

Explosive substances and articles: standards and qualifications

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Background to the project

- Project covers all industries using explosives - HM forces, MoD, commercial industries
- All functions included
- Roles range from basic support role to strategic level
- No nationally recognized qualifications
- Means of validating individual and organizational competence
- Supported by all stakeholders
- Outcomes are suites of standards and qualifications for practitioners

What is “competence”?

Competence is the ability to perform consistently to occupational standards

What are National Occupational Standards?

They define the activities required to carry out a particular piece of work. They:

- cover all aspects of performance
- describe the outcomes of activities
- contain an evaluative aspect
- are set by the industry

How are standards derived?

They are determined by the functional analysis which describes:

- the key purpose of the industry
- key roles
- units of competence
- elements of competence

How are standards structured?

- Each standard defines what someone should be able to do in an area of work
- *Contexts* describe the different conditions in which they must demonstrate competence
- *Criteria* show the standard that someone's performance must meet to demonstrate competence
- *Knowledge* specifies the essential knowledge and understanding that someone needs to be able to achieve the standard

Uses of the standards

As N/SVQs, they:

- acknowledge and accredit competence
- provide portable recognition of achievement

Other uses of the standards:

- training and development needs analysis
- defining job descriptions
- functional audit tool
- etc ...

Purpose of the validation

To establish the robustness and practicality of the standards to ensure:

- the standards match what actually happens
- they are clear and easy to understand
- they are inspirational but achievable
- they are accessible to the biggest population

Issues for validation

- To obtain an independent view of the standards
- To establish:
 - how closely the standards match what you do
 - if there are any gaps
 - if the standards are too stretching
 - whether the standards are user-friendly
 - whether there are changes which would improve the standards

Issues for evaluation

- Is the language:
 - Simple?
 - Clear?
 - Jargon-free?
- Are the standards:
 - Future-proof?
 - Presented in a way that helps understanding?
- Are the contents:
 - Accurate?
 - Comprehensive?

Evaluating the standards - what to do

Compare them with what you do and what your organization does:

- Reading
 - Comparison with job descriptions, competency/skills matrices
 - Use them in job analysis, training needs analysis, performance appraisals
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- Complete the questionnaires in your pack at the end of the process

Level of qualification

Level	Activity	Context	Autonomy
Five	Application of fundamental principles	Unpredictable range of contexts - can inc. significant responsibility for mgmt & resources	Personal accountabilities for analysis, diagnosis, design, planning, execution & evaluation
Four	Complex and non routine, broad range	Wide variety of contexts Can inc. mgmt & resource	Substantial autonomy & personal responsibility
Three	Mostly complex & non-routine, broad range	Wide variety of contexts, can inc. supervision	Considerable autonomy
Two	Mostly routine, some complexity, significant range	Some collaboration	Some autonomy
One	Routine, predictable, varied range	Limited to activity	Limited - procedural