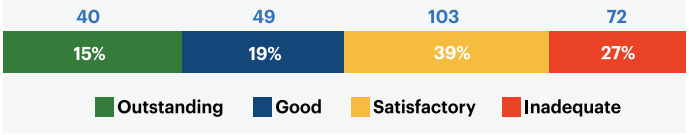
This improvement is due to the enhancement of administrative and educational processes provided to students, which positively reflected on their academic progress and personal development.

Meanwhile, the performance of 45 schools remained at their previous level, including 14 schools that maintained an "Outstanding" rating and 11 schools that continued to perform at an "Inadequate" level.

On the other hand, the results showed a decline in the performance of only one government school by one grade, which experienced a change in the administrative system from male to female staff. Additionally, 6 government schools underwent the review process for the first time.

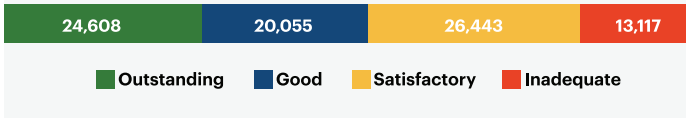
Similarly, the results of private school reviews showed positive performance. Out of the 23 schools reviewed, 11 schools improved by one grade, while 7 schools maintained their previous rating. Regarding the overall effectiveness of all schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain, including government and private schools, the current distribution of school performance ratings is as follows: 15% "Outstanding," 19% "Good," 39% "Satisfactory," and 27% "Inadequate," as shown in the below figure:

Overall effectiveness of 264 government and private schools according to the latest results



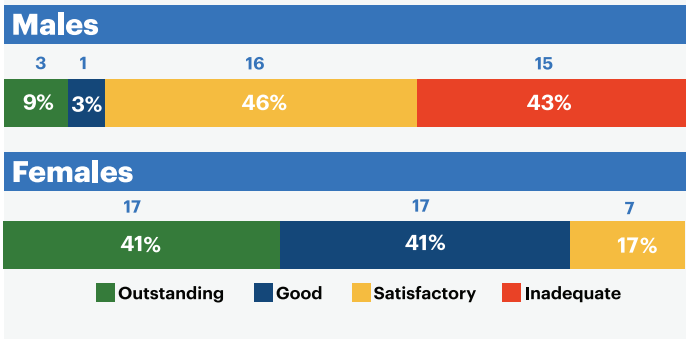
The number of students in the government and private schools reviewed exceeds 84,223 students, with 84% of students receiving at least a "Satisfactory" education, while approximately 16% of students receive an "Inadequate" education, as shown in the figure below:

Number of students distributed in 76 government schools and 23 private schools reviewed



The number of students in the 76 reviewed government schools exceeds 57,828 students, divided as follows: 26,630 boys and 31,198 girls. The results indicate a continued performance gap between genders in government schools, with 9% of boys' schools rated "Outstanding," 3% "Good," 46% "Satisfactory," while 43% received an "Inadequate" judgement. In contrast, girls' schools maintained their high performance, with 41% rated "Outstanding," 41% "Good," and 17% "Satisfactory," with no girls' schools rated "Inadequate" These results show that all schools rated "Inadequate" are boys' schools, while 85% of schools rated "Outstanding" are girls' schools, compared to only 15% of boys' schools, all of which are primary schools.

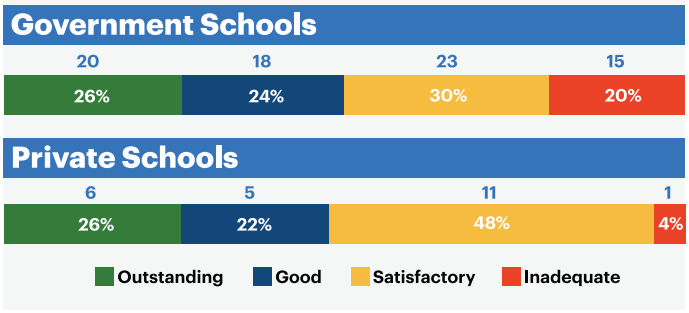
Results of reviews for 76 government schools according to student gender



The review reports indicate that the continued performance gap is due to several reasons, including differences in teaching and assessment methods, their effectiveness, and their suitability for students' age stages, as well as differences in academic support policies provided to students, focusing on their actual educational needs, and the motivational methods provided to them that ensure their enthusiasm for learning and drive them to take greater responsibility for their learning. This requires more efforts and focus to address this gap and limit its expansion.

The evaluation of the **"Students' Academic Achievement"** aspect in both government and private schools reviewed in this batch reveals varied performance, as shown in the figure below:

Results of the Students' Acadamic Achievemnt aspect for 76 goverment schoolsand 23 private schools reviewed



The results of the 76 government schools reviewed in this batch show varied performance, with 26% receiving an "Outstanding" rating, 24% "Good", 30% "Satisfactory", and 20% receiving an "Inadequate" rating. In private schools, 26% received an "Outstanding" rating, 22% "Good", 48% "Satisfactory", and 4% received an "Inadequate" rating.

These results indicate a continued disparity in performance; while the percentage of government schools achieving an "Outstanding" level has increased compared to schools with "Good" performance, most schools are concentrated in the "Satisfactory" category. There is a noticeable positive decline in the number of schools receiving an "Inadequate" rating compared to previous cycles, indicating that most schools meet basic education standards, which is reflected in students' academic progress and personal development, especially in girls' schools that have no "Inadequate" performance. However, performance in some schools requires more focused and organised efforts.

The percentage of government schools receiving an "Inadequate" rating, particularly among boys' schools at the intermediate stage, remains high due to challenges in students' acquisition of basic skills, learning skills, especially reading and writing skills, understanding content, particularly in English, and mathematical skills, which limits their ability to progress in lessons and assignments.

On the other hand, the results of private school reviews show that schools with lower performance need to improve students' Arabic language skills, particularly in essay writing, and require greater support for low-achieving students to ensure they acquire basic knowledge and skills at various stages of education, with a focus on enhancing their academic standards.

