



Diploma of Professional Competence in Occupational Hygiene

Part II The Professional Experience Portfolio (PEP)

What is a professional experience portfolio?

A professional experience portfolio is a systematic collection of evidence and explanation which reflects the professional journey of the author.

Everyone's professional journey is different. Whether it be through consultancy or corporate roles, by University or through work, we all develop as professionals in different ways. The diversity of the occupational hygiene profession adds to its strength. The Professional Experience Portfolio (PEP) aims to provide the flexibility for you to show where you have got to professionally, regardless of the route that you have taken. It has been chosen as an assessment so as not to give preference to any professional development route and to enable you to give voice to how you meet the common standards expected of any occupational hygienist at this level.

Undoubtedly, the reality of life is that for some, it will be easier to demonstrate objectively that a competency outcome has been met in one area and for others it will be easier to demonstrate meeting an outcome in another way. Part of the process is to address where it is harder to evidence competence and for you to work with your mentor, the network provided by the Diploma Days and with the support of Head Office to help address your areas of challenge.

What is the format for the portfolio?

In order to assist you and the assessors in evaluation of whether the portfolio comprehensively addresses the criteria to be assessed it should be presented in the following format:

- 1) Personal statement. A personal statement (of no more than 1,000 words) provides a professional context about you for the portfolio assessor and explains why you consider yourself to be operating at the Diploma level of professional competence in occupational hygiene. The statement should comment on the depth and breadth of your professional experience. Notable achievements or awards and any contributions that you have made to the development of the discipline through publications, presentations, participation in networks, BOHS activities etc., should be outlined in your cv;
- 2) Occupational hygiene CV (as provided with your application);
- 3) Self-assessment (as provided with your application);
- 4) Portfolio Master document. The template is attached. This explanatory document systematically addresses the outcomes that are being assessed. Each section should be completed with a brief explanation of how you believe your proficiency can be evidenced. This is important to help the person assessing your portfolio understand why you believe you are proficient in this area. Your explanation should reference an evidence document, the page number and line number or approximate location in the evidence document;

- 5) Evidence files. Supporting evidence for each of the competency criteria A to J should be organised in separate files, titles with your name and the relevant Competency criteria, e.g. "A Knowledge and Understanding Peter Smith."

Evidence documents. Supporting documents should be in pdf form, referenced by your name and the specific outcome that they support, e.g. "B1 – 1 Critical Thinking Peter Smith 1." This should also be on the document, which should have page numbering added and with highlights of sections particularly relevant to the outcome, either by highlighting or a line down the side.

Submission of portfolios can be accepted in electronic form only. Documents should be reduced to the smallest file size which can be achieved most easily by making a choice of resolution/file size when printing to .pdf or scanning. The Portfolio Master document should be in editable Word format. We would prefer this format, so that any comments can be made by assessors in track changes format and that, should you need to revise or update a submission, it is easy for assessors to follow the responses. Please keep copies of your portfolio for your own reference and in case of computer issues.

Why do I need to produce evidence?

Evidence for your portfolio is not really a question of proving that you have done something, but a means by which the assessors can determine your proficiency level. The evidence you produce should be the means by which they can navigate through what may be years of your professional experience. The assessors can't see you at work and in practice, so need to piece together a picture of you as a professional from the materials that you share.

Do I have to respond to every competency element?

You need to provide a response in the Portfolio Master document to each competency element (A to J), even if it is to identify that you have not had the opportunity to demonstrate this. If you find yourself suggesting that you have already responded for this under a previous heading, please check that you have understood the nature of the competence being examined – some look similar but are to a different purpose. Of course, you may have provided evidence which supports your competence in this area in an earlier document, in which case you should reference that document and where the competence is demonstrated.

What competencies should I focus more attention for the Portfolio?

The following competencies are best evidenced by seeing the evidence of your work in practice:

- E Implementation and Management Skills (Implementing and Taking Action)**
- F General Evaluative Skills**
- G Communication and Reporting**
- H Interprofessional Working**
- I Professional Record Keeping**

You should carefully read the [BOHS-Statement-of-Occupational-Hygiene-Competencies-1.pdf](#). It is assumed that your work already demonstrates competency at licentiate level and above. Evidence submitted which indicates a lack of basic competency may be disregarded as evidence of meeting Diploma level competency standards.

Are there any technical areas of operation that I need to show competence in?

