



هيئة ضمان جودة التعليم و التدريب
Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training

Vocational Review Unit Review Report

Human Performance Improvement

Manama

Kingdom of Bahrain

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The Vocational Review Unit

The Vocational Review Unit (VRU) is part of the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET), an independent body set up under Royal Decree No.32 of 2008 amended by Royal Decree No. 6 of 2009. Established to raise standards in vocational education and training, the VRU is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the quality of vocational provision, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, establishing success measures, spreading best practice and offering policy advice to key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education.

Reviews are based on the VRU's *Review Framework*, and carried out on providers' premises by teams of carefully selected and highly trained reviewers. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the planning of the review, and to represent them during review team meetings. Reviewers examine a range of evidence before arriving at a series of judgements and awarding grades for the quality of the provision.

Review grades are awarded on a four-point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
1: Outstanding	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all aspects and outstanding in the majority.
2: Good	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least satisfactory in all aspects and good in the majority. There may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
3: Satisfactory	This describes a basic level of adequacy. There are no major areas of weakness which substantially affect what learners, or significant groups of learners, achieve. There may be some features which are good.
4: Inadequate	This describes situations where major weaknesses in some areas affect the outcomes for learners and outweigh any strengths in the provision.

Introduction

Description of the provision

Human Performance Improvement (HPI) was established in 2001 and was licensed by the Ministry of Labor (MoL) as a training and consultant office. In April 2010, it converted to being a training provider. HPI mainly offers non-accredited courses in management and soft skills.

HPI is located in Manama. It is managed by a general manager, who is the owner of the institute, and employs an administration and finance manager who is also involved in the marketing and supervises a public relations and training supervisor, a public relations and training coordinator and an office manager. HPI has a pool of around 15 local and regional part-time trainers who work as and when needed.

During the last two years, HPI enrolled 927 learners from both public and private sectors, the vast majority of whom were sponsored by their employers.

Scope of the review

This review was conducted over three days, by a team of three reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed training sessions, analysed data about the courses and qualifications learners achieve, examined learners' written and other work, examined documents and the materials provided by the provider and talked with staff, learners, employers, and trainers.

This report summarises reviewers' findings and their recommendations about what the provider should do to improve.

Table of review judgments awarded

Overall Effectiveness	
How effective is the provision in raising learners' achievement and meeting the full range of learners' and stakeholders' needs?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Learners' Achievement	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Quality of Provision	
How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
How well do courses meet the needs and interests of learners and stakeholders?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all students?	Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

HPI provision is satisfactory across the board. The institute offers a range of non-accredited short courses in management and personal skills which generally meet learners' and stakeholders' needs although limited additional activities are provided to enhance the courses. The majority of learners make adequate progress considering their prior attainment and develop appropriate skills and knowledge useful to their work and personal lives. The reported pass rates are high but these do not accurately reflect the standard of knowledge and understanding seen in the observed lessons and demonstrated in learners' work. Nonetheless, learners enjoy their learning experience and the majority are self-motivated. Trainers are qualified and have sufficient experience in teaching and training. In the most effective lessons, trainers succeed in engaging and motivating learners whilst in the least effective lessons, delivery is too trainer-centred with minimal engagement and individual differences are not always addressed. Learners are assessed adequately during lessons and useful verbal feedback is provided although the correction of written work is inconsistent.

Trainers are approachable and supportive, administration staff are helpful and responsive and learners have access to well-informed advice and guidance on courses. However, learners are insufficiently aware of their progress, or what they need to do to improve further, although communication with stakeholders is effective in informing them on learners' achievement. HPI's leadership and management have a general understanding of the provision's areas for development and strategic planning is suitably focused on these aspects although the performance of trainers is insufficiently monitored. Learners' feedback is regularly sought and analysed and used to improve the provision. Although links with employers from both the public and private sectors are sustained, their feedback is not systematically sought.