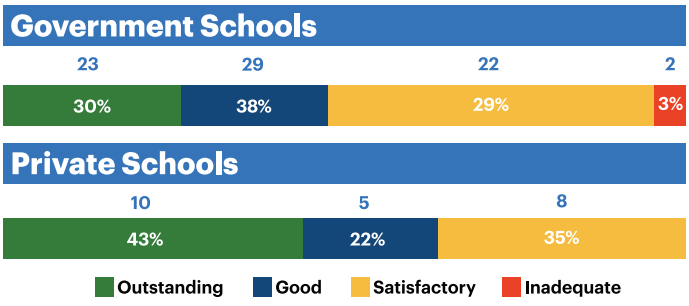
The disparity in performance is also attributed to the varied quality of school examinations and assessments, their challenge to students' abilities, and the accuracy in marking, which has led to a gap between students' results in these examinations and assessments and their actual levels, highlighting the need to align students' assessed performance with their actual competency levels. In contrast, better-performing schools do not show such gaps, as students' levels in lessons align with the results of presented examinations and assessments.

This is consistent with the results of better-performing private schools, where students make significant progress in lessons and written work, especially in English, and possess diverse learning skills, including critical thinking, inquiry, problem-solving, and technological skills. Moreover, these schools achieve high success and proficiency rates in internal and international examinations (if any) for the academic year 2023-2024, reflecting students' ability to learn independently. It is worth noting that the results of one private school and its students' academic achievement were better than the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes.

The evaluation of the **"Students' Personal Development and Well-being"** aspect in the 76 government schools reveals more positive indicators in the results of 30 schools compared to the evaluation of the "Students' Academic Achievement " and the "Overall Effectiveness of the School." The results in more than two-thirds of the schools were "Good" or better, especially in girls' schools, with a significant and noticeable decrease in the percentage of schools with "Inadequate" performance, particularly in boys' schools.

The results in government schools were as follows: 30% of schools were rated "Outstanding," 38% "Good," 29% "Satisfactory," and only 3% received an "Inadequate" judgement. In private schools, the results were as follows: 43% of schools were rated "Outstanding," 22% "Good," 35% were judged "Satisfactory," and no school received an "Inadequate" judgement, as shown in the figure below:

Results of the "Students' Personal Development and Well-being" aspect for 76 government schools and 23 private schools reviewed

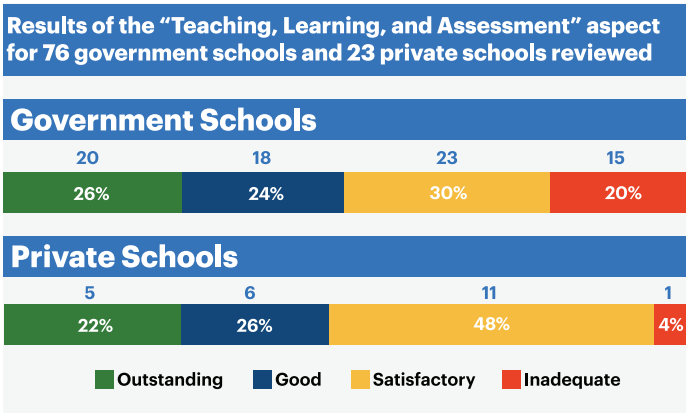


When examining the two criteria of the aspect, the clear improvement in the criterion of student behaviour is evident. This is due to the focus on developing school policies that promote positive behaviour through targeted awareness, guidance, and remedial programmes.

Additionally, providing diverse opportunities for students through extra-curricular programmes and activities that help them discover their interests and promote their talents indoors and outdoors has had a positive impact on developing their personal and leadership qualities. Encouraging cooperation, coexistence, and effective acceptance among students has also enhanced their sense of belonging to the school community. In private schools, students actively participate in cultural events and community projects that enhance their involvement in the local and global community, with a focus on citizenship values.

Furthermore, private schools work to encourage creative thinking and innovation in technology fields, with an emphasis on sustainable development goals. It is worth noting that the "Students' Personal Development and Well-being" aspect was not rated as "Inadequate" in any of the private schools. Despite the positive improvement in this aspect, there is still a need to increase students' motivation and improve their behaviour towards learning, their initiative, and their responsibility for their learning in lessons, especially in some post primary stages in government boys' schools.

When reviewing the **"Teaching, Learning, and Assessment"** aspect in government schools, we find a variation in performance levels, which matches the variation in the results of the overall effectiveness and the "Students' Academic Achievement" aspect. In private schools, we find a disparity in performance levels, with 22% rated as "Outstanding," 26% as "Good," 48% as "Satisfactory," and 4% as "Inadequate," as shown in the following figure:



These results are attributed to the varied effectiveness of the teaching, learning, and assessment procedures provided. In better-performing schools, especially government girls' schools, teachers are observed to manage lessons effectively by employing effective educational and technological strategies and resources, sequencing the presentation of scientific material, providing clear instructions, and using educational activities that challenge students' abilities and cater to their different levels.

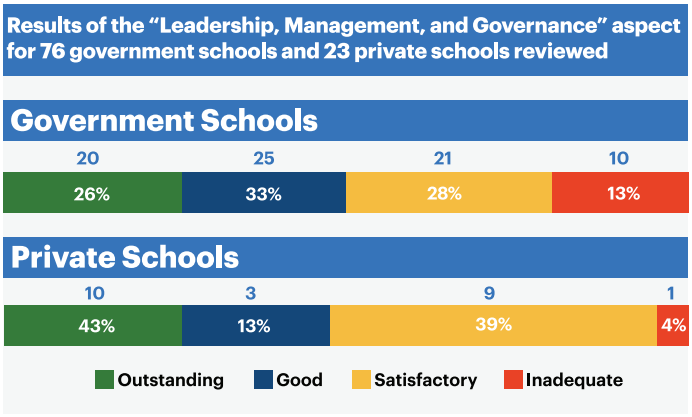
Additionally, learning time is invested in focusing on achieving the lesson objectives and assessing students' learning. In better-performing government and private schools, students actively engage with the educational content, develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and receive clear academic support according to a systematic policy targeting their different educational needs.

In contrast, the effectiveness of learning procedures in lower-performing schools, especially government boys' schools at the intermediate level, has declined. This is due to the limited of focus on student-centred strategies, the inconsistency in presenting educational content appropriate to students' age groups, and the excessive time spent on procedures without sufficient focus on their impact on students' learning. Additionally, assessment methods do not adequately consider curriculum competencies, and neither challenge students' abilities nor sufficiently develop higher-order thinking skills.

There is also a disparity in the effectiveness of academic support programmes for most student groups, in terms of planning and linking them to their actual levels and providing them in a way that meets their needs and covers the gap in their levels in advanced educational stages, especially for low-achieving students. This limits the ability to improve students' academic achievement and progress as required.