At least two documented work examples should cover the identification and/or assessment and/or control of risks associated with workplace exposure to [hazardous substances](#).

At least one documented work example should cover the identification and/or assessment and/or control of risks associated with workplace exposure to [noise](#).

The remaining PEP work items may cover any other technical topic:

- Asbestos
- Hand-arm or whole-body vibration
- The thermal environment
- Ionising radiation
- Non-ionising radiation
- Biological hazards
- Ergonomics
- External environment

The PEP should comprise a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 work examples.

How do I select examples of evidence?

The PEP should not be the sum of all the jobs you have done. It should be a fair and honest representation of the knowledge, skills, capabilities and attributes that you have. The materials provided should show what you are currently capable of and your level of proficiency at the time of application. For each of the competency criteria, there should be at least one robust piece of evidence to help the assessors determine whether you are currently operating at Diploma level. Depending on the most effective and realistic context, this evidence may be tested in the portfolio, the researched essay or in the professional discussion.

Part of the assessment of your professional competence and awareness of what practice at this level should be comes from your choice of evidence and your determination about whether the evidence meets the standard. After all, in practice at Chartered level, you will often be working without supervision or direct audit of your own standard of work. Furthermore, you may well be setting standards for other hygienists to work by. Your judgement is therefore a critical part of the assessment.

What if the best evidence is from a few years ago and I would have done it better in retrospect?

Your evidence should, by and large be work undertaken in practice since your award of CertOH or exempting degree. We learn by experience. The evidence does not need to be of perfect practice. Indeed, you may have done a piece of work, which if you did it again or in different circumstances, you would do differently or better. If this is the case, still provide the evidence in its original form, but also provide a critique, explaining what you think you could or should have done differently. We often also learn by our mistakes. What is important is that you recognise these and reflect.

What happens if I have had relevant experience, but I do not have direct evidence of it?

You may have done a piece of work that, for example, involved interprofessional working, but it is not clear from the documentation. In that case, you could also provide an explanatory

note to contextualise how this might demonstrate your competence. Please provide focused and factual explanation (i.e. try not to provide long, wordy essays).

What happens if I have not had an opportunity to demonstrate a competence?

Most competences will be ones which, over the years, you will have had a chance to demonstrate. However, we are aware that in some roles, it is not always possible to demonstrate some specific areas of competence. Don't be disheartened. You can discuss this with your mentor and/or with Head Office to explore how we can support some aspects of professional development experiences.

What types of evidence can I use?

The following are examples of evidence that could be used for your portfolio.

Type of Item	Description
Investigation reports:	<p>These must demonstrate adequate planning of the investigation, good technical skills in execution, a thorough and valid interpretation of results (including suitable statistical analysis as appropriate), and the proposition of valid and practical risk reduction measures. Basic reports such as those describing routine monitoring to a prescribed template will not be acceptable.</p> <p><i>These could demonstrate all 4 directly assessed outcomes (E, G H and I).</i></p> <p><i>These may also demonstrate specific technical expertise.</i></p> <p><i>Reports should always be redacted in relation to any material that may identify and source or subject of data. It is good practice to seek permission of the organisation that commissioned the work to disclose a review for professional assessment purposes.</i></p>
Expert witness reports;	<p>A good report will give detailed background information on the circumstances giving rise to the alleged injury or disease, a clear analysis of the issues involved, a summary of the publicly available information on the topic and any relevant legal requirements, and the author's opinion on whether the employer or other relevant person acted reasonably or not.</p> <p><i>These could particularly demonstrate outcome F, but also G, H and I.</i></p> <p><i>These may also demonstrate specific technical expertise.</i></p> <p><i>We do not expect that most candidates will have undertaken an expert witness report. It is good practice, where a case has been reported, to include highlighted in the case report how the evidence has been received by a court.</i></p>
Original literature reviews;	<p>These must be critical in nature, draw appropriate conclusions and be correctly referenced. (Please note that review which simply describes other material, without analysis will not provide good evidence.)</p> <p><i>These could particularly demonstrate outcomes F and G. The nature of the source of publication of the review should be included, explaining any peer scrutiny process prior to publication.</i></p>

