OHS Professional Certification

Examples of ChOHSP Professional Reflective Practice Report

The following examples of a Reflective Practice Report are provided to demonstrate how to complete the report. This is a guide only. Reports should be developed and written to suit the style and approach of the applicant and their project/activity.

Example 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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1 Autobiographical review

Reviewing how you got to where you are now helps you to gain a sense of growth and set a context for your reflection. There is no set criteria or length requirement but you may consider questions such as:

- Why did I decide to become involved in health and safety management?
- When and how did I decide?
- What and who influenced me? In what ways?
- As I look back to this time what feelings and images remain?
- If I could make the decision again to become involved in this profession, would I? Why or why not?
- What do I see as my greatest professional strengths?
- What are a few of the frustrations I experience in my work?
- What are a few of the joys and satisfactions?
- Where do I see myself in the next 5, 10 years?
I decided to become involved in health and safety management while working with a major retail chain. I was somewhat shocked at the number of injuries, mainly manual handling related, that occurred and yet the organisation did not have in place any strategies for management of the problem. When I raised the issue I was informed that these injuries were the fault of the staff member and I was then asked if I was setting out to cause trouble – clearly the area manager had no concept of good safety management.

Having been in the profession now for around a decade I would make the decision to become involved in the profession again as I have learned so much, I feel that I am needed and I believe that I am making a difference.

My professional strengths are in the area of communication particularly face to face and with everyone from the workers on the factory floor through to the ‘C’ suite and the Board. I am well considered at work as they believe I am a good strategist and take the needs of the business into account. This has given me the necessary kudos to be able to go straight to the CEO and the Board where appropriate.

I find the mostly middle managers who can’t seem to equate productivity and safety as good management practice many of them appear only able to concentrate on meeting production targets. However, after five plus years I am making some progress and now several of them come to me to talk about various perceived safety issues.

The joys and satisfactions are in the individual successes that I have for example helping someone to realise how they can positively change their working environment by giving them the necessary information and instruction and empowering them to make the required changes. Another satisfaction is the fact that in the last four years not one PIN has been issued whereas there was an average 6 each year for the previous two years.

In the next 5 years I will undertake more study and my goal is to become the General Manager Safety (or equivalent) in a large National company.

2 Reflection on capabilities

As a high level OHS professional you should be operating at Level 9 of the Australian Qualification Framework. This section requires you to reflect on your cognitive, technical and communication skills to demonstrate capabilities at the AQF 9 level.

You may reflect on your OHS professional capabilities by considering your practice as a whole or by examining a recent event, project or activity.

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When undertaking analysis of incidents and near misses, when assessing the health and safety risks to projects and when reviewing the outcomes of audit and inspections.

I started to develop this capability when I undertaking the research work for my Master’s thesis and have developed it further in my work. This capability is a core part of my WHS practice and I believe I demonstrate it well.
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<td><strong>Apply critical thinking, information gathering and communication skills to identify and analyse complex OHS problems and emerging issues.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Approach the resolution of complex problems in a critically reflective.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Use established theory and practical experience from a variety of sources to generate practical evidence-informed solutions to OHS problems taking account of legislation and industry standards.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Defend the proposed solutions.</strong></td>
<td><strong>I believe that I do parts of this capability well but do have areas where I can improve.</strong>&lt;br&gt;In terms of making high level judgements autonomously I will generally consult with others before making a final decision to ensure that I am going to get the support that I need.&lt;br&gt;I am able to work with people across disciplines including high level decision makers and have gained this ability through being mentored and through practice.&lt;br&gt;I apply the research principles learned while undertaking my master’s degree to design projects and investigate issues but the area that I need to improve is in the implementation of significant projects — more of a confidence issue I believe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I believe that the gathering of information and the use of good communication skills are key to the application of critical thinking in order to identify and resolve complex problems.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>By undertaking the necessary research, liaising with those undertaking the work, with experts and regulators I believe I have successfully assisted the business I work for to reach satisfactory outcomes to complex issues and to have people within the business join the journey to success.</strong></td>
<td><strong>I am good at interpreting and tailoring technical information, concepts and theories to various audiences e.g. the shop floor and the board room. I have on several occasions when applying for capital expenditure provided the evidence needed for the project capital provided the benefits of making the change and providing alternative solutions and recommendations.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>It is part of my practice to reflect on the outcome of a project with my team to evaluate our work, the success or otherwise of the activity and to determine if there is anything else we need to do and to learn from the experience.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Communicate knowledge, skills and ideas</strong>&lt;br&gt;Interpret and tailor technical information, complex concepts and theories to communicate knowledge and ideas to a range of specialist and non-specialist audiences using an appropriate range of communication strategies.&lt;br&gt;Provide the evidence-base and logical reasoning to explain the risks and benefits of a range of options and justify relevant propositions and recommendations.&lt;br&gt;Engage in evidence-informed reflective practice, evaluative activities and professional discussion with a view to testing ideas through peer appraisal.</td>
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<td><strong>Application</strong>&lt;br&gt;Make high level independent judgements regarding technical OHS issues and plan, implement and monitor OHS-related projects with a high level of autonomy.&lt;br&gt;Work with people from many disciplines and backgrounds, across a range of work groups including at the highest decision-making levels, demonstrating leadership capacity.&lt;br&gt;Apply research principles to design projects to investigate issues within the workplace&lt;br&gt;Apply project management skills to implement significant projects in the workplace</td>
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3 Reflection on practice