When analysing performance data in the **"Leadership, Management, and Governance"** aspect, the results showed a relative improvement in the aspect's performance compared to the overall effectiveness of the school. The performance in more than 87% of government schools was at a "Satisfactory" level or above. The results were as follows: 26% of government schools received an "Outstanding" rating, 33% "Good", 28% "Satisfactory", and 13% received an "Inadequate" rating. It is noteworthy that the "Inadequate" rating was concentrated in boys' schools, and no girls' school received an "Inadequate" rating.

In private schools, the results were as follows: 43% received an "Outstanding" rating, 13% "Good", 39% "Satisfactory", and 4% received an "Inadequate" rating, as shown in the figure below:



When reviewing this aspect, the school's leadership in better-performing schools communicate well with parents and partners and integrate them into school life, with more than two-thirds of government schools receiving "Good" rating or above, and only one school being judged as "Inadequate".

The results indicate the positive awareness of most school leaders, their support for initiatives and projects presented by teaching and administrative staff, and their ability to flexibly address changes and challenges in school life, especially those related to the availability of physical and human resources.

However, it is important to note that some schools are still unable to address certain challenges they face, particularly those related to the gap between students' actual standards and their educational stage.Additionally, there is a need for more targeted efforts to improve teachers' performance and focus on their development through effective professional development programmes and projects to ensure a positive impact on teaching and learning practices in classrooms and meet the curriculum requirements in some lower-performing private schools.

Results of Monitoring Visits

During the second half of the academic year 2024-2025, the Authority conducted five monitoring visits, all to government schools that received an "Inadequate" rating in their last review visit. These visits aimed to assess the progress made by these schools in addressing the recommendations of the review report. All schools were rated as "In Progress," indicating that they have achieved some improvements, particularly in " Students' Personal Development and Well-being" aspect. However, they need to make further efforts to address challenges related to improving students' academic standards, enhancing the effectiveness of teaching, learning, and assessment procedures in lessons and academic support programmes, and focusing more on developing teachers' performance and monitoring the impact of training on teachers' performance.

Effective Practices in Better-Performing Schools

•Effective administrative processes in diagnosing the reality of schools, working on continuous improvement according to effective plans and procedures, and positively and flexibly addressing challenges to efficiently manage school life.

•Building effective communication bridges with parents and partners and working systematically and purposefully to integrate them and assume their roles in school life positively.

•Effective teaching and learning practices provided in lessons and their impact on improving students' academic standards and pushing them towards achieving academic progress that matches their different educational abilities, especially in primary schools.

•Enhancing students' personal and leadership qualities by providing a diverse package of programmes, activities, and extra-curricular events that support students' comprehensive personal development and enrich their diverse experiences.

•Providing teachers' professional development programmes according to teachers' training needs, and working on spreading creative and innovative practices widely, enhancing the integrative approach between different learning communities.

Areas for improvement

•Continuing to address the performance gap between boys and girls' schools more effectively, especially in the aspects of "Students' Academic Achievement" and "Teaching, Learning, and Assessment."

•Working on improving students' standards and their progress in basic skills in various subjects, especially English language skills and mathematical skills, particularly in boys' intermediate schools.

•Developing teachers' professional development practices, linking them to their actual developmental needs, and ensuring accuracy in monitoring the positive impact of training on improving teaching practices in lessons.

•Improving academic support mechanisms to various categories of students in lessons and school programmes, ensuring students' learning, challenging their abilities, developing their critical thinking skills, and motivating them towards learning.

•Aligning the results of school assessments and examinations with students' actual levels and their proficiency in mastering basic skills, ensuring the quality of preparing school assessments and examinations, and accuracy in grading them.

Kindergartens

The Authority launched the Kindergartens Reviews Framework to enhance the quality of early childhood education. The Framework focuses on three main areas:

1. Children's growth and development
2. Child-initiated learning
3. Leadership and management.

The Kindergartens Reviews Framework was developed collaboratively with partners in 2024, including an Advisory committee from the Ministry of Education and Bahrain Teachers College, as well as local and international experts. It took into account international standards and best practices, stakeholder consultations, and field visits to a sample of kindergartens to ensure the Framework's effectiveness. The pilot phase

covered 15 independent kindergartens evaluated over two days each. This phase helped improve review tools and build trust with the sector in preparation for the first cycle of reviews.

In the second semester, reviews were conducted for 22 independent kindergartens across various governorates over two-day visits, during which self-evaluation forms were analysed, classroom observations were conducted, and parents' opinions were surveyed.

General Results

The reviews revealed effective practices and common areas for development in most kindergartens. Kindergartens with conscious leadership and professional staff performed positively in all three areas, confirming that the quality of leadership and internal professionalisation significantly impacts performance effectiveness. Parents expressed general satisfaction with the care and values promoted by kindergartens, although their awareness of early childhood education quality concepts remains limited. Most kindergartens showed a high level of positive interaction during review visits and a clear commitment to development and benefiting from feedback sessions.

Effective Practices in better performing Kindergartens

- Healthy social and emotional growth, with children showing self-confidence, cooperation, and independence.
- A safe learning environment equipped with resources supporting sensory and fine motor skills.
- integrating Islamic and national values in daily activities.
- Positive and supportive relationships between children and teachers in kindergartens.

Areas for improvement

- Ensuring effective and directed communication between teachers and children by enhancing open dialogue and language modeling contributes to the development of thinking and language skills, such as imagination and problem-solving.
- Improving the application of child-led, play-based learning by providing sensory and interactive experiences that allow the child to explore and lead their learning in a stimulating environment.
- Continuing to develop teachers' targeted professional programmes that meet the needs of early childhood practitioners and focus on appropriate teaching methods for this stage.
- Enhancing self-evaluation practices and data-driven planning to ensure continuous improvement based on a precise understanding of key positives and areas for development.

The second phase of the review cycle will commence in the first semester of the 2025-2026 academic year. The Authority will continue to develop reviewers' skills, organise training in collaboration with partners, and consider expanding reviews to cover kindergartens in private schools.

Special Education Needs institustions

As part of the Authority's strategic plan implementation, the experimental phase of the "Special Education Needs Review" initiative was launched as a qualitative initiative aimed at improving the quality of educational services provided to learners with special needs in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Through this initiative, the "Special Education Needs Review Handbook " was developed to be an annex to the various reviews frameworks adopted by the Education and Training Quality Authority, contributing to enhancing the comprehensiveness of the evaluation.

