



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) - Education

Recognition of overseas skills

Q. I have applied to immigrate to Australia but in completing my application I find that Australia does not recognise my NEBOSH diploma. Could you advise why this is and my options to progress my application?

A. Australian assessments for skilled migration are based on the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) which lists a degree plus 5 years relevant experience as the requirement for an 'OHS officer'. This classification system is currently under review and the Safety Institute of Australia is working to ensure that the future occupational description for an 'OHS practitioner' is more appropriate and relevant. Unfortunately, in the interim, the status quo applies.

Bringing my skills to Australia

Q What are the employment opportunities for OHS practitioners in Australia?

A. While there is no formal data, the observation is that the number of advertisements for OHS positions is increasing. The advertisements often require a 'relevant tertiary qualification'. The Safety Institute of Australia frequently circulates job vacancies to members via email which are not advertised in other media.

A recent survey of 700 OHS practitioners found that 80% of respondees had salaries between \$A50,000 and \$A120,000 with 46% less than \$A75,000.

Q. I would like to start an OHS consulting company in Australia, what are the opportunities and what would be the process?

OHS consulting companies are usually small businesses with their success often related how well the principal is known and respected by industry. In such situations a network is invaluable. Anybody considering establishing an OHS consulting company in Australia should visit first and consider establishing links with established companies.

OHS Education

Q What training is required to become an OHS practitioner?

A. The Certificate IV in OHS is the lowest specialist qualification recognised by the Safety Institute of Australia. It is expected that practitioners in full time OHS roles would have a minimum of a Diploma in OHS with a degree or

Graduate Diploma preferred but this would depend on the demands of the role, the nature of the hazards and the associated level of risk managed by the organisation..

It should be noted that a qualification is only part of the requirements for an effective OHS practitioner with experience also being vital. These two requirements for an effective OHS practitioner are reflected in the grading criteria for the Safety Institute of Australia.

Q What are the issues to consider when deciding to study by distance mode, face to face or other mode?

- A. A number of providers of OHS education in the tertiary sector are offering courses by distance education. While this mode of learning suits the work and life demands of many people the Safety Institute of Australia has concerns about the quality of the outcomes of such programs.

The effective OHS professional must be able to interact with a broad range of people, have good communication skills, be analytical, capable of critical thinking and be able to explain technical issues to others and defend their position on a matter. These skills are often developed and assessed through intellectual discussion with peers, lecturers and mentors and in workshop-type activities. Before deciding to study in external mode the prospective OHS practitioner (or the current practitioner upgrading their qualifications) should satisfy themselves that the education provider has addressed this issue.

A recent survey of Universities providing OHS qualifications found that there was a lower retention rate in courses that were in total distance mode.

BY comparison, a number of universities offer qualifications in mixed mode with on-campus sessions in block mode, weekend workshops etc and there are some courses offered in the traditional on-campus mode.

While there are some providers of the Certificate IV and Diploma offering distance or on-line mode, these programs are more often offered in on-campus-mode. The Safety Institute of Australia considers that the vocational, competency-based qualifications must have a high level of lecturer, mentor and peer interaction.

Q Where can I study an approved OHS qualification?

- A. A list of providers of tertiary OHS qualifications is provided on the SIA web site under 'OHS education'.

Providers of vocational qualifications (Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma) can be found on the web site for the National Training Information Service (www.ntis.gov.au). Follow the thread by selecting training packages; all; qualifications; all; (required qualification); training providers; state. Note that a new qualification package was approved for OHS in 2004 and many providers will not be conducting these qualifications until 2006. Therefore this list may be incomplete until the providers all obtain a modification to their scope of registration.

Q Where can I find a list of providers of training courses in OHS auditing?

A. A list of providers of OHS auditor training is given on the SIA web site under OHS education.

(last updated May 2005)