	<p><i>These may also demonstrate specific technical expertise.</i></p> <p><i>It is good practice to include any published response or further citation of the review by other experts.</i></p>
Technical reviews of processes;	<p>These should consider the occupational hygiene issues related to processes. Examples include the incorporation of control measures at the design stage and the transfer of a process from one site to another. (Please note that a review which simply describes other material, without analysis will not provide good evidence.)</p> <p><i>These could demonstrate all 5 directly assessed outcomes (E, F, G H and I). These may also demonstrate specific technical expertise.</i></p> <p><i>Reviews should always be redacted in relation to any material that may identify and source or subject of data. It is good practice to seek permission of the organisation that commissioned the work to disclose a review for professional assessment purposes.</i></p>
Research reports:	<p>These must be of a standard that would be accepted by a peer reviewed journal. (Please note that a report which simply describes other material, without analysis will not provide good evidence.)</p> <p><i>These could particularly demonstrate outcomes F and G. The nature of the source of publication of the review should be included, explaining any peer scrutiny process prior to publication.</i></p> <p><i>These may also demonstrate specific technical expertise.</i></p> <p><i>It is good practice to include any published response or further citation of the review by other experts.</i></p>
Articles for in-house or external publications;	<p>These must effectively communicate the subject to the intended audience, be technical in nature and include some interpretation or comment. Wholly descriptive articles are not acceptable. The article can be on any subject as long as it has some relevance to the practice of occupational hygiene.</p> <p><i>These could particularly demonstrate outcomes F and G. The nature of the source of publication of the article should be included, explaining any editorial scrutiny process prior to publication.</i></p> <p><i>These may also demonstrate specific technical expertise.</i></p>

It is good practice to include any published response or further citation of the article by other experts.

Can I use evidence that is not just my own work?

Many of us work in collaborative contexts or with management systems and processes which contribute to and influence our practice. That does not discount this work from being useful evidence of achieving some of the outcomes.

What is critical is that you are clear on the extent to which the work is a product of your own professional practice. Please make clear whether evidence is the result of a collaboration.

- Did you write it?
- Did you organise it?
- Did you evaluate it?
- Is your role clear?

How do I deal with ethical issues, confidentiality and data protection?

You should be familiar with the basic principles of data protection as part of your professional practice and development. Compliance with these will make you compliant with confidentiality requirements for meeting professional ethical standards. Particular note should be made in relation to personal information, sensitive personal information and exclusions to the duty to protect privacy/confidentiality arising out of the reporting of wrongdoing. Simple, broadly relevant and up-to-date information can be found at [Introduction to confidentiality | \(hcpc-uk.org\)](http://Introduction to confidentiality | (hcpc-uk.org))

You are entitled to process data and information provided by your employer and clients for the purposes of your own professional development and professional review. It is a fair use of data and information to share with your professional body for audit and quality assurance of *your* professional practice. The Diploma portfolio would meet that criterion.

Any information that is not required in order to make a judgment on your own practice (i.e. other than the objective professional context) should be redacted. In redaction, the preference should be to redact, unless the information or data is essential to making a judgement on your work. The test should be: could I make a professional determination on the correct practice without access to this information. In submitting information, you may choose to redact, but then to precis redacted information.

In order to meet ethical and legal standards, assessors should not seek to make a judgement on the specific professional method, calculation or conclusion that could have been drawn from the data/information. The judgement should be whether, on the face of the evidence provided, your approach was an appropriate one to take, based on the material provided. If you are unable to provide sufficient material for the assessor to base their evidence on, then they will not be able to judge you competent, based on this evidence.

Separate considerations apply to **commercial confidentiality**. This arises out of contracts for the provision of services to clients and may be in the form of standard terms, non-disclosure agreements or client standard terms and conditions. Typically, the restrictions provide blanket prohibition on the sharing of data and information *accessed* by you as part of your work (i.e. created by the client). There is a distinction between this and data and information created by you as a result of observing, monitoring and accessing the client's operation. Rights in this data and information typically vest in you or your employer. Whether your use of

observations, monitoring etc. are confidential, if redacted to remove association with the client, can be complex and depends on circumstances. The same can apply in cases of statutory confidentiality, such as under the Official Secrets Act. Any rights can be waived by the client. It is good practice to seek the consent of the client to:

- share the work in a redacted form which makes it impossible to identify the client and their employees/sites etc;
- exclusively with the assessment team of your professional body as part of professional audit.

How will my portfolio be used to assess me as competent?

