

Requirements for Candidates

A GENERAL

1.0 Introduction

Candidates holding one of the Intermediate level W500 series qualifications (*see table 1 below*) are eligible to apply for a Certificate of Competence [CoC] in that subject. This requires submission of a personal learning portfolio [PLP] covering the subject area, which includes a report; and then, following successful PLP and report assessment, a 75 minute oral examination.

Candidates who hold the earlier Occupational Hygiene Module qualifications [M101, M102, M103, M104, M201, M202, M203 and S301] may also apply for the CoC in that subject and will be exempt from the need to complete a PLP, but will still need to submit a report before taking the oral examination. The oral examination for these candidates is 60 minutes. A more detailed version of this document written specifically for CoC Asbestos is available [EA9] from the BOHS website.

Successful candidates are awarded the 'Certificate of Competence in [Module subject]' and are entitled to use 'CoC ([Module subject])' after their names.

Table 1 Occupational Hygiene Modules

Module number	Module Title	CoC Title
W501	Measurement of Hazardous Substances	Measurement of Hazardous Substances
W502	Thermal Environment	Thermal Environment
W503	Noise – Measurement and Effects	Noise – Measurement and Effects
W504	Asbestos and Other Fibres	Asbestos
W505	Control of Hazardous Substances	Control of Hazardous Substances
W506	Ergonomic Essentials	Ergonomic Essentials
W507	Health Effects of Hazardous Substances	Health Effects of Hazardous Substances

2.0 Application Procedure

Candidates must complete the application form and send it, together with a copy of their PLP (except where exempt), a copy of the report and the appropriate payment, to BOHS Head Office. Application forms received without payment or with an incomplete PLP and/or report will be returned.

All documentation for the CoC application, PLP submission and report submission can be downloaded from the [Certificate of Competence in an Individual Subject](#) page of the BOHS website. The PLP and the report will be examined before candidates can be put forward for the oral examination. When the Society has completed its assessment of the PLP and report they will be destroyed. It is the responsibility of the candidate to hold a copy (or the original and submit a copy) of their PLP and report for any alternations/corrections which might need to be made following marking to either or both documents.

The Certificate of Competence in any subject is only awarded to those candidates who satisfy the examiners as to their knowledge in that subject and demonstrate by their examination success, education, training and experience that they are competent to practice in the subject field.

Overall, the combination of the PLP, which includes the report, and the oral examination aim to probe knowledge (including UK legislation), operational and practical skills in the subject area.

B SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

1.0 Personal Learning Portfolio [PLP]

The PLP must contain a record of at least six months of relevant experience, and any further learning achieved during this period following successful completion of the W500 Module.

The PLP must be a structured record of the workplace learning, practical experience and skills development.

Overall the portfolio will contain:

- i) A diary of relevant experience of practical application in all of the relevant subject areas. This will include records of personal input into surveys, measurement studies, reports, etc. Candidates will be expected to submit at least six experience reports and these should cover at least four different subjects during the six month PLP period. [Examples of these are given in Section B 2.0.]
- ii) Evidence of any relevant additional learning such as meetings tutorials and training courses attended, further reading in subject areas, etc. Candidates will be expected to submit at least four records of additional learning. [Examples of these are given in Section B 3.0.]
- iii) A commentary on what has been learnt from the experience documented above.
- iv) Copy of one relevant report produced.

The report must be relevant to the subject (and more detailed requirements are detailed below, in Section C 2.0), and must be accompanied by a Certificate of Authorship for that report.

It is important that the information that goes into the PLP is the candidate's own work. It is recommended to use a ring binder or similar to keep all of the documentation together. Loose papers may not be accepted for submission as part of the PLP.

The portfolio must contain the following specific items:

- a) A completed front cover that has been signed by the candidate and countersigned by a line manager or other responsible person who will confirm the contents are the candidate's work. *If the front cover is not completed and signed the portfolio will not be accepted.*;
- b) An index listing the contents of the portfolio;
- c) The candidate's PLP diary;
- d) One report with a Certificate of Authorship.

