

INTRODUCTION TO OHS PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT

As part of the SIA's OHS Certification Program, we have recognised that some people working in the OHS/WHS sector have very strong work experience at the OHS Professional level, but only some of the education required to be eligible to undertake the certification capability assessment.

If you fall into this category, Certification is still open to you. We recognise that many health and safety people acquired their education in a different environment to that which exists today. We provide these people a fair opportunity to access the certification program, while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the program, by having a suitably rigorous process for people to undertake. This process is called the OHS Professional Knowledge Assessment (OKA).

Please note OKA is a part of the assessment for Certified OHS Professional. Applicants will need to complete a detailed Practice Report and our qualified Demonstrated Capability Assessors will conduct assessment with Applicants' nominated referees. Upon successful completion of all above assessments, applicants will be certified as OHS Professional. For more details about Practice Report and Certification requirement, please check on our website here.

We are also examining alternative assessment processes for other certification levels as well.

What does the OKA involve?

The University of Newcastle has been retained to deliver the OKA via distance learning – a three-part assessment involving:

- (a) A two hour multiple choice **online exam**;
- (b) The conduct of a **case study** where the candidate has 4-5 weeks to complete the work; and
- (c) The conduct of a 1 hour face-to-oral online VIVA **interview** conducted via Zoom.

The content is articulated against the Body of Knowledge at AQF 7 level.

This is an academic exercise. It does not assess your ability to do your job. It carries the standard requirements of academic exercises, case studies and exams consistent with any AQF 7 process in any field, and is marked in the same way. Whilst it is not a replacement for the completion of OHS higher education, it is delivered in a way which involves assessment of the candidate's capability to understand the Body of Knowledge conceptual frameworks at AQF 7, and translate these through the exam and case study, as well as the interview.

1. The online exam:

The online exam is articulated at AQF7 level. Candidates have a limited time to complete it, and are marked to meet a minimum requirement.

2. The case study:

The case study involves the writing of a report in regard to a case study scenario involving a workplace incident. A legal report is not required. A management report is not required. This is an academic exercise within normal university based requirements. There are very specific assessment criteria. Candidates will be advised of those, and will be marked against them. They will not be marked up for providing additional information. There is a significant word limit on the case study, and one of the challenges of this component is addressing the assessment criteria within the word

limit provided. Working within such parameters is a common experience for students who have studied at University AQF 7 level and above, but can be a more difficult challenge for those who are not used to it.

3. The interview:

The interview involves 'defending' the result of your test and case study, and in the process confirming it was you who undertook both. The assessors will have possibly identified gaps in the exam and case study, and may ask you to elaborate on those issues. It is critical that you have your case study report with you to refer to.

On completion of the exam, case study, and interview, candidates will have been expected to meet a minimum standard in all areas assessed and if successful are marked to a pass level. If a candidate fails to meet the minimum standard in any area, they will fail the OKA.

Who is eligible for the OKA?

The following people may apply for the OKA:

- People who are currently Certified OHS Practitioner/have met the requirements of OHS Practitioner, but in addition have five years working at OHS professional level;
- People who have five years working at OHS professional level Diploma of WHS/some education units at AQF 7 (bachelor degree) or AQF 8 (post graduate), but not enough units or content to automatically qualify.

When will the OKA be held?

The SIA, in collaboration with the University of Newcastle, will be conducting the next OKA between the months of April and May 2018.

The due dates of the 3 components involved in the assessment are as follows;

- Online Exam (From 8am on 13 April to 8pm on 14 April 2018 (36hr access period during which to complete the 2hr online exam)
- Written Assignment (Due Tuesday 8 May 2018 at midnight AEST)
- 3. VIVA Assessment (A 1hr face-to-face oral assessment to be scheduled during the week of 14 May 2018)

What is the cost of the OKA?

The cost of the OKA is \$850 plus GST. Fees are **Not** refundable to people who fail as we have absorbed some of the actual cost of the OKA to make it as affordable as possible.

How do I express my interest for the OKA?

If you are interested in undertaking the OKA as an alternative pathway to certification, please e-mail Tanny Lu at certification@sia.org.au and provide the following details:

- Full Name
- A certified copy of your ID (Driver's license or Passport)

What happens if I fail?

If a candidate initially fails the OKA, written feedback will be provided by the University to the SIA, and the candidate will engage in a review of the process with one of our certification assessors, after

which the SIA will determine next steps. Various options are then available to the SIA and could include but are not limited to:

- Repeating parts or all of the testing process; and/or
- Entering into a mentoring process as part of CPD; or
- Formal advice that the process was unsuccessful.

Preparation

The OKA is an important investment, both by you, and by the SIA in that we subsidise the process. As a result it is critical that applicants give themselves the best chance to be successful by adequately preparing. Refunds are not provided to people who fail.

We welcome your application, but also want you to succeed if you do apply.

Please make sure that you read through all of the information included in the information pack before deciding to go ahead.

To access the Information Pack, click [HERE](#).

Some suggestions for preparation:

- Study the Body of Knowledge. The exam is articulated against the Body of Knowledge at Graduate standards in OHS subject matter.
- Thoroughly read through the general orientation materials which the University of Newcastle will provide to each applicant
- Be aware of the technological requirements & ensure accessibility
- When they are provided, study the assessment criteria for the case study very closely, and before you complete your case study, check that you have addressed them. If you do not, you may fail.

Important notes for your application

Your ID must be certified according to the University of Newcastle standards. The University of Newcastle accepts documents that have been certified by:

An authorised person of a tertiary or higher education institution who will sign and stamp the copies.

A Justice of the Peace, who will stamp and sign the copies and include the name, registration number and state of registration.

A person currently employed as (each certified copy must include an official stamp from the notary's employing institution):

1. An accountant
2. A bank manager
3. A credit union branch manager
4. A barrister, solicitor or attorney
5. A police officer of the rank of sergeant or above
6. A postal manager
7. A principal of an Australian Secondary College. High school or primary school.