

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies

Are these new standards?

The BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies sets out in one place the existing standards of competency for occupational hygiene providers previously embodied in existing documents. These materials which have been developed over a period of years outlining the skills, knowledge, and attributes of competent professionals.

The competency standards are not new, although we have sought to clarify some and to remove some inconsistencies in published materials. The aim is to have a comprehensive, definitive, and accessible source of competency standards for use by the profession and those who work with us or use our services.

The BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies will be revised periodically as the profession, regulatory policy and industries develop to ensure that our profession is up to date and relevant.

What do I need to do to show I have met these competencies?

The Faculty of Occupational Hygiene (to be referred to as 'the Faculty') will continue to use a combination of accredited training, professional qualifications, and the continuing professional development scheme to assure competence within the profession.

The BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies may (in the future) enable the Faculty to assure the same standards are met to the same extent by a more diverse and inclusive group of practitioners.

The Faculty will continue with its continual improvement of the qualifications and the CPD offer to ensure that there is public confidence in the profession and support for all aspiring occupational hygiene professionals.

I have a Faculty membership at Licentiate or Chartered Level, but have not been trained or tested in all these competencies. Do I have to do additional training/examinations?

There are no plans to implement additional testing of knowledge skills for those who have attained Licentiate or Chartered Membership. However, we would expect that qualified professionals will find the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies an invaluable guide for planned self-development to ensure:

- Continued current competence across the range of occupational hygiene skills;
- Sufficient breadth to address new situations and working contexts with competence and confidence; and
- An aspiration to develop expertise and professional recognition by the profession through the Faculty.

Much of what is most valuable in the development of competencies comes from working in the field. We hope that as professionals, the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies will help professionals identify and critique their own skills in the workplace and assist with planning and targeting CPD.

The mentorship programme aims to provide support where there may not be expert workplace supervision, providing guidance and feedback on the development of occupational hygiene skills.

Regardless of formal qualification or recognition, practitioners should assure themselves that they meet these standards and that they can objectively demonstrate this to their clients and others, including the regulator.

I'm an experienced Occupational Hygienist with the expected competencies, but I don't have Faculty Membership at Licentiate or Chartered Level because circumstances have prevented me from progressing. Will I receive help?

The Faculty Committee are aware of a number of Faculty members who are experienced practitioners and may be highly competent professionals but who, because of work or personal circumstances, have not been able to access training opportunities in the same way as other hygienists and therefore may not hold a Faculty membership commensurate with their experience and expertise.

The BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies also provides the basis for an assurance framework for the Faculty. The Faculty Committee are reviewing options to enable it to assure professional competency and the meeting of standards for those who may have been prevented by circumstances from pursuing existing routes to qualification.

We value the diversity and work of all of those supporting high quality work in the market.

Anyone who feels they are in this situation is requested to write to membership@bohs.org and we will seek to support your development and recognition on an individual basis, with reference to the standards and levels outlined in the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies.

I've never been trained or tested in some of these areas and feel I would benefit from additional training. How can I obtain this training?

The BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies provides a comprehensive self-audit tool to help all occupational hygiene professionals to identify their competencies and areas where they may need further development. This should help individuals identify the areas of development that they need to focus on to meet the criteria for competence that the Faculty formally assesses.

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In recent years, the Faculty has sponsored free professional development courses at the BOHS annual occupational hygiene conference to provide additional support for professional development.

The Faculty Committee will be reviewing each step on the pathway to Chartership, using the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies as a guide to ensure there is helpful and accessible support for the continued development of professionals.

What is an Advanced Practitioner and is there a Faculty membership level for this?

In mapping competencies against other benchmarked standards and frameworks, we identified that there is a level of expertise and competence beyond that required for the

Certificate of Operational Competence (CertOH), but not at the standard of the Diploma of Professional Competence (DipOH) required to achieve Chartered Membership.

This is reflective of working with full professional independence (perhaps as a sole employed hygienist within an organisation) or as a specialist lead. We felt it important to outline that such roles required competence levels above Licentiate Level but might not always require full Chartered status.

How does the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies relate to the new Register of Occupational Hygiene Professionals?