This section requires you to consider a recent event or activity that has caused you to reflect on your practice. You should describe the event or activity, reflect on what occurred and your response to ‘theorise’ about what happened and the implications. This should be a free flowing description but you may find the following questions a useful guide.

Is there a background to the situation? What is the context?
Where was I? Who was I interacting with? Who else was there? What happened? What did I do?
Why did I do that? What was I thinking/feeling at the time? Where might these thoughts or feelings come from?
What assumptions might I have been making at the time? What values or beliefs might have contributed to me acting in this way? Did my relationships with the other people contribute to my actions?
Is my response part of a pattern?
How does my response, or my pattern of response, fit with the capabilities of a high level OHS professional?
How does my response, or my pattern of response, fit with contemporary approaches to OHS?
Does my reflection suggest ways of modifying or revising my underpinning theoretical models or personal skills as part of my professional practice?
Does my reflection have implications for the OHS profession overall and suggest ways in which the OHS profession should develop?

A recent issue that caused me to reflect on my practice capabilities was within the organisation for which I work. The company is a national one with our head office in Sydney with significant facilities and branch offices in all State and Territory capitals and smaller offices (sales outlets) in regional areas within NSW, Vic and Qld.

I was asked to go from Head Office to take oversite the State H&S role in Victoria. At the Victorian office I quickly discovered that the management system was not being implemented properly and that regular inspections, incident investigations and other significant matters were not being undertaken or left incomplete.

When I raised these issues with site management I was informed that the incumbent was doing an outstanding job and that I was not to meddle, just to ‘hold the fort’ until he came back off leave.

I was disappointed in my fellow safety manager and disappointed in the attitude of management which was apparently centred on keeping things ‘ticking over’ and not considering where there was room for improvement.

Should I just do as I was told or should I go to more senior management in NSW and let my feelings and concerns be known? After thinking about it for a week or so I decided that had to take the matter further and informed the State Manager of my decision. The State manager informed me that if I took such action he would ensure that I did not work with the company for very long and that I would have no further work in Victoria.

I talked with my partner and some health and safety colleagues about the State Manager’s response and was counselled by them to take the matter further. I did so. At first the response was that my complaint was not a credible one and it took around two to three weeks for anything to happen. By this time I was working back in Head Office and I had been informed that I was not to interfere any further in Victoria. It was determined by Executive Management that a third party audit needed to be undertaken in Victoria and, as a consequence of the result the OHS Manager was dismissed and the State Manager resigned.

Now I feel guilty that I have caused these people to lose their jobs but also vindicated in raising the issue. However, I do feel that I have done the right thing from a professional viewpoint and also upheld the safety standards set within head office.

Summary

In preparing this journal and making the associated reflections: Reflective comments
Has my perception of how I undertake my OHS practice changed? If so, how?

Have I identified anything I would change about my practice? If so, what changes would I make?

Realistically, how could I go about making these changes?

Have I arrived at any other conclusions about my practice? If so, what?

5 Declaration

I certify that while I may have engaged in discussion with professional peers or mentors the above statements are my own.

