

Bahrain: Establishing a new national examination board

In Bahrain, Cambridge International Examinations has helped establish a new exam board, devised new primary and secondary school assessments, and built the local capacity required to support the changes introduced.

The challenge

In 2008, Bahrain launched Vision 2030, a long-term plan to reduce dependency on energy revenues by building a more diversified, knowledge-based economy. This demanded major educational reform, and Bahrain's National Authority of Qualifications and Quality Assurance for Education and Training (NAQQAET) defined the need for a new system of national examinations to drive improvements through Bahrain's school system. Long-term, NAQQAET wanted to develop and deliver assessments locally, so needed a partner with expertise in both assessment and capacity building.

Our response

Working with NAQQAET, we established a new and independent exam board, the Directorate of National Examinations (DNE), defining its organisational structure and key roles, documenting procedures, and providing training. We created a bespoke assessment model based on Bahrain Ministry of Education curriculum standards, also aligned to international best practice while reflecting local contexts. We also helped the DNE acquire the knowledge and skills required to sustain the new system and monitor its impact.

From 2008 (the pilot stage) to 2015, new exams were introduced into grades 3, 6, 9 and 12 in a phased process. Students study core subjects, such as maths, and innovative syllabuses, such as problem solving, in both Arabic and English. The DNE now runs a secure and effective examinations process, maintains standards over time, and has the skills required to manage an awarding body, with Cambridge remaining as a 'critical friend'.

“ I have been working with Cambridge since the inception of the Bahraini National Examinations project in 2008. They worked closely with us to set up the project, train our staff, and set up its processes. Personally, I have great admiration and respect for the professionalism and experience of Cambridge. I have learned a lot from working closely with their team and benefitted from their deep understanding of the examinations. ”

Wafa Alyaqobi, Director, Directorate of National Examinations, QQA, Bahrain

Why Cambridge?

We can deliver specialised skills, knowledge and expertise in international education, including:

- bespoke assessment model design and implementation, including operational delivery
- new qualification development and implementation
- defining and creating new awarding bodies
- capacity building and skills development
- as part of the University of Cambridge, access to expertise on every aspect of assessment design, delivery and evaluation.

Learn more at www.cie.org.uk/educationservices or email educationservices@cie.org.uk