



BCONSULT

Occupational Certificate

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY PRACTITIONER

NQF Level 5 | SAQA ID 121527 | 120 Points | 24 Months

Occupational Health & Safety Practitioner – NQF Level 5

SAQA ID: 121527 | Credits: 120 | Duration: 24 Months |

1. Course Overview

The Higher Occupational Certificate: Occupational Health and Safety Practitioner is an NQF Level 5 occupational qualification designed to prepare learners to function professionally as Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Practitioners across a wide range of industries and organisational environments.

Occupational Health and Safety Practitioners play an important role in creating and maintaining safe, healthy and compliant workplaces. They provide guidance and support to employees and management, monitor workplace health and safety conditions, facilitate hazard identification and risk control, investigate incidents and accidents, and support the implementation and continuous improvement of Occupational Health and Safety management systems.

The qualification develops the operational, technical, analytical and communication competencies required to manage workplace health and safety effectively. Learners develop competencies in risk management, OHS governance, legal compliance, operational planning, emergency preparedness, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder engagement and the promotion of a positive health and safety culture.

The programme combines 34 credits of Knowledge Modules, 48 credits of Practical Skills Modules and 38 credits of Work Experience Modules, providing an integrated learning pathway that combines theoretical knowledge with practical and workplace application.

The qualification also provides a professional development pathway for existing health and safety personnel and technically qualified individuals seeking to advance or transition into Occupational Health and Safety roles.

2. Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the qualification, learners will have developed the knowledge, practical skills and workplace competencies required to:

- Apply occupational health and safety principles within complex workplace environments.
- Identify workplace hazards and evaluate occupational health and safety risks.
- Develop risk profiles and legal registers for designated work areas.
- Plan and support the implementation of operational Occupational Health and Safety management systems.
- Develop and maintain OHS documentation, controls, processes and reporting systems.

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- Support emergency preparedness and response arrangements.
 - Monitor, evaluate and continuously improve Occupational Health and Safety systems.
 - Interpret and apply relevant Occupational Health and Safety legislation and governance requirements.
 - Promote positive workplace behaviours and an organisational culture that prioritises health and safety.
 - Integrate Occupational Health and Safety reporting into broader organisational reporting systems.
 - Communicate effectively with employees, management, external stakeholders and regulatory authorities.
 - Apply professional and ethical principles when managing Occupational Health and Safety responsibilities.

3. A Qualified Learner Will Be Able To:

1. Facilitate and support actions to eliminate or control hazards and mitigate Occupational Health and Safety risks within a designated work area.
2. Plan the implementation of operational Occupational Health and Safety management systems that support organisational requirements, legislative compliance and workplace safety objectives.
3. Monitor and continually improve the effectiveness of operational Occupational Health and Safety management systems through appropriate monitoring, evaluation, auditing and corrective action processes.
4. Promote a positive culture of Occupational Health and Safety by encouraging safer working practices, ethical conduct, employee participation and continual improvement.
5. Facilitate the integration of Occupational Health and Safety reporting into the organisation's broader management, governance and reporting systems.
6. Communicate effectively with internal and external stakeholders and regulators relevant to the management of Occupational Health and Safety.

Qualified learners are also expected to demonstrate professional attributes including critical thinking, confidence, assertiveness, ethical conduct, compassion, insightfulness, effective communication, innovative decision-making and strong analytical ability.

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Entry Requirements

The recognised entry requirement for this qualification is:

National Occupational Certificate: Occupational Health and Safety Officer, NQF Level 4.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) may also be applied in accordance with the relevant QCTO RPL Policy.

RPL may be used for:

Access to the qualification where the learner can demonstrate the required prior competencies.

Recognition and credit for specific knowledge, practical skills or work experience modules where competence has already been achieved.

Access to the External Integrated Summative Assessment where the required prior learning and workplace competence can be formally demonstrated and confirmed.

There are no additional legal or physical entry requirements specified for this qualification.

4. International Comparability

The Higher Occupational Certificate: Occupational Health and Safety Practitioner was internationally compared with Occupational Health and Safety qualifications offered in Australia and the United Kingdom.

Australia

The qualification was compared with the Diploma of Work Health and Safety offered in Australia. The Australian programme prepares practitioners to coordinate and maintain workplace health and safety programmes and includes competencies related to:

- Workplace Health and Safety legislation.
- Risk assessment and risk management.
- Health and safety management systems.
- Workplace health and safety auditing.
- Continuous improvement.
- Occupational hygiene.

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Ergonomics.

Safe design principles.

Project management and organisational change.

The South African and Australian qualifications are comparable in terms of their purpose, entry requirements, duration and core learning content, although some differences exist in the emphasis placed on individual learning components.

United Kingdom

The qualification was also compared with the NEBOSH Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety, a recognised professional health and safety qualification in the United Kingdom.

The NEBOSH Diploma develops competencies in:

Health and safety legislation and regulatory requirements.

Workplace hazard identification and risk management.

Health and safety management systems.

Monitoring, auditing and continuous improvement.

Health and safety culture.

Professional ethics.

Organisational governance.

Contractor and supply chain safety.

Workplace health and safety reporting.

Communication with internal and external stakeholders.

The South African qualification and the UK qualification have similar purposes and cover many of the same core professional competencies. A principal difference is that the UK qualification has a longer overall duration.

Overall, the Higher Occupational Certificate: Occupational Health and Safety Practitioner compares favourably with both international qualifications in relation to purpose, content, entry requirements and level of complexity.

5. Occupational Certificate: Occupational Health and Safety – NQF Level 5

The appropriate foundational occupational qualification for entry into this programme is:

National Occupational Certificate: Occupational Health and Safety Officer – NQF Level 4

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This provides the foundational Occupational Health and Safety knowledge and competencies required for progression into the Higher Occupational Certificate: Occupational Health and Safety Practitioner at NQF Level 5.

The qualification therefore supports a structured occupational progression pathway from operational OHS Officer-level competencies towards more advanced practitioner, supervisory and management responsibilities.

Upon completion, learners may also pursue further study through recognised articulation pathways.

6. Potential Career Opportunities

Successful completion of this qualification may support employment or career progression in roles such as:

Occupational Health and Safety Practitioner
Health and Safety Practitioner
OHS Practitioner
Safety Practitioner
Occupational Safety Practitioner
Health and Safety Coordinator
Health and Safety Supervisor
SHE Practitioner
SHEQ Practitioner
Workplace Safety Coordinator
Occupational Risk Practitioner
Health and Safety Compliance Officer
OHS Systems Coordinator
Health and Safety Advisor
Risk and Safety Coordinator

With appropriate experience and further professional development, learners may progress into more senior positions such as Occupational Health and Safety Manager, SHEQ Manager, Safety Manager, Risk Manager or Occupational Health and Safety Consultant.

The qualification is applicable across both the public and private sectors and may support careers in industries such as manufacturing, construction, mining, logistics, healthcare, engineering, energy, transport, government, hospitality, retail and professional services.

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7. Learning Options

The qualification incorporates three integrated learning components:

Knowledge Learning

Structured theoretical learning covering Occupational Health and Safety management systems, governance, sustainability and operational management principles.

Practical Skills Development

Applied learning activities that enable learners to develop risk profiles, legal registers, reporting systems, emergency preparedness processes and operational OHS management systems.

Workplace Experience

Structured workplace exposure that allows learners to apply their knowledge and practical competencies within operational planning, supervision, management and Occupational Health and Safety environments.

Learners must successfully complete all prescribed Knowledge, Practical Skills and Work Experience Modules before qualifying for the External Integrated Summative Assessment, unless the required competencies have been formally recognised through RPL.

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