The initial phase of the assessment process will be an evaluation of the PLP and the report. If either or both are unacceptable then the assessor will give an explanation for the rejection and advise correction and resubmission. Reports can only be resubmitted twice before the full fee will be required again. PLPs will be subject to a resubmission fee. Please refer to the BOHS website for all current fees.

More detail on the content of each section is given below.

2.0 PLP Diary

The diary will record your personal experience and additional learning related to good practice in the subject area. All record sheets can be downloaded from the [Certificate of Competence in an Individual Subject](#) page of the website.

The experience record sheet should be used to keep a record of your practical experience. This will cover things such as surveys, discussions with workers or colleagues regarding relevant subject matters, development of procedures, risk assessments and control recommendations.

The fields to be completed in this record sheet are as follows:

- a) Current role/position – briefly describe the role.
- b) Title of survey/project – briefly state the title of the survey/project/task. This could be a monitoring survey, walk-through survey, talk to operators/management, development of a sampling strategy or safe operating procedure.

- c) Date of survey/project – state the date(s) on which it was carried out.
- d) Type of survey/project – briefly describe the type of survey/project/task carried out.
- e) Scope of survey/project – briefly state the aim of the survey/project/task.
- f) Personal involvement – briefly state what individual involvement there was in the survey/project/task.
- g) Limitations of the survey/project – Clearly state any limitations to the survey/project/task. This might be things such as the equipment used, number of people surveyed, duration of the survey and any other factors that may have an effect on the results.
- h) Problems encountered/reflection on what has been learnt – State any problems that may have been encountered and what the possible effects these problems may have had. Also state what has been learnt from carrying out the survey/project/task.
- i) Verification – Each page must be signed off by a line manager, supervisor or other responsible person who will verify that the work reported is that of the candidate.

Sample Experience Pages

Item	Description
<i>Current role/position</i>	<i>Occupational Hygiene Technician</i>
<i>Title of survey/project</i>	<i>Heat stress survey in Copper Smelter</i>
<i>Date of survey/project</i>	<i>23rd January 2011</i>
<i>Type of survey/project</i>	<i>Walk-through survey</i>
<i>Scope of survey/project</i>	<i>Identify potential heat exposure areas for future monitoring programme</i>
<i>Personal involvement</i>	<i>Assisted the site hygienist during walk-through, prepared initial draft report</i>
<i>To which course module(s) does the survey/project relate</i>	<i>W502 Thermal Environment</i>
<i>Limitations with the survey/project</i>	<i>Survey only conducted on one day. The ambient temperature was low for the time of year so may not have identified all critical areas. Senior foreman was on sick leave so we were not able to discuss the process with him.</i>
<i>Problems encountered/reflection on what you have learnt</i>	<i>Exposed asbestos lagging identified during walk-through. Immediate control action instigated. Site hygienist made significant changes to my draft report and discussed these with me. It was brutal but enlightening!!</i>
<i>Verification that work performed as stated</i>	
<i>Manager's name</i>	
<i>Manager's signature</i>	
<i>Date</i>	

Item	Description
<i>Current role/position</i>	<i>Occupational Hygiene Technician</i>
<i>Title of survey/project</i>	<i>Assessment of toluene exposure during a gluing task</i>
<i>Date of survey/project</i>	<i>3rd February 2011</i>
<i>Type of survey/project</i>	<i>Initial survey of personal exposure</i>
<i>Scope of survey/project</i>	<i>Assess toluene exposure to determine adequacy of LEV during a gluing task.</i>
<i>Personal involvement</i>	<i>Assisted the site hygienist setting up and fitting personal exposure monitoring equipment to workers carrying out task. Prepared initial draft report</i>
<i>To which course module(s) does the survey/project relate</i>	<i>W501 Measurement of Hazardous Substances,</i>
<i>Limitations with the survey/project</i>	<i>Survey only conducted on one day. Workers suggested that the solvent smell was not as bad as it normally was as they did not have many jobs to do on the day of the visit.</i>
<i>Problems encountered/learnings</i>	<i>One of the sampling pumps failed part-way through the day so sample was lost. No visual check was carried out on LEV in use. Site hygienist made significant changes to my draft report and discussed these with me.</i>
<i>Verification that work performed as stated</i>	
<i>Manager's name</i>	
<i>Manager's signature</i>	
<i>Date</i>	