Signature of candidate

Date

Example 2

Personal details

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1 Autobiographical review

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Why did I decide to become involved in health and safety management?
When and how did I decide?
What and who influenced me? In what ways?
As I look back to this time what feelings and images remain?
If I could make the decision again to become involved in this profession, would I? Why or why not?
What do I see as my greatest professional strengths?
What are a few of the frustrations I experience in my work?
What are a few of the joys and satisfactions?
Where do I see myself in the next 5, 10 years?
**Why did I decide to become involved in health and safety management?**

I was working as a chemical engineer in a team and an opportunity arose in 2005 to become a part-time safety officer. I soon found that I had knowledge and skills that staff and affiliates found helpful in mitigating risk. I also had capability to transform vision into practical solutions.

**When and how did I decide?**

In 2006, I went full-time into OHS. The employer I was working for was undergoing a significant restructure. I found my interests and independence in the safety function as appealing to my personal growth and career path. I felt that leaders, staff and affiliates would benefit from and respond better to someone with an engineering background providing them with safety advice. I formalised my role by obtaining a Graduate Diploma in OHS which the employer paid for.

**What and who influenced me? In what ways?**

The senior manager at the time gave me a new opportunity to lead a team and forge a new and interesting career path that provided independence and personal growth.

**As I look back to this time what feelings and images remain?**

An explosion occurred. There was a fire and the emergency services attended. No-one was injured. I still recall being yelled at and intimidated by a senior manager as I tried to speak with witness about the incident. This manager maintained that I did not have the authority to do what I was doing. I went home crying the entire way. I was inexperienced and unprepared for the behaviour I encountered. I was junior in level to the senior manager. I learnt so many personal and professional lessons from that incident. With time, I learnt how to diffuse a confrontational situation.

**If I could make the decision again to become involved in this profession, would I? Why or why not?**

My employer empowered me to make changes. I wasn’t afraid to learn new knowledge and skills. Making mistakes along the way is part of the journey. I don’t believe I would have had the same satisfaction and independence if I had remained in my former role.

**What do I see as my greatest professional strengths?**

Highly knowledgeable and experienced, respected, and trusted advisor to senior leaders, staff and customers internally and externally. I believe I can communicate a vision and bring people along the journey.

**What are a few of the frustrations I experience in my work?**

It is challenging to bring everyone along the journey at the same time. Incremental steps are necessary for impactful outcomes that may take 12 or more months. I also need to be inclusive and foster safety champions more widely.

**What are a few of the joys and satisfactions?**

Being an invited speaker at national and international conferences and being made a Chartered Fellow of the SIA Ltd.

**Where do I see myself in the next 5, 10 years?**

Spending more time coaching leaders, safety teams and consulting.
2 Reflection on capabilities

As a high level OHS professional you should be operating at Level 9 of the Australian Qualification Framework. This section requires you to reflect on your cognitive, technical and communication skills to demonstrate capabilities at the AQF 9 level.

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Analyse and evaluate information

Access, analyse and critically evaluate information from a range of sources to synthesise knowledge to inform action.

Evaluate complex ideas and concepts to develop a theoretical framework to inform action.

In my role as OHS Manager, I maintain a number of regulatory licences in hazardous chemicals, pressure vessels, and irradiating apparatus and materials. This requires me to understand and keep abreast of requirements. I do this by subscribing to regulatory newsletters and attending stakeholder forums. In my office, I have hardcopy reference guides (e.g., CCH) and regulations. My company has direct access to Australian Standards.

The radiation licence requires quarterly compliance reporting to the regulator. Pressure vessel licences require annual maintenance reporting to the regular. Hazardous chemicals reporting occurs every 2 years to the regulator.

I receive all incident reports for my company. I summarise the contributory causes and preventative action, and analyse results. I maintain records of lead and lag indicators, and identify improvements where required.

I use common digital systems and tools to locate and store information on pressure vessels, hazardous chemicals, irradiating apparatus and materials.

I have access to and read the company policies and procedures. There are several mandatory courses that all employees need to complete on: bullying and harassment; and demonstrating company values.

I read professional journals from the AIHS and RACI. I have a copy of the AIHS Body of Knowledge.
### Overall assessment

I demonstrated this capability to a very high capacity and am frequently called upon by senior leaders and colleagues to advise and coach/mentor new and inexperienced practitioners. I do not feel constrained in applying this capability as it is a core requirement of my role.

