



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

# **Vocational Review Unit**

## **Review Report**

**RRC Middle East**  
**Manama - Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 23 – 25 November 2009**

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## The Vocational Review Unit

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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 five-point scale:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1: Outstanding	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all or nearly all aspects and is/are exemplary or exceptional in many.
2: Good	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are better than the basic level. Practice will be at least sound and there may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
3: Satisfactory	This describes a basic level of adequacy. No major areas of weakness substantially affect what learners, or significant groups of learners, achieve. Some features may be good.
4: Below satisfactory	This describes situations where major weaknesses in some areas affect the outcomes for learners and outweigh any strengths in the provision.
5: Very weak	This describes situations where there are major weaknesses in all, or almost all, areas and where, as a result, learners are very poorly served.

## **Introduction**

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### **Description of the provision**

RRC Middle East (RRCME) was established in 2006 as a Bahraini-owned franchise of RRC (UK). It is licensed by the Ministry of Labour to provide training in health, safety, environment and security. RRCME offers externally accredited courses such as the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) Certificate in Construction Safety and Health, the NEBOSH National Certificate in Environmental Management, the NEBOSH International Diploma, and Institute of Safety and Health (IOSH) certificates such as Working Safely, Supervising Safely and Managing Safely. RRCME runs the provider-accredited Key 2 Safety course at three levels, as well as non-accredited short courses and workshops. The company also provides consultancy services such as developing health and safety policies and procedures and preparing risk assessment plans.

RRCME is located in the Diplomatic Area, Manama. The company employs a managing director, a business development and marketing manager, an accountant/HR administrator, an operations administrator, administrative assistants, a sales and marketing representative and an office assistant. RRCME has four full-time trainers, including the managing director and business development manager, and three local part-time trainers. It also draws on the RRC (UK) pool of 25 trainers with different backgrounds and experience.

All RRCME learners are adults aged 19 and above and are sponsored by their employer. Between January and September 2009 RRCME trained 446 learners.

### **Scope of the review**

This review was conducted over three days by a team of three reviewers and one consultant reviewer. During the review the team observed learning sessions, analysed data related to learners' achievements, examined documents and talked with trainers, staff, learners and employers.

This report summarises reviewers' findings regarding the range of RRCME provision, and their recommendations for improvement.

## Overall judgement

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### Effectiveness of provision

#### Grade 3: satisfactory

The overall effectiveness of RRCME's provision is satisfactory. Learners' achievement and progress are measured well on all courses, especially for the 2009 intake. Success rates on externally accredited and provider-accredited courses are good, at 76% and 100% respectively. RRCME's average pass rates for IGC1 and IGC2 of the NEBOSH International General Certificate are 75% and 69% for 2009, higher in both cases than the average global pass rates which are 60% and 58% respectively. Between 20% and 25% of these learners achieve a distinction. Retention rates are high across the board, at 99% for some courses and 100% for others. Learners' achievement is effectively measured on non-accredited courses through a well-structured post-course assessment. Most learners acquire good vocational skills that improve their performance at work. The majority have the basic skills needed for the courses they attend; they enjoy their learning experience at RRCME. Attendance is high, at 97%, and is recorded well. Learners' punctuality is satisfactory.

Trainers are appropriately qualified and experienced; they provide good models of vocational practice. All courses have detailed lesson plans and those sessions observed were well run in terms of time and activity management. Trainers use satisfactory training techniques, such as group work and case studies related to learners' work. Trainers start sessions by revisiting what was covered previously and sharing lesson objectives. They end appropriately with a summary of what has been introduced and an evaluation of whether the objectives were met. A minority of learners are insufficiently engaged during sessions. Although learners' work is regularly checked, they are given insufficient feedback on how to improve. Learning aids and resources are satisfactorily used to promote learning. Initial assessment is used on only a few courses and the results are not used sufficiently in lesson planning.

RRCME offers a good range of externally accredited, provider-accredited and non-accredited specialised courses that meet learners' and employers' needs. Learners are provided with good enrichment activities such as site visits, visiting speakers, risk assessments and investigation reports. Most courses are coherent and provide learners with progression opportunities even between non-accredited, provider-accredited and externally accredited courses. Course contents and outlines are detailed and sent to employers in advance. A few courses are customised effectively to the specific needs of employers.

Trainers are supportive and approachable. Learners attend a useful induction programme that enables them to settle in quickly. Induction provides clear health and safety guidance, and 'golden rules' about attendance, punctuality and assessment. They receive useful help with revision and exam preparation. RRCME has comprehensive health and safety policies and procedures, which are communicated to learners and staff. Health and safety measures are fully in place. RRCME's premises and physical resources are satisfactory. There are, however, car parking problems, especially during the morning period.