The Faculty is implementing a Register of Occupational Hygiene Professionals, in conjunction with the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) for Health and Social Care, designed to protect the public from the risk of services being provided by individuals who lack tested capabilities and competence. The PSA will be accrediting the Register of those occupational hygiene professionals whose competencies the Faculty has been able to formally assure.

Public FAQs

Who is the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies for?

- Businesses and employers
- Practising occupational hygiene professionals
- Educators and trainers
- Professionals in related areas of practice
- Professionals from other jurisdictions

Why would you need to refer to the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies?

- Businesses and employers – the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require competent persons to be employed or contracted to provide health protection for workers. This should be determined by reference to the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies.
- Practising occupational hygiene professionals – practitioners are legally and ethically bound to operate within the limits of their competence.
- Educators and trainers – standards for training and education aiming at approval need to align with the competencies and outcomes outlined in the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies.
- Professionals in related areas of practice – effective interprofessional working and benchmarking require the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies as a reference point for professional occupational hygiene practice.
- Professionals from other jurisdictions – the mutual recognition of occupational hygiene practitioner status is reserved to BOHS by the UK Regulated Professions Act 2022 and the detailed competencies for recognition are outlined in the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies.

What is the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies used for?

- Businesses and employers - Designing role specifications and deciding the level of competence/qualification needed to comply with legal competency requirements (see also Buyers Guide for Occupational Hygiene Services).
- Practising occupational hygiene professionals – understanding the competencies expected of you and practice limits (see also Faculty of Occupational Hygiene Code

of Ethics and Good Practice Guide for Consultants), planning areas of focus for continuing professional development.

- Educators and trainers – designing training and education materials and assessing alignment with occupational hygiene qualifications.
- Professionals in related areas of practice – understanding the overlap and relationship between occupational hygiene professional practice and other professions.
- Professionals from other jurisdictions – understanding and mapping to the UK's regulation of occupational hygiene practice.

How should the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies be used?

- Businesses and employers – Using the specific language and outcomes from the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies in role and contract specifications can ensure that there is consistency with professional expectations and standards of work. Businesses and employers can freely use the statement for their own internal documentation.
- Practising occupational hygiene professionals – The BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies should be a continual point of reference for practitioners in determining the scope of their professional practice, planning training and development to maintain their practice skills and for the planning of professional and career development.
- Educators and trainers – The BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies should provide the outline map for the design of training and education tools and provides the outcomes to which occupational hygiene training should lead. It also provides the context in terms of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the Bologna system for benchmarking occupational hygiene qualifications to other qualifications for the purposes of the Recognition of Prior Learning.
- Professionals in related areas of practice -The BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies is the definitive statement of the province of the occupational hygiene profession in the UK and can be used to determine standards expected of professional practitioners from other domains offering some occupational hygiene services, as well as setting the expectations of occupational hygienists contributing to interprofessional and multi-professional working.
- Professionals from other jurisdictions – The BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies provides the definitive statement of professional standards, skills and knowledge in the UK for reference when considering the status of a UK occupational hygiene professionals working in another jurisdiction and to benchmark professional qualifications, experience and training for foreign hygienists coming into the UK market.

When should you have reference to the BOHS Statement of Occupational Hygiene Competencies?

- Businesses and employers – If you are employing or contracting occupational hygiene services, please refer to it when determining whether a person is competent.
- Practising occupational hygiene professionals – When deciding your next steps in training and considering your professional development planning and training, please refer to it.
- Educators and trainers – when designing, reviewing, and promoting training and education, please refer to it.

- Professionals in related areas of practice – When mapping across professional competencies or considering interprofessional training and education please refer to it.
- Professionals from other jurisdictions – When considering working across jurisdictions or mapping qualifications equivalence please refer to it.

Where can you find further information on this?

- Businesses and employers – further information on competence and occupational hygiene can be found at: <https://www.bohs.org/find-an-occupational-hygienist/>
- Practising occupational hygiene professionals – further information on developing your professional competence can be found at: <https://www.bohs.org/education/>
- Educators and trainers – further information on working with BOHS on education and training can be found at: <https://www.bohs.org/education/approved-training-providers/>
- Professionals in related areas of practice – further information on working with BOHS in interprofessional contexts, please contact admin@bohs.org.
- Professionals from other jurisdictions - further information on working with BOHS in interprofessional contexts, please contact admin@bohs.org.