### Solve problems/develop strategy

**Apply critical thinking, information gathering and communication skills to identify and analyse complex OHS problems and emerging issues.**

**Approach the resolution of complex problems in a critically reflective.**

**Use established theory and practical experience from a variety of sources to generate practical evidence-informed solutions to OHS problems taking account of legislation and industry standards.**

**Defend the proposed solutions.**

I review the OHS risk profile of the company, OHS risk management plans and Standard Operating Procedures, and make recommendations for improvement. I apply knowledge of the company to identify factors that will impact on risk control.

I developed the OHS Strategy and Operational Plan in consultation with the Director, management team and staff.

I consulted with a wide range of internal stakeholders to identify the key behaviours to transform the company to increase visible leadership and proactively address non-compliance. This was articulated onto a poster that is displayed at all business unit worksites.

I authored a company OHS procedure on smoking on site. I contributed to the updated OHS Policy.

**Overall assessment**

I have extensive experience in the formulation of strategy and mitigation of risk. I applied my knowledge and experience on a daily basis in my role.

### Communicate knowledge, skills and ideas

**Interpret and tailor technical information, complex concepts and theories to communicate knowledge and ideas to a range of specialist and non-specialist audiences using an appropriate range of communication strategies.**

**Provide the evidence-base and logical reasoning to explain the risks and benefits of a range of options and justify relevant propositions and recommendations.**

**Engage in evidence-informed reflective practice, evaluative activities and professional discussion with a view to testing ideas through peer appraisal.**

I use listening and questioning techniques to clarify understanding and elicit the views of others. I completed a ‘change management’ training course and consider factors that may impact on the successful implementation of strategies and plans.

I communicate with a wide range of customers through written materials, emails, posters, websites, training and in-person presentations. I use digital technology to maintain official records, registers of hazards, and incident statistics.

I write monthly strategic OHS reports for the Director and management team, highlighting high-level compliance, OHS performance indicators, and safety initiatives, all with recommendations for improvement.

I prepare reports for and present at quarterly OHS Committee meetings and general staff meetings. I consulted with site Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) on the formation of new work groups and call for HSR nominations. I hold monthly meetings of the OHS Team (direct reports).

I have articulated the roles and responsibilities of leaders and staff in Specific Operating Instructions (SOIs), and communicated these widely. SOIs were issued on radiation safety and international travel.

I sent ‘Safety Alerts’ to staff on key incident learnings along with actions required. For example, in 2014-15 there was a Safety Alert on faulty fuses in electrical devices.

I established and maintain a company OHS intranet that includes:

- OHS Committee minutes
- OHS incident summaries and statistics
- List of OHS risk management plans and SOPs
- Online tools on a range of risk areas (e.g., chemical safety, gas safety, plant and equipment, radiation safety)

I authored a quarterly site OHS Newsletter.

I presented training on contractor OHS management. I designed and deliver a module on OHS leadership to team leaders as part of a training initiative designed and run by the HR team.

It a mandatory requirement of all employees in my company to prepare an Annual Performance Plan with objectives and performance indicators, and to have this evaluated annually by self and line manager. I consistently achieved set objectives and often exceed them.

I am a frequent invited speaker at national and international conferences. In 2014-15, I presented the following papers:

**Overall assessment**
I am a seasoned communicator using a range of mechanisms and tools to reach a diverse customer base. It's important to be inclusive in decision-making processes.

### Application

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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply project management skills to implement significant projects in the workplace. Carried out the role of Technical Committee representative for the Standards Australia Committee on Plant Safety. I served as an Executive Director of SIA Ltd (to Oct 2013-14).</td>
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- Does my reflection have implications for the OHS profession overall and suggest ways in which the OHS profession should develop?

On 1 July 2014, Company X implemented a new operational structure and new management roles. I was appointed as the OHS Manager with a team of three OHS Advisors. I had been working many years in another section of the company in which I knew everyone and the work conducted, and had contributed to that section having a strong reputation in OHS amongst clients and regulators. I was moved to a new company where I didn’t know many people, I didn’t know much about the work conducted, and I was going to inherit a very large gap in safety culture and systems. There had been a traditional lack of staff consultation on OHS initiatives, invisible leadership and reactive approaches to compliance. I had a significant challenge ahead of me.

