

Notification of Intended Changes to Asbestos Proficiency Modules -Improved Ways of Assessing and Examining Candidates

We are pleased to advise you about important changes that will be of significant benefit to all candidates, employers, and Approved Training Providers. As a professional qualifications and technical awarding provider, regulated under Royal Charter, we are always seeking ways to improve the quality of the courses and awards we are responsible for.

Part of that process is to keep our courses under continual review, through gathering feedback from Approved Training Providers and other stakeholders. The British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) considers this as a vital part of our processes and is undertaking additional work to make it easier for Approved Training Providers and learners to provide honest and constructive feedback on what is good about our qualifications, and what can be enhanced.

In addition, it is good practice to review courses on a periodic basis to ensure that any changes have not substantially drawn the provision away from the original specification and, indeed, to allow for benchmarking to ensure that they are relevant and appropriate for the purposes they were designed.

The main changes to the Asbestos qualifications which are intended to be effective from February 2022 are as follows:

Changes to Syllabi

All technical content for P400 through to P408 has been thoroughly reviewed to take into account the release of published changes to HSG248 Asbestos: The Analysts' Guide, findings from HSE's interventions, and developments in analytical procedures and methodology.

This is to ensure that all of the technical content is compatible with today's regulations and needs and is as user friendly as far as is practicable. We have also carefully considered the time allocated to each qualification and adjusted it accordingly. This is to ensure it remains manageable, for both Approved Training Providers and candidates, and all syllabus content can be effectively covered through the duration of each course.

Training Materials

The changes that we have made to the syllabi are crucial, and as part of our normal quality assurance requirements it will be necessary for all training materials to be submitted to BOHS for approval prior to delivering the refreshed courses to candidates. Thus, Approved Training Providers will need to submit all course manuals and lecture slides (as relevant) electronically for each module.

These will be reviewed by subject specialists using our normal, but updated, inspection procedure. The easiest way to submit your course materials (especially if they are large files), is by using a web transfer site such as [FileMail.com](https://www.filemail.com/) and sending them directly to Inspections@bohs.org.

Changes to Examinations and Assessment

- **Formative Practical Assessments:**

The use of the terms Formative Practical Assessment has been used in the past, to describe the practical assessment carried out and documented by the tutor and then submitted to BOHS as evidence that a candidate has adequately demonstrated the practical skills required.

It has always been accepted that the tutor was able to coach individual candidates during this assessment hence the use of the term "Formative Assessment". However, it must be stressed that the Practical Assessment is a compulsory part of the assessment process and that the tutor, by reporting a successful practical assessment result, is confirming that the candidate has demonstrated all the appropriate practical skills required of them.

The Practical Assessment takes place with the tutor and is submitted as evidence. It will be used as part of the whole summative assessment, along with examinations that test theory and practical application in an occupational setting. The new forms (currently in progress with the development team) will be made available as part of the course specifications on the website.

- **Written Examinations:**

Exam questions have been fully reviewed on all exam papers to remove any ambiguity and make them more vocationally focused. The new exam papers will now all be similar in style to the former Written Practical papers, by using pictures and diagrams.

Candidates will be able to better apply what they have learned throughout their Asbestos courses and will feel more confident in their ability to sit and successfully pass an examination. Furthermore, the candidate should feel more confident in applying what they have learnt in their chosen occupation.

The exam papers themselves, will all be Short Answer Questions (SAQ) with variable marks. Questions will be open and unambiguous and contain more images and diagrams.

All P400 series written exams will now have a blended approach and will be split into Syllabus areas. For example: Exam Paper 1 will cover syllabus sections 1 to 3 and Exam Paper 2 will cover syllabus sections 4 to 7. In addition to this, all P400 Series written exams will be now open book.

Again, as with the Syllabi, the time allocated to each exam has also been carefully considered and adjusted accordingly to ensure they remain manageable for the candidate.

- **Examination Pass Marks**

The review of all examinations along with the addition of many new style questions will allow and encourage candidates to apply the practical knowledge learnt. This approach will enhance and test both practical and theoretical understanding rather than the more traditional methods. This change in approach also requires a review of the pass mark so that it can be set accordingly. We have carried out an in-depth study and statistical analysis of the achievement levels of all candidates for 2019/2020 and 2021.

This study showed that the overall pass mark for this style of examination should be 55%. In addition, this and other studies have shown that some candidates had managed to pass the overall qualification and actually show little or no knowledge of some parts of the syllabus. Hence the need to apply subject threshold marking for all the sections of the syllabi.

Setting a minimum threshold mark for each syllabus section will ensure that any candidate awarded a qualification will have met the minimum criteria for all parts of the syllabus. The marks are thus being set at 45% to pass sections of the syllabus with an overall pass mark of 55% to pass the exam paper.

For example: If Exam Paper 1 covers section 1 and 2 of the syllabi, candidates will need to achieve a minimum of 45% for syllabus section 1 and a minimum of 45% for syllabus section 2. However, Exam paper 1 has an overall pass mark of 55% which needs to be achieved in order to pass Exam Paper 1.

This will be reviewed at frequent intervals from February 2022.