HPI's capacity to improve is satisfactory. During the last two years, the management has done some recent improvements to the provision which include, introducing new courses, becoming an approved centre for City & Guilds international examinations, and receiving the approval of City & Guilds to offer two externally accredited courses and the planned implementation of a quality management system based on QAAET requirements, with the support of Tamkeen, to improve the quality of provision. However, the impact of these improvements has not yet been realised. Although the number of enrolments decreased by

40 per cent between 2010 and 2011 from 581 to 346 learners, repeat business was good in both years. HPI uses a number of administration checks which provide indicators on the quality of training provided. The current level of human resources is limited, an aspect identified in the provider's SWOT. However, HPI collaborates with a regional partner to provide sufficient support in the development, review and updating of the course material.

Learners' achievement

How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The majority of learners develop appropriate and relevant skills and knowledge which are useful for their work and sometimes for their personal life. They make adequate progress considering their prior attainment. However, a few learners do not achieve all the course objectives and consider the progress they make as minimal with the courses not up to their expectations. Learners' achievement is suitably measured; assessment is valid and reliable to measure learners' understanding and progress. Although the reported achievement rates are high across all courses, these rates are not reflected in the observed lessons or in the standards of the learners' work. Furthermore, individual performance reports do not always reflect the actual performance of learners with all learners given high marks but these do not always reflect the marks scored in their post-course assessments.

The majority of learners are self-motivated and enjoy their learning experience at HPI. In the majority of the observed lessons, learners were able to work independently or collaboratively, as leader or team member respectively. In a minority of the lessons observed, learners were able to challenge each other and effectively question their trainer. Attendance and punctuality are always recorded. From the attendance records and in most of the observed lessons, learners are attending regularly but punctuality is an issue. Some learners arrived to their lessons more than thirty minutes late.

The quality of provision

How effective is teaching and/or training in promoting learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Most of the lessons observed were satisfactory, with a significant minority good and a few judged as inadequate. HPI trainers are qualified with good command of their specialisms and have sufficient years of experience in teaching and training. This was clearly reflected in their accurate explanations, knowledgeable responses to learners' questions and use of relevant vocational examples. Lessons usually start on time with the sharing of objectives and time is generally managed well, although in a minority of the lessons observed activities took more time than needed. Although lessons are planned, the plans used by trainers are basic and there is no evidence of the use of initial or continuous assessment for better accommodation of learners' varying needs. This was confirmed in a significant minority of the lessons observed.

In the more effective lessons, learners were engaged and motivated and were enabled to further their understanding of the session topic and solve relevant problems. In the least effective lessons, delivery was too trainer-centred with minimal involvement and participation by learners. Trainers assess learners' understanding appropriately through formative assessment and useful verbal feedback is provided. However, correction and marking of learners' written work are inconsistent with no clear marking scheme used. Although HPI trainers maintain adequate records of learners' progress, these do not always reflect the actual performance of learners. The available resources and materials are used appropriately.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

HPI offers a variety of non-accredited short courses in management and personal skills which generally meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. A few courses have suitable progression levels. In April 2011, HPI received City & Guilds approval to offer two externally accredited courses in selling and customer service although these courses have not yet been offered or implemented. Course materials are internally designed in collaboration with a regional partner and are regularly reviewed and updated to meet stakeholders' needs. Some employers communicate with HPI by e-mail regarding course material and HPI use the comments received to update course materials. A few courses have been customised to meet the specific needs of stakeholders. However, HPI do not have a formal mechanism in place to gather and analyse stakeholders' views on the quality and relevance of the courses offered, or to collect their training needs.

The majority of learners are satisfied with the range of offered courses although a few stakeholders stated that for some courses the title of the course do not always reflect the content. Courses are planned and structured appropriately to meet the needs of learners and stakeholders; however, a few learners found the course duration either too short or too long for some of the courses. Limited additional activities are provided to enhance courses and enrich learners' experience.