The initiative was implemented through systematic stages, starting with defining the scope and gathering basic information, followed by developing a comprehensive roadmap that included conducting five exploratory visits to special education institutions to assess the current situation and identify actual needs. Additionally, three meetings were held for both the Advisory Committee and the Working Group Committee responsible for developing the Reviews Handbook to discuss cooperation mechanisms and develop the SEN Review Handbook's content and evaluation mechanisms.

As part of awareness and training efforts, three training sessions were organised for relevant partners, and an interactive electronic forum for parents was launched to enhance community communication. During the pilot phase, six licensed SEN institutions were piloted, covering all categories of SEN institutions across the Kingdom of Bahrain. The phase concluded with the final draft of the SEN Review Handbook being uploaded to the BQA website for feedback from stakeholders.

Results of the Pilot Reviews

The results of the pilot reviews conducted from January 28 to February 28, 2025, showed varied performance levels. Some institutions demonstrated the ability to implement effective educational and organisational practices, while others showed inconsistent capabilities, highlighting the need to enhance development efforts and technical support.

Effective Practices in Better-Performing Institutions

- Proactive leadership capable of addressing challenges innovatively.
- Clear and disseminated organisational practices to ensure institutional performance sustainability.
- Availability of educational and organisational documents, records, and policies, with easy access.
- Sufficient human and physical resources to effectively support learning processes.

Areas for improvement

- Enhancing the quality of learning experiences provided to learners in teaching and learning aspects.
- Updating organisational and educational policies and procedures to be more comprehensive.
- Developing curricula and local programmes to align with the latest educational practices.
- Improving the content of individual educational plans to ensure the achievement of specified educational goals.
- Expanding the scope of basic and supportive services to enhance comprehensive support for learners.

The next phase of the initiative aims to continue efforts by submitting the Special Education Needs Review Handbook to the Cabinet for approval. Furthermore, the Authority will upload the accompanying training toolkit to its website to ensure its availability to all partners and enhance effective implementation across various relevant institutions.

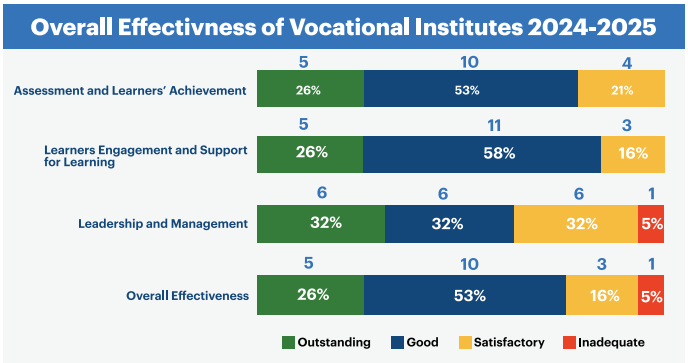
Vocational Training Institutions

The 19 reviewed institutions, which results were published in the academic year 2024-2025, provide support to approximately 30,919 learners with a demographic distribution of 26% female and 74% male across various fields. The distribution of study areas includes 31% in Leadership, Management, and Human Resource Development, 16% in Information and Communications Technology, 13% in Business and Commerce, and 13% in Health & Safety. The remaining 27% of qualifications cover a range of diverse learning areas, including Aviation and Fashion.

The Monitoring Visit conducted in the academic year 2024-2025 for one institute reviewed in Cycle 4 shows that the institute has successfully implemented several measures to address most of the recommendations, receiving an 'In Progress' judgement. The review results published during this academic year indicate that, out of 19 vocational institutes, five were judged as 'Outstanding' in Overall Effectiveness, 10 'Good,' 3 'Satisfactory', and one received an 'Inadequate' judgement.

Compared to their previous performance in Cycle 4, nine institutes continued to achieve 'Good' or above in their Overall Effectiveness, while two institutes demonstrated significant improvement, achieving an 'Outstanding' judgement. Meanwhile, two institutes remain 'Satisfactory' in their Overall Effectiveness. Additionally, among the newly reviewed institutes, five successfully met the BQA review requirements -four attaining a 'Good' judgement and one received a 'Satisfactory' rating. However, one new institute did not meet the BQA review requirements and received an 'Inadequate' judgement.

Below is an analysis of 19 vocational institutes across three Aspects. Given that the 'Assessment and Learners' Achievement' Aspect is the most critical, influencing Overall Effectiveness, its judgement is consistently aligned with the institute's overall performance. Institutes generally perform better in the 'Learners Engagement and Support for Learning' Aspect, where the majority provide positive and supportive environments that actively promote learning and engage learners throughout the learning process. Additionally, the performance of institutes in leadership and management development remains inconsistent and requires greater focus for improvement.



Effective Practices in Better-performing Institutions

- Strong leadership with extensive expertise in the fields of provision, facilitating industry collaboration, and insight into market dynamics.
- Well-structured assessment processes that effectively measure learners' skills development and progressive attainment of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), enabling most learners to acquire essential knowledge and vocational skills, achieve high proficiency rates, and complete their qualifications in a timely manner.
- Trainers with strong subject expertise effectively utilise training methodologies and offer targeted learner support, enriching the learning experience.

Areas for improvement

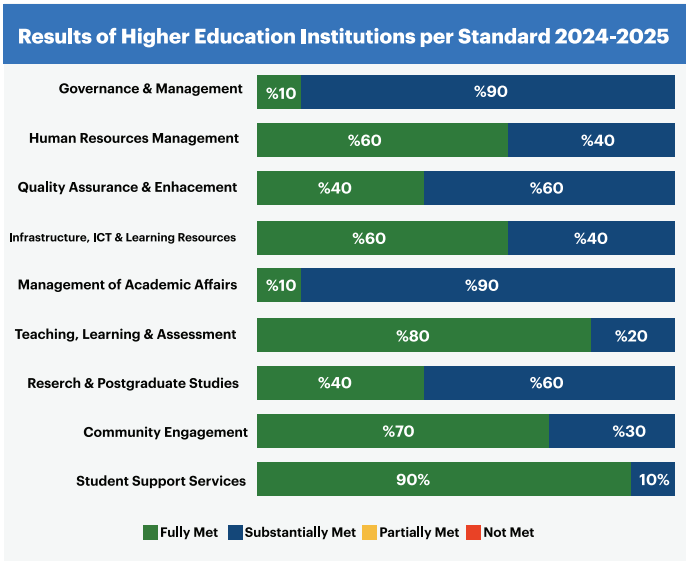
- Further strengthening learners' theoretical knowledge while enhancing practical skills to improve the achievement of Intended learing Outcomes.
- Leveraging training strategies to better engage less active learners and promote the development of problem-solving and hands-on critical thinking skills essential for workplace success.
- Optimising the use of self-assessment results for supporting strategic planning and driving ongoing improvement efforts.
- Enhancing the effectiveness of training session observations for ensuring thorough monitoring and consistently improving the quality of training.