3.0 Additional Learning

The additional learning record sheet is used to record any additional learning. Examples of this could include attendance or participation in relevant meetings and seminars (including on-line seminars and courses), tutorials and reading of relevant articles, papers and books. This will show that the candidate has extended the knowledge of the subject gained during the relevant W500 series course.

The fields to be completed in the record sheet are as follows:

- a) Details of meeting/course/seminar/article/book title – Enter the relevant information about the meeting/course/seminar attended or the title of the article or book read here. This can also include reading on-line sources of information such as government guidance or participation in online courses and seminars.
- b) Date – Enter the date(s) of attendance of the meeting, etc. or reading the book, etc.
- c) Location/Reference details – Enter the location of the meeting or seminar attended. If participating on-line enter the website address. For books and articles enter the author(s) and publisher. If read on-line enter the website address.
- d) Learning outcomes/technical content – Briefly summarise the technical content of the meeting/seminar or book/article. For meetings and seminars attach the programme. Briefly summarise what was found useful and how that added to knowledge.
- e) For practical and other tutorials provide details of experience and the name of the tutor.
- e) Duration – For meetings, tutorials and seminars state the duration.
- f) Key speakers – For meetings and seminars list the key speakers.
- g) Verification – Each page must be signed off by your line manager, supervisor or other responsible person who will verify that the work reported is that of the candidate.

Sample Additional Learning Pages

Item	Description
<i>Details of meeting/course/seminar/article /book title</i>	<i>BOHS regional meeting on Managing Asbestos in Premises</i>
<i>Date</i>	<i>19th May 2010</i>
<i>Location (for meetings and seminars) Reference details for books and articles</i>	<i>Cardiff</i>
<i>Learning outcomes/technical content</i>	<i>Covered the new HSE guidance – The Survey Guide - Managing Asbestos in Premises that has replaced the previous MHDS100. Speakers provided an overview of the new guidance, issues relating to reports, and surveys, litigation and insurance, management issues, the role of the CDM co-ordinator and the role of UKAS. Programme attached.</i>
<i>Duration</i>	<i>09.30 – 17.00</i>
<i>Key speakers</i>	<i>Ken Hill, Colette Willoughby and Martin Stear</i>
<i>Verification of attendance</i>	
<i>Manager's name</i>	
<i>Manager's signature</i>	
<i>Date</i>	

Item	Description
<i>Details of meeting course/seminar/article /book title</i>	<i>Monitoring for Health hazards at Work (4th edition)</i>
<i>Date</i>	<i>November 2010</i>
<i>Location (for meetings and seminars) Reference details for books and articles</i>	<i>Book by John Cherrie, Robin Howie and Sean Semple Published by Wiley Blackwell</i>
<i>Learning outcomes/technical content</i>	<i>A very useful overview of practical occupational hygiene covering inhalation exposure, dermal and ingestion exposure, physical agents, assessing the effectiveness of control and risk assessment and risk communication. I found the chapter covering skin exposure particularly useful as I am currently dealing with a skin exposure problem in our metal plating plant.</i>
<i>Duration</i>	
<i>Key speakers</i>	
<i>Verification of attendance</i>	
<i>Manager's name</i>	
<i>Manager's signature</i>	
<i>Date</i>	

