



The OHS Body of Knowledge and Learning Outcomes

The OHS Body of Knowledge was published as an e-book in April 2012. It was developed to:

- Inform OHS education, but not prescribe a curriculum
- Provide a basis for course accreditation
- Provide a basis for professional certification
- Inform continuing professional development (CPD) for current professionals
- Provide a standard for OHS practice to inform employers, recruiters and regulators.

The OHS Body of Knowledge takes a conceptual approach which enables it to be applied in different contexts and frameworks. To optimise its value from an educational perspective, learning outcomes have been developed for each technical chapter in the Body of Knowledge. These learning outcomes reflect the outcomes-based quality assurance approach of the Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the learning outcome descriptors in the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF). The learning outcomes have been structured to reflect the three key categories of descriptors in the AQF 7 and above qualifications. That is that graduates will have well developed/advanced cognitive, technical and communication skills to:

- Analyse, critically evaluate and transform information to complete activities
- Analyse and generate solutions to complex problems
- Transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to others.

These learning outcomes describe what a new graduate generalist OHS professional should be able to do in the workplace as an outcome of their OHS education which includes content addressing the OHS Body of Knowledge. There is no suggestion that the new graduate should be able to address all of the learning outcomes across all chapters of the Body of Knowledge. The learning outcomes as described give an indication of what should be the capabilities of an OHS professional; it will be up to those developing OHS education programs, OHS professionals planning their CPD or recruiters or employers selecting or developing people for the OHS function to consider the required breadth vs depth .

While there are many ways of framing learning outcomes, for this purpose the learning outcomes have three components. They define:

- What new graduates should be able to do that demonstrates the learning
- The context within which they will demonstrate the learning
- The level or standard at which they demonstrate the learning.

The context and level are important in differentiating between the new graduate and the experienced professional.



Using the learning outcomes

For educators

While the learning outcomes may inform development of assessment activities it is important to note that the learning outcomes are not about the assessment activities but rather what will be expected of graduates when they enter the workforce. The learning outcomes as stated here do not have to be specifically included in program documentation but should inform program development and assessment.

For OHS professionals

While these learning outcomes describe what could be expected of new graduate generalist OHS professionals they are also a guide for experienced professionals in mapping their current knowledge and skills as basis for an ongoing CPD plan.

For employers and recruiters

The learning outcomes may be used to inform the development of position descriptions and duty statement as well interview questions in recruitment. They may also be used in performance appraisals and professional development plans.

The learning outcomes in context

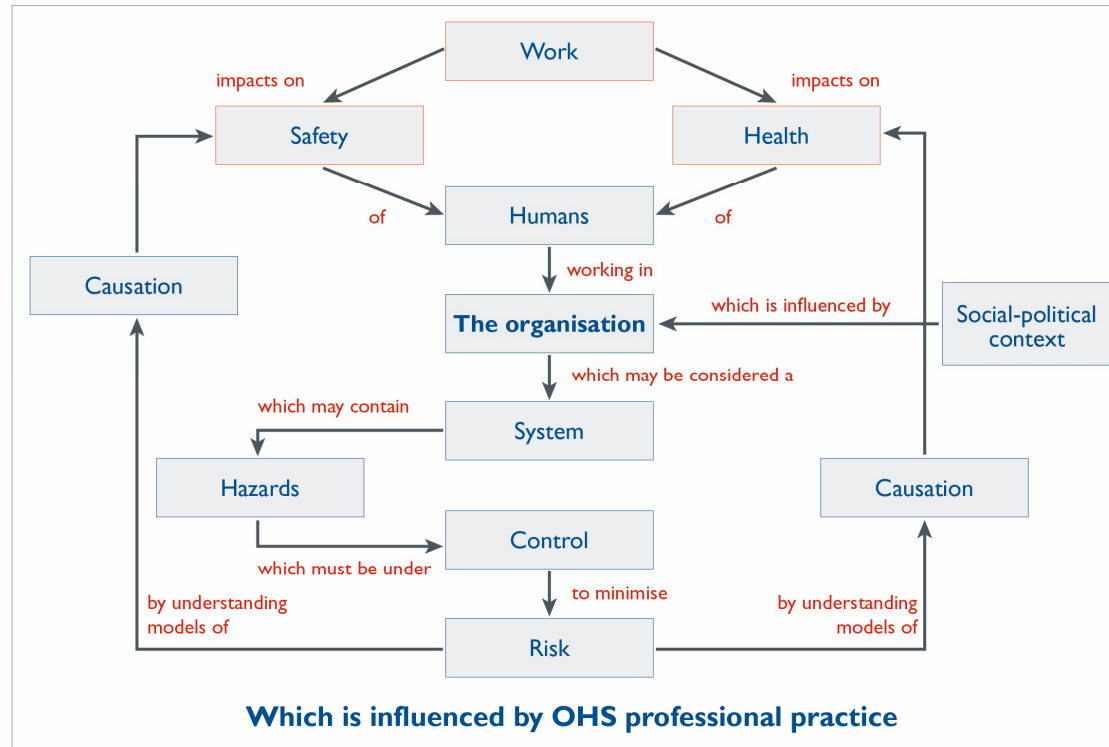
As part of developing learning outcomes generic graduate attributes based on the AQF learning outcome descriptors have also been developed. These graduate attributes are specific to the particular AQF level 7 (bachelor), AQF level 8 (graduate diploma), AQF level 9 (masters by coursework) and should be read as a generic overlay to the specific learning outcomes.