Higher Education Institutions

The review results of 15 academic programmes published during the 2024-2025 academic year show that all of them received a 'Confidence' judgement. As a result, the consolidated outcomes of the second Acdamic Programme Reviews (APR) reviews cycle, which evaluated 132 academic programmes, indicate that 127 programmes 96% were awarded 'Confidence,' while five programmes 4% received a 'No Confidence' judgement. One of these programmes underwent a follow-up visit and was subsequently awarded an 'Adequate Progress' judgement. These results demonstrate a significant improvement in the performance of HEIs compared to the first APR Reviews Cycle (Phase 1 and Phase 2). This progress is partly attributed to programmes that initially received a 'Limited Confidence' judgement and sought to enhance their performance before being reassessed in an extension review visit, ultimately earning 'Confidence' judgements. Furthermore, institutions are taking a more proactive approach by increasing staff awareness of quality assurance requirements and recruiting experienced professionals to meet review standards.

With respect to the Institutional Reviews (IR published results, 10 institutions received the judgement 'Compliant with the General Framework Standards.' These institutions comprise two government and eight private HEIs, offering undergraduate and postgraduate academic programmes to around 53,735 students, with a demographic distribution of 57% female and 43% male across diverse fields of study.

As shown below, analysis of the results from 10 HEIs across the nine IR Standards indicates that institutions generally perform better in providing student support services as well as teaching, learning, and assessment. Most identified areas for improvement fall within governance and management of academic affairs, as well as quality assurance. Most HEIs need to enhance their practices through benchmarking, ensure consistent application of policies and procedures, and effectively utilize analysed data to enhance performance.



Effective Practices in Better-performing Institutions & Programmes

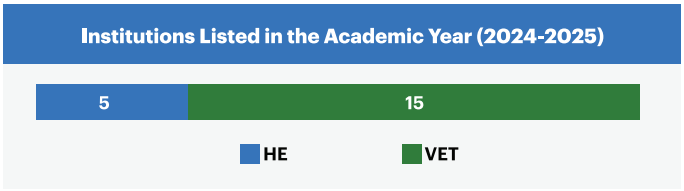
- The comprehensive structured processes established for designing and reviewing academic programmes integrate benchmarking, market analysis, and stakeholder inputs to ensure relevance and quality.
- The close collaboration with industry and government partners along with the mutually beneficial partnerships with distinguished HEIs.
- The implementation of advanced learning management systems to enhance student support, along with robust information management and tracking systems for continuous monitoring of core operations.
- The considerable efforts put forward to promote a supportive learning environment that fosters lifelong learning, ensuring students have equal opportunities across well-structured programmes, continuous evaluation, diverse extra-curricular activities, and active community engagement.
- The systematic approach to professional development, offering professional certifications and online training opportunities to enhance the skills and expertise of both academic and non-academic staff.
- The strong commitment to social responsibility by undertaking diverse initiatives to support the local community, advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), and actively involving both internal and external stakeholders.
- The provision of scholarships and financial aid to support students from various backgrounds, including those who have discontinued their education, enabling their return to academic pursuits while promoting inclusivity and educational equity.

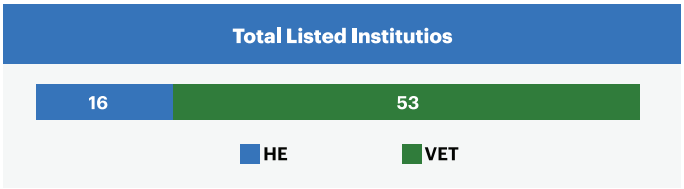
Areas for improvement

- Strengthening the governance framework by clearly separating duties between the governing body and management while defining the relationship and reporting lines between the Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees.
- Developing comprehensive annual operational plans for all academic and administrative departments, tracking progress toward annual targets while aligning with and supporting the strategic plan.
- Ensuring consistent implementation, regular updating, and systematic review of all policies and procedures to assess their effectiveness.
- Establishing a structured approach for systematically gathering and analysing data from diverse sources, including benchmarking and surveys, to foster ongoing improvement across all areas.
- Conducting regular reviews and updates of research-related policies to strengthen support for research activities, encourage innovation, and enhance their impact on teaching and learning.
- Ensuring that the numerous community engagement and outreach activities are more strategically oriented and linked to the vision and mission of the institution.

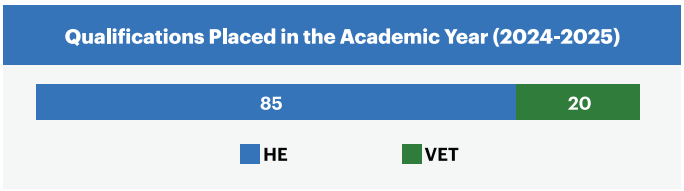
National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

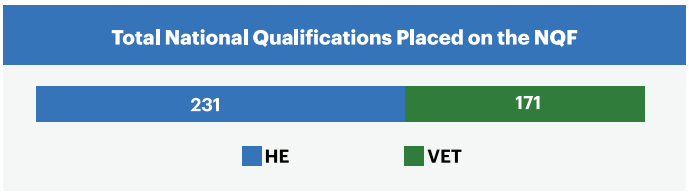
During the academic year 2024-2025, the BQA listed 20 education and training institutions in the NQF Register, of which 5 are Higher Education (HE) and 15 are Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions. In contrast, 5 institutions were archived, bringing the total number of Education and Training Institutions listed in the NQF to 69, which is equivalent to 76% of the total licensed institutions, as shown in the below Figure.

