

Introduction to OHS Professional Knowledge Assessment

NOTE: This document should be read in concert with the online information about Australian OHS profession certification at: <https://www.aihs.org.au/certification>

1. Background

As part of the AIHS'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 at the Professional level 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.

The Professional Knowledge Assessment is a *part of* the assessment for Certified Generalist OHS Professional. Upon successful completion of the Professional Knowledge Assessment, candidates will then need to complete the Practice Report and our qualified Demonstrated Capability Assessors will conduct phone interviews with the candidates' nominated referees to complete demonstrated capability assessment. For more details about the Practice Report and Certification requirement, please check on our website [here](#).

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

2. What does the Professional Knowledge Assessment involve?

The University of Newcastle has been retained to deliver the assessment 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 5-6 weeks to complete the work; and
- (c) The conduct of a 1-hour face-to-face online **VIVA interview** via Zoom.

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

This is an academic exercise reflecting your ability to demonstrate knowledge. It does not assess your ability to do your job. It carries the standard requirements of academic exercises such as 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 that involves assessment of the candidate's capability to understand the Body of Knowledge conceptual frameworks at AQF 7 level, and translate these through the exam and case study, as well as the interview.

2.1 The online exam:

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

2.2 The case study:

Our experience thus far, is that *some* candidates – particularly those who do not have significant experience in the completion of University assignments – can struggle with this by not following the instructions. It is critical to note the following:

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 and candidates are advised of those. These should be followed or marks will be lost. You will not be marked up for providing additional information. There is a word/page limit on the case study, and one of the challenges of this component is addressing the assessment criteria within the limits provided.

2.3 The interview:

The Viva 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 Professional Knowledge Assessment.

3. Who is eligible for the Professional Knowledge Assessment?

The following people may apply for the Professional Knowledge Assessment:

- People who are currently Certified OHS Practitioner/have met the requirements of Certified OHS Practitioner, but in addition have at least five years’ experience working at OHS professional level; or
- People who have at least five years’ experience working at OHS professional level with Diploma WHS/AQF 7 (bachelor degree) qualification covering some WHS-related content.

For clarification between practitioner and professional roles, please see OHS Global Framework for Practice [here](#). It is important for you to note that if you wish to be certified at OHS professional level, your work experience must be deemed to be at that level for the specified amount of time.

4. When will the Professional Knowledge Assessment be held?

The AIHS, in collaboration with the University of Newcastle, will be conducting the next Knowledge Assessment between April and May 2021.

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

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement
1	Online Exam	From 8am on Friday 9 th April until 8.00pm on Saturday 10 th April 2021. (36 hr access period during which to complete the 2hr online exam)	Individual
2	Written Assignment	Sunday 9 th May 2021 (11.59pm, Sydney time)	Individual
3	Oral Assessment – ‘Viva’	A 45 minute face-to-face oral assessment to be scheduled during the week commencing Monday 24 th May 2021	Individual

5. What is the cost of the Professional Knowledge Assessment?

The cost of the Professional Knowledge Assessment is \$850 plus GST. Fees are **NOT** refundable to people who fail as we have ALREADY absorbed some of the actual cost of the assessment to make it as affordable as possible, delivering it at *less than what it costs us*.

An admin fee will be charged by the university directly if you withdraw your enrolment after the Census date for the intake you are in.

6. What happens if I fail?

Passing is not guaranteed. Around 80% of the candidates pass the Knowledge Assessment. If a candidate initially fails the Professional Knowledge Assessment, this is not the end of the certification application process. Written feedback is provided by the University to the AIHS, and we will engage with you in a review of the process, after which we will determine the next steps. Various options are available to the candidate and the AIHS and could include but are not limited to:

- Repeating partial or the assessment process in whole (this requires further payment); and/or
- Entering into a mentoring process as part of CPD; or
- Formal advice that the process was unsuccessful.

If candidates are unsuccessful in the partial/full assessment, they will put together a plan how to close the gaps for future assessment. The plan will be reviewed by the AIHS, based on which the AIHS can provide mentoring opportunities if requested by the participants. Participants then meet their mentor and re-enrol in partial/full of the assessment when they are ready.

7. Preparation and Process

The Professional Knowledge Assessment is an important investment, both by you and by the AIHS in that we subsidise the process. As a result, we want candidates to 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. After you are enrolled in the Professional Knowledge Assessment, the AIHS will deliver an interactive webinar at 3pm Melbourne time on Wednesday 7 Apr 2021 to go through the important areas of the assessment. The purpose of the webinar is to ensure all candidates understand what is expected of them to successfully complete the assessment from the start of the process. All candidates are required to attend the webinar as a part of their preparation for the assessments.

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](#).

8. If I pass the Professional Knowledge Assessment, am I certified?

Not yet. The knowledge assessment confirms that you have met one of the three requirements for certification. You must also confirm your work experience at that level, and pass the capability assessment, which involves the completion of practice reports and referee interviews.

9. Some suggestions for preparation

- Study the Body of Knowledge www.ohsbok.org.au. The exam is articulated against the Body of Knowledge at Graduate standard in OHS subject matter.
- Thoroughly read through the general orientation materials which the University of Newcastle will provide to each candidate.
- Be aware of the technical requirements and 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.
- Watch the Certification Webinar [here](#).

10. How do I express my interest in the Professional Knowledge Assessment?

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

- Updated CV
- Academic Transcript of OHS or relevant qualifications
- A certified copy of your photo ID (Driver's license or Passport)

11. 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 can be:
- 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.