Even for professional educators, portfolio assessment is a challenge. The person assessing your portfolio will be a professional occupational hygienist. They will be balancing the desire to recognise your competence with the duty to ensure that the professional standards we are responsible for maintaining are met. There are few other circumstances where Occupational Hygiene professionals are under practice scrutiny, so this process is a critical assurance for public safety.

Each of the five outcomes being assessed by the portfolio must be met by objective evidence being provided from your professional practice. The assessors will need to be assured that:

- 1) Evidence relating to meeting that outcome has been presented;
- 2) The evidence is the work of the candidate;
- 3) It is clear that the candidate understands how the evidence they have provided demonstrates that they are proficient in that element of practice;
- 4) The evidence shows objectively (taking into account any further contextual information provided) that the outcome has been addressed; and
- 5) The evidence shows the required level of proficiency in relation to the outcome.

If all these points are met, then the assessor may make the judgment that the competency has been demonstrated through the portfolio.

The assessor will consider the portfolio as a whole. This may enable the assessor, where a piece of evidence is not clear from a specific piece of supporting evidence, to determine from the totality of the evidence whether that competency has been attained.

In respect of each component of each competency assessed, the feedback will therefore be:

- a) Competency demonstrated (PASS); or
- b) Competency not demonstrated (SUBMIT FURTHER EVIDENCE):
 - Evidence not provided
 - Authorship unclear
 - Explanation unclear
 - Evidence not suitable to demonstrate competency claimed
 - Evidence does not demonstrate the standard has been met

What happens if the assessor does not think that I have demonstrated competence in an area?

The portfolio aims to encapsulate years of your professional practice in a set of evidence and explanations. It could be that you may not manage to convey to the assessor your current level of professional practice successfully with the evidence you first submit. You may therefore be asked to resubmit your portfolio with revisions.

The feedback you receive will tell you what you are missing, but it will not be able to tell you how to remedy it. Only you know your professional practice. A mentor may help you reflect on suitable approaches. If you are asked to resubmit, this does not mean that you are not competent. It does mean that there is insufficient evidence in the portfolio to allow you to proceed.

This happens most often because:

- 1) A candidate fails to provide objective evidence relating to meeting that outcome. In this case, you will be asked to provide evidence;
- 2) It is unclear whether the evidence is the work of the candidate. In this case you will be asked to provide further clarification on your contribution to the work;
- 3) It is unclear how the candidate believes the evidence supports their proficiency. This may be because the explanatory statement is absent or unclear how it relates to the evidence provided;
- 4) It is unclear from the *nature* of the evidence offered how the candidate believes that the outcome has been met. In this case, you may be asked for substitute evidence; and
- 5) It is unclear from the *quality* of the evidence offered how the candidate believes that the outcome has been met. In this case, you may be asked for substitute evidence.

It is not the role of the assessor to correct or feedback in detail on evidence.

If the assessor indicates that more than around 25% of the standards have not been evidence, they may advise that resubmission of the portfolio should not be attempted for a period of at least one year. This is to enable you to marshal further evidence, but also manages the limited marking and feedback resources available to assess portfolios at this professional level.

You will be given the opportunity to submit the portfolio 3 times. If you have not been successful on your third attempt, we may advise you not to resubmit for a period of at least one year. Your next submission will be required to be a fresh submission, although you can use evidence already relied upon, but you will need to pay a further portfolio assessment fee.

If you have concerns about how your portfolio has been assessed, please contact quality@bohs.org.

How can I ensure I pass first time?

We want you to succeed first time round. The main reason why portfolios require further work is that submissions are made in hope and uncertainty, rather than being the confident result of rigorous self-assessment. The assessors have to make a judgement of your whole practice on the basis of the material you provide. That is a difficult job if they have to infer or guess from the material why it has been included and how it relates to your claim to professional competence, especially at Diploma level.

To avoid the need to resubmit, please ensure that you address each competency directly by showing:

- 1) which element of which competency the evidence relates to;
- 2) what is the evidence you are using to demonstrate it;
- 3) who is the author of the evidence being used;
- 4) where can the assessor find the specific evidence you are relying on in the documentation submitted;
- 5) how does the document provide evidence of proficiency;

- 6) when did the professional activity take place; and
- 7) why, as explained in the introductory text, do you believe the evidence demonstrates you have met the outcome.

Please be very focused and systematic to help our assessors understand your professional journey in a clear and objective way. Carefully select your evidence and clearly introduce its relevance and systematically present the information.