How well are learners supported and guided to achieve better outcomes?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Learners at HPI receive appropriate support and guidance but are insufficiently aware of their performance or what they need to do to improve further. Administrative staff are helpful and responsive to learners' and stakeholders' queries and trainers are approachable

and supportive. Trainers provide learners with their e-mail addresses and contact numbers to communicate with them when needed on work matters. However, the support provided is *ad-hoc* and is inconsistent across trainers. Learners have access to well-informed advice about courses; brochures are informative and the website is updated and user-friendly. Course outlines and content are specified in writing, are accurate and always made available to stakeholders in advance of the courses starting.

HPI communicates effectively with employers to inform them about learners' performance with detailed individual performance reports sent at the end of each course. Employers are satisfied with the follow-up and this communication. Premises are fit for purpose; HPI conduct most of their training activities in suitable hospitality venues with most learners satisfied with the standards and the facilities provided. Arrangements for the delivery of courses are appropriately flexible to suit the needs of learners and stakeholders although a few learners stated that the timing of courses does not always suit them, especially after the long working day. Clients who are not satisfied with any training event for any reason are compensated with a free course.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Management is aware of the institute's areas for development and uses some administrative checks as indicators to oversee the quality of provision. Appropriate training staff are recruited but their performance is insufficiently monitored. Although learners' views are regularly sought and acted upon appropriately, employers' views and feedback are not systematically gathered to inform decision making and improve the provision further.

HPI has a clear mission statement which is shared with senior staff and has developed a strategic plan based on an appropriate SWOT analysis. Objectives are suitably focused on improving the quality of performance with targets set for some, although the time scales for implementation are broad. Progress monitoring is adequate although some objectives have not yet been implemented or have been postponed. The management structure is appropriate to meet the provider's aims and objectives. HPI maintains a useful collaboration with a regional partner who supplies them with experienced trainers who also develop and update course materials when needed.

All trainers used are qualified and experienced, suitably inducted and deployed. However, their performance is insufficiently monitored to ensure the continuous improvement of the

quality of training provided. Although HPI do some administration checks which provide management with indications about the quality of training, there is no internal lesson observation system in place to evaluate and provide feedback to ensure the continuous improvement of the training offered.

The monitoring of learners' achievement is adequate. Fit for purpose initial assessment is conducted on most courses, however, the outcome is insufficiently analysed or utilised. Learners' achievement is measured and relevant data are kept with management checking the results at the end of each training course. However, the final recorded results do not always reflect the actual performance of learners. Learners' views and feedback are regularly sought, aggregated, analysed and used appropriately to improve the provision. Although HPI maintains effective communications and follow-up with stakeholders on course planning and administrative issues, their feedback about the provision is not systematically sought. The majority of the employers interviewed stated that their feedback is only sought verbally but a significant minority stated it is not sought at all.

Essential health and safety measures are in place to secure a healthy and safe environment for learners and staff but HPI do not have a formal, documented health and safety policy. However, learners have recently been provided with guidance on health and safety measures. HPI conducts all training events in suitable hospitality venues where essential health and safety measures are assured. HPI's self-evaluation form is informative and identifies important areas for development but the grades are overestimated.

The provider's key strengths

- Well-qualified trainers who have sufficient years of experience in teaching and training
- The relevant range of short courses on offer, mainly in management and personal skills, which is regularly reviewed and updated
- The sustained links and effective communications with employers which inform them about their learners' performance.

Recommendations

In order to improve, HPI should:

- improve learners' achievement and ensure that they are regularly updated on their progress
- improve the quality of training by:
 - using more effective teaching methods and activities to engage and motivate all learners
 - improving lesson planning by using initial and continuous assessment to ensure that learners' varying needs are accommodated
 - ensuring that correction of learners' work is rigorous and consistent and effective feedback is always provided to learners to help them improve
- improve leadership and management practices by:
 - introducing a more effective internal lesson observation system to ensure the continuous improvement of training
 - ensure that employers' views and feedback about the provision are systematically sought and used to improve the provision.