

BOHS W500/W201 Learner Update and FAQs

- The Occupational Hygiene Training Association has decided that BOHS, the UK's Royal Chartered Occupational Hygiene Society and qualifications body will no longer award training certificates for W500, W201 and ICertOH.
- The last BOHS-awarded OHTA examination will take place in December 2024, but booking first sittings of W500 series and W201 examinations will not be possible after December 2023.
- We have therefore put together these FAQs to help you understand what this means and how BOHS plans to support you as a learner.
- Please feel free to contact us with more questions, concerns and suggestions.

What is happening?

- **BOHS will no longer be associated with OHTA courses or awards.** This was not BOHS's decision or choice.
- BOHS will be re-introducing its own examinations, which will be recognised as meeting UK standards with effect from December 2023. This is to ensure you can continue on their planned path to qualification as promised in BOHS marketing. However, these won't be recognised by OHTA.

What does this mean in practice?

- As a consequence of this, **the last BOHS W500 or W201 examinations will have to take place before 4th December 2024**, in order to allow time for marking and any potential appeal you might make. **These will be resit examinations only.**
- **Training providers will not be able to book first sit BOHS-awarded W500 or W201 examinations for you after 4th December 2023 (i.e. next month).**
- This is because you are entitled to the same treatment as previous candidates, i.e. a right to resit within 12 months.
- Please note: if you were to attempt a W500 or W201 examination, but had a lesser period of time to resit, you would be entitled to a refund from the training provider and/or BOHS and/or OHTA.

Why is it happening?

- This was a business decision by OHTA.

What if I've already booked onto a W500 course?

- If you have booked on a W500 course for 2024, please contact your training provider.
- BOHS will ensure that any candidate who is eligible because of training and experience can access an examination exactly equivalent to a W500 examination, wherever they are in the world.
- We need to do this to honour our obligations in relation to the marketing of the W500 series and ICertOH. **However, BOHS examinations will not have any direct endorsement, relationship or be subject to the requirements of OHTA.**

Are W500 courses still going to continue?

- **W500 course approval comes from OHTA not BOHS.** W500 courses can still run, but will not be subject to first sit examination by BOHS.

- For arrangements for alternative examinations, please refer to the Training Provider for further information.
- However, you must be aware that **any OHTA examinations are not currently recognised by BOHS, are not part of an accredited international qualifications framework and are not recognised in the UK or by the UK's professional regulator.**

I still want a UK-recognised qualification, what can I do?

- All existing W500 BOHS examination centres are being offered the chance to run the re-launched BOHS M-series examinations. These were the BOHS examinations that W500s were modelled upon.
- BOHS M-series examinations will assess the same syllabus and content as BOHS W-series examinations, but are not linked directly to OHTA or W500 training.
- You can elect to sit an M-series examination without undertaking any specified training, as long as you are sufficiently prepared. However, we would strongly advise you to ensure that you have been appropriately trained at work, in a University or by a reputable Occupational Hygiene Training provider before attempting M-series examinations.
- BOHS will be reintroducing the M-series which will be the professionally recognised examination, leading directly to UK qualification.
- The exams will be identical in length, require coverage of the same syllabus and be administered and marked in the same way as W500 examinations.
- However, as BOHS examinations, they will be directly qualifying for the UK, meaning that you will:
 - 1) Be examined to UK standards;
 - 2) Be entitled to one year of free membership of BOHS from the date of commencing their first M500 examination;
 - 3) After completion of the first M500 examination, be entitled to join the Faculty of Occupational Hygiene as an Associate Member (the UK's professional body) and to have the letters AFOH after their name;
 - 4) Have qualification recognition for the purpose of working in the UK and be entitled to be listed on the Register of Occupational Hygiene Professionals, if working in the UK for more than six months (or immediately, if a Hygienist from the Republic of Ireland);
 - 5) Have a direct route to higher UK qualifications, such as the Certificate of Competence in Occupational Hygiene (CertOH) which is an internationally recognised qualification;
 - 6) Have a formal award of the Royal Chartered Society, evidenced by a Certificate carrying the BOHS Coat of Arms.

How will M-series examinations differ from W500s?

- M-series is an examination series, not a course. You can seek preparation by any means, including a course of training, in-company training or self-study.
- M-series is in no way associated with W500 courses, with OHTA and does not have their approval or support.
- For ease of reference, the relaunched M-series examinations will be M501, M502 etc, corresponding to W500s and following on from the previous BOHS M-series titles.
- M-series examinations will cover the same content as M-series examinations prior to 2011, which form the basis of the W500 UK legislation will not be part of M-series examinations and

will be supported by L202, a self-study course and examination which will be free to BOHS members.

- M-series examinations will be short answer questions in exactly the same format as W500 examinations.

What are OHTA500 courses?

- BOHS has limited information about OHTA courses, but has been informed that there will be changes to the syllabus, training manuals and the test OHTA will provide will be in multiple choice format.
- OHTA will be a new awarding body, but details of how they will operate, their recognition by professions and their governance and sustainability are not available to BOHS.
- Further information should be sought from OHTA.

How much is an M-series examination?

- BOHS has been subsidising W500 courses, providing them at more than half cost price.
- M-series examinations will still be marked by a professionally qualified occupational hygienist and be subject to the full quality processes of a Royal Chartered awarding body..
- We plan to continue to make M-series affordable and will maintain the price of an examination at £100.
- However, we will no longer be collecting the levy for OHTA's management costs, so the total cost to you, as a learner, will fall from £140 for W500s to £100 for M500s.
- We hope that this way you will still be able to access UK standard and recognised qualifications for an affordable price.

What will happen after 1st January 2025?

- Throughout 2024, we plan to consult on how we can better support training providers, exam centres and, most importantly, you - our learners.
- Our emphasis during this year will be on supporting exam centres to explain the changes to the qualifications system caused by OHTA's decision and to understand how BOHS can better support those centres wishing to provide support for M500s.
- In 2025, we will implement changes to the support for centres and for learners.

I already have W500 qualifications. Will they still be worth something?

OHTA has indicated that it intends to allow for the continued recognition of W500s for their new ICertOHTA to be launched in January 2025.

W500 awards will still be recognised by BOHS for all current and future qualification purposes, including ICertOH (while it continues as an awarding body) and CertOH.

Finally

We sincerely apologise for the sudden and significant changes. BOHS has had only a few days to process this information and come up with a solution to ensure business continuity for you and guarantee learners can have continuity of awarding, professional status and recognition and access to high quality and professionally recognised award.