Learners' achievement and progress are closely monitored. RRCME's management makes effective plans to improve the provision. RRCME's vision and strategic objectives are sufficiently focused on quality improvement and shared appropriately with staff; its action plans, however, are not clearly linked to strategic objectives. RRCME recruits suitably qualified staff and trainers, monitors their performance satisfactorily and gives them sufficient development opportunities. Learners' feedback is collected through evaluation forms, aggregated, analysed and used satisfactorily to improve provision. Employers' views and feedback on the quality of training and its impact are insufficiently gathered, although RRCME has recently started to visit clients as part of its communication improvement plan.

## **Capacity to improve**

### **Grade 2: good**

RRCME has good capacity to improve. Learners' achievement increased across the board between 2008 and 2009. Enrolment shows a steady increase, from 130 learners in 2006 to 624 in 2008. RRCME has good repeat business; most employers come back for more training courses, some as many as 13 times in a year.

RRCME's managers plan improvement effectively. In 2009, the company expanded its programmes, introducing a wide range of new courses. These courses were selected after careful consideration of local labour market needs, and have been well received by learners and employers. In August 2009, RRCME started work on the ISO 9001:2008 certification, putting sufficient focus on learners' achievement and the quality of training through measurement of achievement, ensuring the quality of delivery and monitoring trainers. A well-written quality manual is produced, based on gap analyses; some aspects have been implemented already.

RRCME has improved its record-keeping regarding learners' achievement. A new database allows more accurate recording of learners' results. It will in future be used to track certificates issued. Having recently expanded its premises and appointed more staff,

RRCME has sufficient resources to enable improvement. RRCME's self-evaluation form (SEF) was informative and highlighted accurately the recent improvements to the provision.

### Summary of grades awarded

Overall judgement	Grade
<b>Effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 3: satisfactory</b>
Capacity to improve	Grade 2: good
<b>Review findings</b>	
How well do learners achieve?	Grade 2: good
How effective is training?	Grade 3: satisfactory
How well do programmes meet the needs of learners and employers?	Grade 2: good
How well are learners guided and supported?	Grade 3: satisfactory
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Grade 3: satisfactory

## Main judgements and recommendations

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### Strengths

- **Measuring and monitoring of learners' progress and achievement.** Achievement data are gathered, analysed and discussed appropriately in management meetings. RRCME regularly compares its success rates with those available globally. The company also monitors monthly the number of learners achieving distinction grades on externally accredited courses. On provider-accredited and non-accredited courses, learners' achievement is effectively measured through a well structured post-course assessment.
- **Learners' achievement and skills development.** Most learners acquire good vocational skills that they can use at work. Some learners have been promoted after achieving their qualifications.
- **Trainers' model of vocational practice.** Trainers provide good models of vocational practice and show sound practical and theoretical knowledge. They effectively link theory and practice through the use of real-life examples and work-related incidents.
- **Range of specialised courses.** RRCME offers a good range of specialised courses and workshops in health and safety. It takes good account of local circumstances, and of learners' and employers' needs, in developing its provision. The NEBOSH International Certificate and Diploma, for example, is a blended course that is flexible enough for learners who cannot attend regularly because of work commitments and the Independent Training Standards Scheme and Register courses are in great demand by the construction industry.
- **Improvement planning.** RRCME's managers plan improvements effectively and systematically. Recent improvements include increases in the number of staff and in the range of courses offered, the implementation of a new quality management system, much of it directly relating to training operations, and the introduction of a new management information database to capture relevant information about learners.

### Areas for improvement

- **Pre-course assessment.** RRCME occasionally carries out a cursory initial assessment, through verbal questions, to evaluate learners' prior knowledge of a subject. This

takes place on only a few courses. It is not clear how the outcomes of this assessment are used in lesson-planning

- **Gathering employers' feedback and views.** Until recently RRCME has made only sporadic efforts, mainly through verbal contact, to gather useful information from employers on the quality of the training provision. It has taken a more systematic approach recently, visiting clients' workplaces and asking them to complete a post-course questionnaire. It is still too early to judge the effectiveness and impact of this initiative.
- **Car parking.** Car parking is problematic, especially in the mornings.

## **Recommendations**

In order to improve provision, RRCME should:

- carry out pre-course assessment for all courses and use its outcomes in lesson-planning
- collect, aggregate and analyse employers' feedback and use it to improve provision
- address the car parking problem