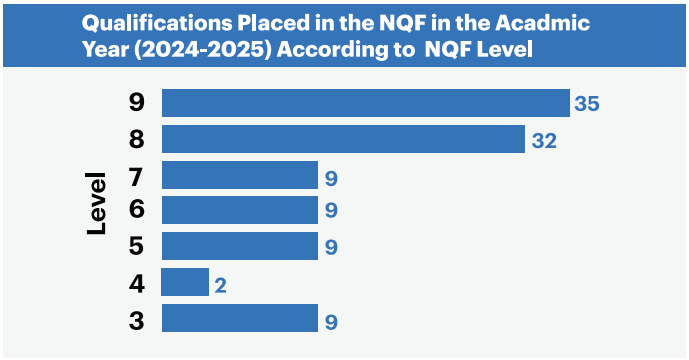




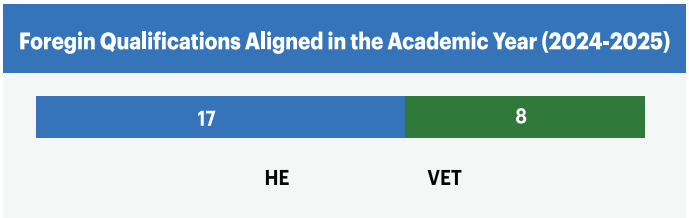
In addition, 105 national qualifications have been placed on the NQF, including 85 HE qualifications and 20 VET qualifications. In contrast, one 1 national qualification was archived, bringing the total number of qualifications placed on the NQF to 402, which is equivalent to (52%) of the total licensed national qualifications, as shown in the Figure below. Moreover, 15 qualifications were re-validated to maintain their status on the NQF, including 12 HE qualifications and 3 VET qualifications.

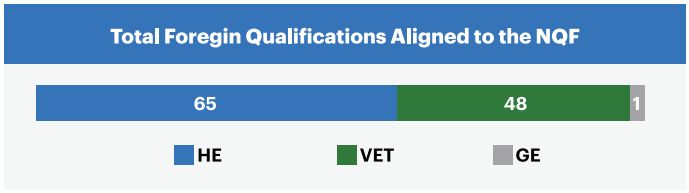




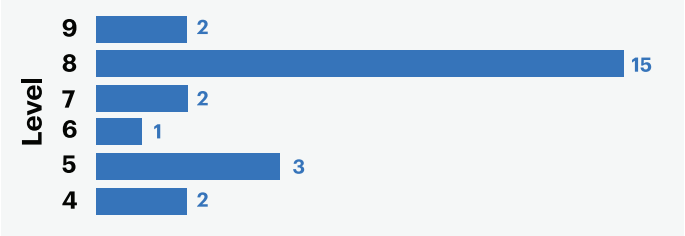


25 foreign qualifications have been aligned to the NQF, including 17 HE qualifications and 8 VET qualifications. 5 VET qualifications were archived, bringing the total number of foreign qualifications aligned to the NQF to 114, which is equivalent to 30% of the total licensed foreign qualifications, as shown in the Figure below. In addition, one aligned VET qualification was revalidated.





Foreign Qualifications Aligned to the NQF in the Acadmic Year (2024-2025) According to NQF Level



As a result of the continuous coordination between the BQA and its partners, including the Ministry of Labour, the Higher Education Council, and the Labour Fund (Tamkeen), to activate the joint mechanisms to link the NQF operations to licensing and funding processes; the following points have been identified:

- A 20% increase in the institutional listing completion rate, with a 66% increase in the number of listed institutions compared to those listed in the previous year, most of which are VET institutions.
- A 13% increase in the qualification placement completion rate, with the total number of qualifications placed this year exceeding three times compared to the previous year, most of which are HE qualifications.
- A 6% increase in the alignment of foreign qualifications completion rate, most of which are HE qualifications.

Effective Practices in Better-performing Institutions

- Vocational Education and Training institutes demonstrated higher compliance with the NQF requirements, resulting in an increase in the number of the listed institutions.
- Many higher Education institutions have aligned their qualification development and reviews cycles with the validity periods defined by NQF, establishing a systematic and consistent quality assurance approach.
- Several higher education institutions have introduced exit and bridging qualifications as part of their degree programmes, supporting the recognition of learners' achievements, enabling flexible learning pathways, and enhancing access and mobility within the education system.
- Several awarding bodies implement a well-defined cycle for developing and reviewing their qualifications. This approach ensures industry relevance, supports continuous improvement, and enables systematic updates - ultimately maintaining the credibility and quality of their qualifications over time.

Areas for improvement

- Vocational Education and Training institutes need to establish a clear plan for their active qualifications to facilitate their timely inclusion in the NQF Register.
- Vocational Education and Training institutes still need to improve their policies and procedures for accumulating and transferring credit hours by establishing a clear mechanism for credit identification, accumulation, and transfer.
- Vocational Education and Training institutes need to implement a clearly defined qualification cycle, more robust assessment verification and moderation procedures, and maintain high standards in the delivery process in line with international best practices.
- Both Vocational and Higher Education institutions need to improve their mechanisms for documenting and following up on the outcomes of their quality assurance activities, which will support more effective improvements of their quality assurance systems.

National Examinations

The Authority held the national examinations for Grades 12 and 9 during the following periods:	
Grade 12	**27-29 April 2025**
Grade 9	**6-11 May 2025**

Grade 12 National Examinations cover the following subjects:	
Arabic	Paper 1 for Writing and Paper 2 for Reading.
English	Paper 1 for Writing and Paper 2 for Listening and Reading.
Mathematical skills	1 paper

Grade 9 National Examinations cover the following subjects:	
Arabic	Paper 1 for Listening and Writing and Paper 2 for Reading.
English	Paper 1 for Writing and Paper 2 for Listening and Reading.
Mathematics	1 paper
Science	1 paper

The national examinations consist of essay questions in Arabic listening and writing examinations, as well as in the English writing examination, whereas the remaining examinations consist of multiple-choice questions that are marked automatically. Grades 9 and 12 Arabic language examinations specifications have been developed; the reading paper has been transformed from short-answer questions to multiple-choice questions while maintaining the core competencies and it has been implemented and marked automatically. The BQA analyses national examinations results in cooperation with the international partner "Evaluation department from Cambridge University", using the performance referencing methodology with a standardised scale from 0 to 100.

From 2022 to 2024, a cohort referencing method was used during Covid-19 which allowed comparing students' performance relative to their peers within the same cohort and using a standarised scale from 0 to 50. In 2025, the performance referencing methodology was readopted, BQA shifted from cohort referencing to performance referencing method. This process will involve establishing performance levels based on statistical data and experts' professional judgments, enabling the comparison of student performance over the years. A student's pass grade is classified into five levels ranging from (A to E), while level (U) indicates that the student has not obtained the passing grade.

