

Construction Industry Training Authority
Schemes and Measures implemented in respect of Building Quality Assurance

Since its establishment, the Construction Industry Training Authority (CITA) was committed to train qualified personnel for the industry. The following schemes and measures are being adopted in respect of building quality assurance:

1. Training of construction workers and human resource programme

The CITA offers 3 types of training courses for people intending to become construction craftsmen, technicians and operatives. These include the one-year full-time Basic Craft Courses for Secondary 3 school-leavers, the one-year full-time Construction Supervisor Trainee/Technician Training (CST) Programme for Secondary 5 school-leavers and the full-time Short Courses for youngsters or persons who wish to switch from other industries. The training capacity for these 3 types of courses in the 1999/2000 training year is 1,640,300 and 5,718 respectively. Trainees completing the one-year Basic Craft and CST courses are, in general, youngsters aged 16 to 19. They have to, in principle, receive a further 2 to 3 years' on-the-job training and accumulate certain practical experience before they can formally become craftsmen or supervisors.

With respect to the quality of the graduates, all trainees of the one-year full-time Basic Craft Courses and those of certain full-time Short Courses are required to take the relevant Intermediate Trade Tests of their respective trades on completion of the courses since 1998, and must obtain a pass before they can graduate. The requirement of passing the Intermediate Trade Tests on completion of the courses can further ensure that the trainees have attained the skill level of semi-skilled workers, which helps to assure building quality.

In order to ensure that the training courses offered by the Authority meet the requirement of the industry, advisory committees were set up for various training courses since 1996. Members include representatives from contractors, sub-contractors, workers unions, merchants associations and professional bodies. It is hoped that the advisory committees can strengthen

the liaison between CITA and the industry, so that the Authority can understand the trends in the industry and the needs of the employers. The CITA can thus more accurately grasp the training requirement of the different trades, keep the courses abreast of time and meet the needs of the industry. So far a total of 13 advisory committees have been set up, including that for the 9 Basic Craft Courses and 3 types of Shorts Courses, as well as the Advisory Committee on Continuing Education Courses for In-service Construction Personnel. Recently the CITA is actively working on the setting up of advisory committees for 3 other Short Courses.

In order to enhance the skills and knowledge of in-service construction personnel, the CITA offers a comprehensive range of part-time training courses. These courses can be classified into 5 major categories, namely skills enhancement courses, safety related courses, management related courses, technology related courses and tailor-made training courses. In the 1999/2000 training year, the CITA is offering about 30,000 places for various part-time training courses for the continuing education and training of in-service personnel, plus a total of 51,000 safety card training places.

Looking ahead, apart from the training up of high-quality young craftsmen and supervisors to meet the demand of the industry, CITA will also provide continuing education and training for in-service personnel with a view to raising the skill level of construction personnel and building quality.

2. Trade tests

At present, the Authority is conducting 2 major categories of skills tests, namely the trade tests for craftsmen on voluntary basis and the certification tests for construction plant operators under statutory requirement.

Since 1990, the CITA has been cooperating with the Vocational Training Council in the implementation of trade tests for construction craftsmen on a voluntary basis, which now covers 16 principal construction trades. Up to the 31st October 1999, a total of 9,127 craftsmen passed the trade tests, representing 25% of the total number of workers in these 16 trades.

At the request of the Government, the CITA has launched an intermediate trade test scheme for semi-skilled craftsmen in January 1998, covering 14 principal trades in the industry. Up to the 31st October 1999, a total of 6,404

semi-skilled craftsmen already passed the intermediate trade tests, representing 18% of the total number of workers in these 14 trades.

In response to statutory requirements, the Authority started to conduct certification tests for operators of the 4 types of cranes commonly used in the construction industry in December 1993. At present, all crane operators working in the industry should have passed the certification tests. Up to the 31st October 1999, a total of 8,987 crane operators passed the certification tests. As the validity of the certificates is for 5 years only, the CITA has been conducting refresher courses and re-validation tests for these operators since September 1998 to ensure their skill level. As of the 31st October 1999, a total of 3,546 crane operators passed the re-validation tests.

The CITA, in response to the introduction of relevant regulation and ordinance, has also been conducting certification courses with imbedded certification tests for persons working on temporary suspended working platforms (gondolas) and for operators of builders' lifts since November 1995 and May 1996 respectively. Up to the 31st October 1999, a total of 4,155 persons and 1,167 operators passed the certification tests for gondolas and builders' lifts respectively.

3. Re-training

The Authority offers 2 types of re-training courses for in-service construction personnel and for people who are originally working in other industries but wish to join the construction industry. In-service construction personnel can choose to enroll onto various part-time courses related to their duties as a form of continuing education, or other training courses in order to take up different jobs. In the 1999/2000 training year, the CITA is offering a total of 28,823 places for various part-time courses, and a total of 51,000 places for the safety card training courses.

People who are originally working in other industries but wish to join the construction industry through attending a proper training course can enroll onto various full-time Short Courses offered by the CITA. They can acquire a specific operative/craftsman/technician skill within two weeks to 6 months' time and look for job opportunities in the industry with the assistance of CITA's placement officers. In the 1999/2000 training year, a total of 5,718 places are being offered for various full-time Short Courses.

4. Training on work ethics

To enhance the conduct and occupational ethics of the construction industry personnel in general, the Authority has paid special attention to these aspects in the training of new blood. Instructors of full-time courses will, through the close relationship of master and apprentice, exert a subtle influence on the trainees in a gentle and continual manner, advising them to respect their profession and derive pleasure from a job satisfactorily completed, and the advantages of having a particular skill. The placement officers would also very often advise trainees who first join the industry to be more farsighted when choosing their jobs, and to be honest and steadfast in their employment.

The industry has a fine division of labour and completion of each construction process depends on the efforts and cooperation of different grades of technicians and workers. The CITA, therefore, is developing the sense of responsibility and team spirit among the trainees through physical and recreational activities, so that they can better understand the responsibility of individual and its importance to the group.