C REPORT

1.0 General Requirements

- 1.1 As part of the requirements for the CoC examination candidates are required to submit one copy of a written report to BOHS. This report must cover work which has been undertaken by the candidate personally in their PLP within the six months and must not have previously been submitted for examination purposes. When the Society has completed its assessment of the report it will be destroyed. It is the responsibility of the candidate to hold a copy (or the original and submit a copy) of their report for any alternations which might need to be made following marking.
- 1.2 A Certificate of Authorship **must** be completed for the report and accompany the report when submitted to BOHS.
- 1.3 The report **must** demonstrate the candidate's technical knowledge and ability, be a piece of practical work that they personally have carried out and must be directly concerned and relevant to the subject area of examination. Reports received by fax or in electronic format will not be acceptable.
- 1.4 The report can be on any aspect covered within the relevant W500 series Module syllabus and examples for specific modules are outlined in Section 3.0 below.
- 1.5 The report **must** be acceptable to the Society in order for the candidate to proceed to the oral examination. If a candidate's report is not acceptable to BOHS it will be returned to the candidate with an explanation, and a set timescale in which to revise and/or re-submit another report. Candidates are allowed to resubmit reports on two further occasions, thereafter resubmissions of the same report will not be accepted and the candidate will be required to submit a new report together with a further payment of the current full fee.
- 1.6 For the purpose of confidentiality, reports may be edited to delete/blank out the name of the company/organisation commissioning the report. However, the report and the Certificate of Authorship must bear the full address of the premises where the task was carried out.
- 1.7 If at any time the submitted report or accompanying documents are found be deliberately misleading or fraudulent then BOHS will immediately withdraw any issued Certificate of Competence and the candidate will not be permitted to resubmit reports. This sanction will have no exceptions but will be subject to an appeal procedure.

2.0 Report Contents

- 2.1 There is no restriction on the maximum length of each report.
- 2.2 The report **must** be properly structured and would normally be expected to include the following sections:
 - 2.2.1 Title page, including a title and a unique number by which the report can be identified.
 - 2.2.2 Concise or executive summary.
 - 2.2.3 Introduction or background. This must include a detailed description of the task and an outline of the location.
 - 2.2.4 Methodology for the task(s) being reported including all relevant risk assessments and safety procedures.
 - 2.2.5 The report should include both positive and negative information and data.
 - 2.2.6 A copy of the original hand written field notes, as an appendix to the report or as an attached document where appropriate.
 - 2.2.7 Copy any of analysis reports with appropriate authentication.
 - 2.2.8 Discussion and recommendations. *All reports must reach conclusions in a clear and logical way so that it is easily understandable to the recipient. Where action is required by the recipient, especially immediately, the report writer could be deemed to be negligent if the report did not contain this advice. Note: if recommended action is not included in your standard report format then supplementary documentation will be required by BOHS with these reports.*
 - 2.2.9 Reference tables and graphs etc as appropriate.
 - 2.2.10 Plans (architect or sketch)
 - 2.2.11 Where reference is made in the report to legislation, approved codes of practice or other documentation this must be current and not contain out of date references.
- 2.3 If it is not customary for reports produced by your organisation to include all the above, it will be necessary for you to provide it either on a supplementary sheet or in an accompanying letter.
- 2.4 Where it is normal to use palm tops or other similar recording devices to assist them with their studies, if these cannot be downloaded to give a working log sheet, then candidates must produce normal operational log sheets or abstracts from their laboratory notebook for the study they intend to submit for consideration. Without this information, we will be unable to assess them properly and they will be rejected.
- 2.5 Studies and reports carried out by a team will only be acceptable if ownership of the report can be claimed by the candidate alone. Only in exceptional circumstances will reports for surveys carried out on the same premises be allowed to be submitted. Use of exceptional circumstances for planned multiple surveys must be prior notified as there are additional requirements required for the reports submitted. Please contact BOHS Head Office prior to any such survey.
- 2.6 The report must be written by each individual candidate and where relevant any reported analytical data must confirm that the samples were taken and provided to the analytical laboratory by the candidate..
- 2.7 Where the report is generated from a computer generic report that requires the author to put information in about the study, please ensure that the information required has actually been put into the report and that it is a free-standing document.
- 2.8 Reports will also be rejected where they contain misleading or inconsistent information.