My role as a OHS Manager was to:

- Provide strategic advice to the Director, senior leaders, management team and OHS Committees
- Directly manage a team of OHS Advisors and oversee a OHS support function with first-aiders and fire wardens
- Maintain regulatory compliance and implement OHS policies and procedures
- Monitor the OHS risk profile and risk plans
- Monitor incident trends and performance
- Conduct audits and inspections
- Deliver OHS training
There were immediate challenges and risks posed:

- The company was large (500+); at most, I had only dealt with 50-100 people
- Learning who was who in the line management structure – needed to introduce myself
- Learning the company business and key OHS risks – engaging with workers
- There were inaccurate and missing records of OHS regulatory requirements such as a radiation inventory
- – I needed to take charge of this matter as it posed a significant risk to the company
- There was a lack of an emergency management plan and workplace safety inspections
- There was significant psychosocial risk generated by the extensive organisational restructure and workforce reduction (redundancy) – needed to engage with HR on complex cases
- The OHS team was located in an area on site that was invisible to staff – we needed to relocate centrally.

My first role was to identify the key elements of an OHS strategy and to draft and implement an operational plan. I brought with me a strong technical knowledge of OHS. I had to now use my influencing skills to appeal to the ‘hearts and minds’ of a new audience. I asked what was and wasn’t working well, and what changes were needed. I consulted with the wider company staff through management meetings, team leader training, OHS committee meetings, and general discussions in the lunch room and corridors. There was a general download of negative experiences. I listened carefully and gathered common themes. We reached a consensus on an OHS strategy with three key areas: Safety leadership; Safe workplace; and Flexible workforce.

I gave myself 100 days to get on top of the situation. I was seeking quick ‘wins’ to address gaps. I significantly underestimated the extent of the legacy left by the previous company management and OHS staff. I worked additional hours outside of work for many months in order to make headway.

Twelve months later, the company is doing well in OHS. Here are some notable examples:

- Whenever non-compliance occurs, the company OHS values are referenced to recalibrate behaviours.
- We were tested with a radiation regulatory audit that identified no non-compliances and a number of best practices.
- There was significant improved communication of OHS both visually and through sharing of learnings such as incidents. Teams use the learnings to improve work practices.
- We have good staff uptake of initiatives and a very strong sense of staff consultation. This was demonstrated by the recent unprecedented strong response to a call for new Health & Safety Representatives and OHS Committee members. If I had put out the call 12 months ago, the response would have been very low.
- I provided sound advice and practical solutions to achieve safe work practices that lead to low numbers of disabling injuries and workers compensation claims (lag indicators) and an improvement in lead indicators such as number of OHS Reviews conducted. I also acquired increased proficiency and know-how across a range of business skills.

Personally, a change is exactly what I needed but I didn’t see it at the time. As an OHS professional, it is important to be flexible and adaptable. It is evident that my knowledge and skills are transferable and can make a positive impact. My advice to the OHS profession is to not be afraid of change or a new challenge. Embrace it and seek opportunities to use it to your advantage.
## 4 Summary

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<td>My role involves connecting and interacting with a diverse range of customers/stakeholders. This requires a flexible and adaptable approach to my OHS practice. I need to use evidence-based approaches to influence improvements in safety practices. The workforce I deal with is highly intelligent and will seek to understand ‘why’ an approach is being taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have I identified anything I would change about my practice? If so, what changes would I make?</td>
<td>My practice already provides with me with a variety of tasks and interactions both internally and externally. I will seek to coach my team to be more inclusive of the way they conduct themselves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Realistically, how could I go about making these changes?</td>
<td>I will be seeking internal HR and external coaching support to assist me and my OHS team to think and behave in ways that benefits our customers.</td>
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<td>Have I arrived at any other conclusions about my practice? If so what?</td>
<td>My practice is engaging. There are always challenges, whether regulatory or industrial, that will test my knowledge and skills, and then use this rich experience to help others.</td>
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## 5 Declaration

I certify that while I may have engaged in discussion with professional peers or mentors the above statements are my own.

<table>
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<th>Signature of candidate</th>
<th>First name Surname</th>
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