Results are reported using the 'Grade Boundaries' method for each subject, which is an established model for awarding grades that aligns with international standards.

The table below shows the ranges of marks for each performance level:

Performance Level	Mark Range
A	100%-90%
B	89%-80%
C	79%-70%
D	69%-60%
E	59%-50%
U	Less than 50%

The participation of students in the national examinations was as follows:

Grade 12		
12,160 students	from	38 government schools
Representing all government secondary schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain.		
530 students	from	16 private schools
participated voluntarily in the English and mathematical skills examinations.		
467 students	from	13 private schools
participated voluntarily in the Arabic examination.		

Grade 9		
12,839 students	from	62 government schools
Representing all intermediate government schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain.		

The results of this year's national examinations for Grade 12 showed that students performed best in mathematical skills, followed by Arabic, then English. As for the results of Grade 9 national examinations, the best performance was in the scientific subjects, mathematics and science, where identical percentages were achieved in both subjects, followed by Arabic and then English.

Grade 12

The Figure below shows the overall performance average in the core subjects, as well as the average performance for each subject:

Overall Performance Average 50.5/100		
Arabic	**English**	**Mathematical skills**
50.4/100	46.3/100	55/100

The following Figures show the percentage of students in government schools at performance levels (A-E) and level (U):

Arabic Overall Performance Average 50.4/100	
Percentage of students at performance levels (A-E) **55.7%**	Percentage of students at performance level (U) **44.3%**

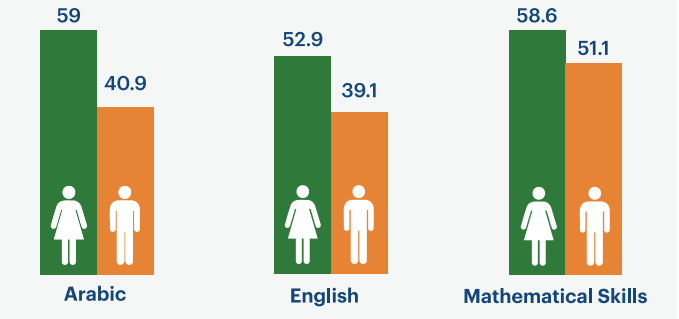
English Overall Performance Average 46.3/100	
Percentage of students at performance levels (A-E) **47.9%**	Percentage of students at performance level (U) **52.1%**

Mathematical Skills Overall Performance Average 55/100	
Percentage of students at performance levels (A-E) **60.5%**	Percentage of students at performance level (U) **39.5%**

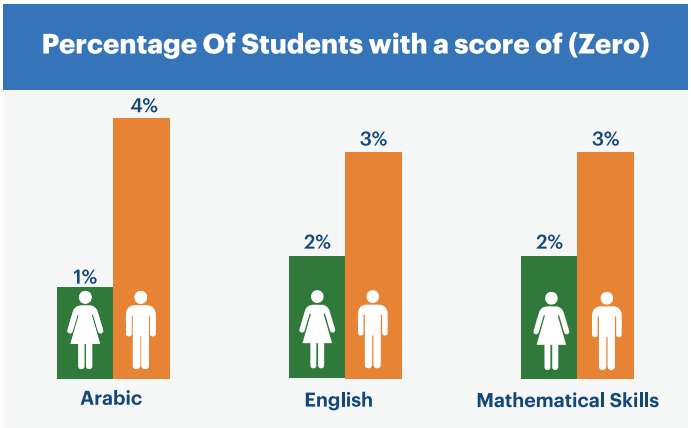
Students' Performance by Gender and Type of Education:

Girls continue to outperform boys in various subjects, particularly in Arabic as shown in the Chart below:

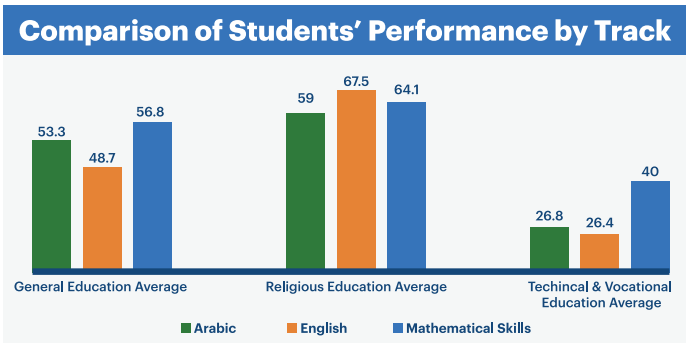
Comparison of Performance Average in Subjects between Boys and Girls



In addition, boys scored (zero) more than girls, including those who were absent from the examination, as shown in the following Chart:



Comparisons of students' performance show that students in the religious education track outperformed students in both general education and technical and vocational education tracks. There is also a noted decline in the performance of technical and vocational education track students in both Arabic and English compared to other tracks; as shown in the following Chart:



Private Schools Students' Performance:

Private schools students sat the Grade 12 national examinations voluntarily, as 530 students from 16 private schools took part in the English and mathematical skills examinations, while 467 students from 13 private schools sat the Arabic examination.

The following Figure shows the performance average in various subjects and percentage of students at performance levels (A-E) and level (U):

Arabic Overall Performance Average 61.4/100	
Percentage of students at performance levels (A-E) 76%	Percentage of students at performance level (U) 24%

English Overall Performance Average 79/100	
Percentage of students at performance levels (A-E) 5%	Percentage of students at performance level (U) 95%

Mathematical Skills Overall Performance Average 69.3/100	
Percentage of students at performance levels (A-E) 88.6%	Percentage of students at performance level (U) 11.4%

Effective Practices

- Understanding the main requirements in the questions and appropriately employing vocabulary and rules of grammar and spelling, as well as extracting explicit meanings and having the ability to criticise and evaluate in Arabic.
- Listening skills and the ability to write an essay, and to identify key and detailed information in English.
- The skills of identifying similar data and extracting and processing data in mathematical skills.

Areas for improvement

- Employing writing skills in report and essay writing, while elaborating on ideas, identifying pivotal dualities and analysing characters in Arabic reading texts.

- Employing writing skills in English essay writing, while elaborating on ideas and presenting appropriate arguments as well as the critical and analytical reading of texts, and understanding the implicit meanings and linguistic connotations in them.

- Employing the skills of dealing with problems; particularly those related to making choices and decisions and searching for solutions.