3.0 Specific Report Requirements

Due to the wide range of subjects covered by the W500 series Modules it is not possible to define specific requirements for all of the acceptable reports. Outlined below are a series of report subjects that are regarded as suitable for particular modules other than for W504 Asbestos, which are specified separately in document EA9 with supplementary advice in document DA 53 [both downloadable from the BOHS website]

Candidates should use the information below to judge the suitability of subjects for their report if they wish to submit for Modules other than asbestos.

Module W501

- A risk assessment for a process utilising hazardous substance(s) for which there is significant measurement data [A risk assessment of a system on a trivial operation would be regarded as insufficient] [See also section D2.0]
- Air sampling study on vapour, gases or dusts using personal dosimetry with sufficient number individual results that basic statistics can be applied.[See also section D2.0]

- Area sampling study with or without personal sampling which must include suitable conclusions and describe the significance of location of sampling [See also section D2.0]
- Real time measurement study of potential or actual personal exposure using direct reading instrumentation [See also section D2.0]
- Technical report for legal purposes as a specialist witness [See also section 2.0]

Module W502

- Measurement and assessment of the effects on workers of high or low temperature in the workplace either as real time measurement or on the basis of a series of measurements or a combination of both. [See also section D2.0]
- Technical report for legal purposes as a specialist witness [See also section D2.0]

Module W503

- Measurement and assessment of noise in the workplace either as real time measurement or on the basis of personal sampling or a combination of both. [See also section D2.0]

Module W505

- Report on a thorough examination and testing of the performance a significant ventilation system as required under the COSHH regulations. [A ventilation system involving more than two sets of measurements could be regarded as significant] [See also section D2.0]
- Report on the design of a control system designed for a specific task along with supporting measurements confirming the effectiveness of the system. The report should include the treatment and discharge system [See also section D2.0]
- Report on the design of a significant ventilation system for a process or series of tasks with supporting measurements to confirm effectiveness of system The report should include the treatment and discharge system [See also section D2.0]
- Report on a general building ventilation system that could include evaluation of air change rate and/or effectiveness in providing suitable working environment for employees. [See also section D2.0]
- Technical report for legal purposes as a specialist witness [See also section D2.0]

Module W506

- An assessment of ergonomic risk associated with a process or a workstation. [See also section D2.0]
- Technical report for legal purposes as a specialist witness [See also section D2.0]

Module W507

- Assessment of the risks in the workplace from hazardous substances as a literature study followed by consideration of the use of that substance or substances in a process or processes.
- Technical report for legal purposes as a specialist witness [See also section D2.0]

D ORAL EXAMINATION

1.0 General Requirements

In order to pass the oral examination, candidates **must** be able to satisfy the examiners with regard to their knowledge including UK legislation, operational and practical skills in the subject area (i.e. the whole module syllabus). The examiners will have access to the candidate's PLP and report and may well refer to their contents during the oral examination.

Three examiners, who will ask questions in turn covering all aspects of the relevant syllabus, will usually conduct the oral examination (in exceptional circumstances there may only be two examiners, one of whom will be designated Chair). They will expect the candidate to be forthcoming with appropriate answers. The questions will be straightforward tests of knowledge and understanding of the information covered by the syllabus. No trick questions are asked by the examiners. If a candidate does not understand the question being put they should ask for clarification by the examiner. This oral examination will normally last approximately 75 minutes (60 minutes for earlier 'M' series candidates).

The examiners will not give the candidate a result on the day, as their considerations and recommendations are discussed and finalised after the examination and, on occasion, final authorisation is required from the Chief Examiner.

On some occasions trainee examiners may sit in on the oral examinations but they take no part in the results process of the examination.

Candidates **MUST** be able to demonstrate to the examiners that they have carried out relevant work and have knowledge in **ALL** of the areas of the syllabus.

Candidates are expected to have prepared themselves for this oral examination by ensuring that they have appropriate knowledge of all the areas of the syllabus and that it is up to date. Lack of knowledge of any part of the syllabus because, for example, those duties do not form part of the candidate's day-to-day responsibilities, will **NOT** be taken into consideration by the examiners and candidates presenting themselves in this way will automatically fail the examination.