Grade 9

The Figure below shows Grade 9 overall performance average in the core subjects, as well as the average performance for each subject:

Overall Performance Average 54/100			
Arabic	**English**	**Mathematics**	**Science**
50.8/100	47.2/100	59/100	59/100

The Figures below show the percentage of students in government schools at performance levels (A-E) and level (U):

Arabic Overall Performance Average 50.8/100	
Percentage of students at performance levels (A-E) **62%**	Percentage of students at performance level (U) **38%**

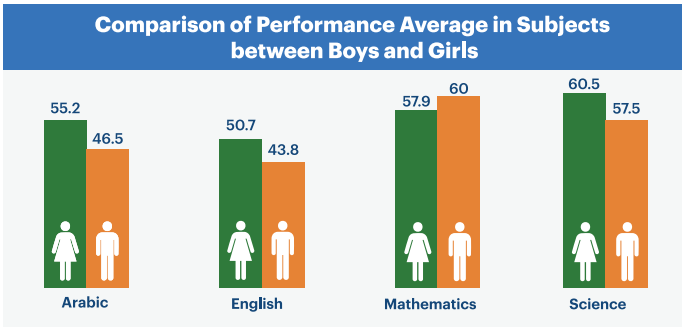
English Overall Performance Average 47.2/100	
Percentage of students at performance levels (A-E) **46%**	Percentage of students at performance level (U) **54%**

Mathematics Overall Performance Average 59/100	
Percentage of students at performance levels (A-E) **75%**	Percentage of students at performance level (U) **25%**

Mathematics Overall Performance Average 59/100	
Percentage of students at performance levels (A-E) **73.6%**	Percentage of students at performance level (U) **26.4%**

Students' Performance by Gender:

The analysis of boys and girls results in intermediate schools shows that girls continue to clearly outperform boys in Arabic and English, while both genders achieved almost similar performance in mathematics and science, as shown in the Figure below:



Effective Practices

- Identifying explicit meanings in listening and reading, criticising reading texts and appreciating their beauty aspects in Arabic.
- Understanding and responding to the writing topic, while adhering to the word limit in Arabic.
- The ability to write a personal email based on given requirements while adhering to the specified word count in English.
- Identifying details, attitudes, purpose and opinions, and demonstrating the general understanding of detailed information from English listening scripts.
- The knowledge and concepts in the fields of numbers and algebra, geometry and measurement.
- Recalling and understanding the basic knowledge skills and application of scientific concepts in natural sciences, earth and space.

Areas for improvement

- Developing Arabic and English writing skills, in terms of the ability to produce ideas effectively, construct arguments and viewpoints and provide logical reasoning and justifications.
- Extracting postions and implicit meanings in listening and reading texts, while criticising listening to materials and appreciating their beauty aspects in Arabic.
- Applying grammar and morphology rules in reading Arabic texts.
- Understanding the implicit meanings and inferences and distinguishing between correct answers and distractors in English listening and reading texts.
- Understanding reading texts, matching the information to their paraphrased expressions in questions, and employing vocabulary and rules of grammar to understand English reading texts.
- The use and application of scientific concepts and knowledge in the fields of numbers and algebra, geometry and measurement, data analysis and probability in diverse contexts.
- Application and integration in the fields of biology and environmental science, as well as applying mathematical relationships in the field of natural sciences.

Recommendations

BQA in analysing the performance of Bahrain's education system, as outlined in this report, central themes emerge and our evidence leads BQA to formulate the following system recommendations in order to support improvement and increase performance across all stages:

For BQA

•Continue cooperation and coordination with strategic partners to ensure value added and sustained growth in our collaborative efforts.

•Continue to improve procedures and processes according to best international practices.

•Build national capacities and enhance the culture of quality in educational and training institutions.

For Regulating bodies

•Develop curricula to focus on higher-order thinking skills, problem-solving, decision-making, and improving writing skills in both Arabic and English.

•Provide professional development programmes and monitor their impact on enhancing teaching and training.

•Strengthen follow-up processes on improvement plans and ensure that programmes are aligned with labour market requirements and graduate employment.

For Education and Training institutions

•Encourage a culture of self-evaluation and enhance the institutional leadership's ability to adapt and optimise the use of available resources.

•Ensure the quality of student assessment and making processes, and provide academic support to low-performing students.

•Monitor the impact of teachers' professional development.

•Offer programmes that meet the labour market needs.

Summary

Government and private schools showed notable improvement in performance especially in student behaviour, effective community participation, and the effective use of educational resources , especially technological resources in private schools. However, some government schools still face challenges in enabling students to acquire basic skills and there is a need for greater academic support, enhancement of teacher's professional development, and ensuring the quality of school assessments and examinations.

Reviews of kindergartens revealed effective practices, such as providing a safe environment for children and supporting their social and emotional growth. However, it is recommended to enhance dialogue between teachers and children, promote play-based learning approaches, and develop targeted professional programmes for early childhood teachers.

Pilot reviews of Special Education Needs institutions highlighted effective practices in policy clarity and resource availability. It is recommended to enhance the quality of learning experiences, update organisational and educational policies, develop curriculum, individual educational plans, and support services.

The results of vocational institutes showed some effective practices such as proactive stakeholder engagement and experienced trainers,while there was a need for diversifying training programmes and improved self-assessment process, and utilizing results for continuous improvement.

The review results of higher education institutions show improvements in performance, with better compliance with quality standards, and a strong commitment to student support and academic quality, while further enhancement is recommended in governance, strategic planning, and systematic data gathering and analysis.

As for the NQF operations, there is significant improvement in institutions' compliance with NQF requirements, however, there is a need for VET institutes to establish clear plans for active qualifications and improve assessment procedures. Both VET and HE institutions need to enhance documentation and follow-up mechanisms for quality assurance activities.

As for Grade 12 students' performance in the national examinations, results show that students performed well in basic skills and were less proficient in higher order thinking skills. It is recommended to develop students' skills and abilities in understanding written and spoken texts, critical and analytical reading, writing skills in preparing reports in Arabic and English, problem-solving skills, and writing skills in Arabic for private school students.

With regard to Grade 9 students' performance in the national examinations, students demonstrated a good grasp of basic knowledge and concepts. It is recommended to develop students' higher order thinking skills, writing skills in Arabic and English, and the application of mathematics in the fields of numbers and algebra, geometry and measurement, data analysis, and probability. Finally, it is recommended to apply scientific concepts in the fields of natural sciences, life science, and the environment.

هيئة جودة التعليم والتدريب

Education & Training Quality Authority