The OHS Body of Knowledge takes a 'conceptual' approach. As concepts are abstract, the OHS professional needs to organise the concepts into a framework in order to solve a problem. The overall framework used to structure the OHS Body of Knowledge is that:

Work impacts on the **safety** and **health** of humans who work in **organisations**. Organisations are influenced by the **socio-political context**. Organisations may be considered a **system** which may contain **hazards** which must be under control to minimise **risk**. This can be achieved by understanding **models of causation** for safety and for health which will result in improvement in the safety and health of people at work. The OHS professional applies **professional practice** to influence the organisation to being about this improvement.



This can be represented as:



The first two chapters of the Body of Knowledge (*Introduction* and the *OHS generalist OHS professional in Australia*) provide background and so are not reflected in the learning outcomes. An understanding of the global concepts *Work*, *Safety* and *Health* and also *Hazard as a concept* should underpin all aspects of the work of the generalist OHS professional and so are not specifically addressed in the learning outcomes. The chapters on *Foundation science* and those addressing the *Human as individual (As a biological system; Basic psychological principles; Principles of social psychology)* address the



'science' which should underpin or inform the practice of the generalist OHS professional. These chapters are not addressed as specific learning outcomes but their applicability is noted as appropriate in the learning outcome statements.

The OHS Model of Practice deserves special comment. This chapter is in the "Practice" section of the OHS Body of Knowledge and so is located and numbered toward the end of the publication. However the chapter, and the learning outcomes, should be interpreted as overarching the application of all aspects of the OHS Body of Knowledge. Thus the learning outcomes for the "Model of Practice" should be read prior to those relating to the 'technical' chapters.

Development of the learning outcomes

These learning outcomes have been developed through a series of workshops with OHS professionals and OHS educators and are offered for further comment and input.

Comment on the learning comes may be forwarded to: learningoutcomes@ohseducationaccreditation.org.au by the 25th September.

In making comment you should include your name, position, organisation and a contact email and phone number.

Providing comment

When making comment, note that the learning outcomes refer to the new graduate and the structure reflects the learning outcome descriptors of the AQF which impacts on the structure and content of the learning outcomes. The 'cognitive level' refers to the level in *Blooms taxonomy of education objectives* (Bloom, 1956).

The overarching question *Is this what I would expect of a new graduate OHS professional in their first year post-qualification?* Some further questions you may consider are:

What should the graduate be able to do?

This is about performance, so the outcomes must be expressed in terms of verbs of action, i.e. things that another person could observe occurring or see demonstrated through the action or the output. An abstract definition such as "understand" is not useful.

In what context? Does the context as stated realistically depict the circumstances in which the new graduate would be expected to carry out the described action?



Context is about the surrounding circumstances that will shape the graduate/professional's activity, including some or all of the place, time, what has happened previously or is intended to happen subsequently, whether other people are involved and what roles they might have, the purpose of the activity, what material assistance might be available for the discharge of the responsibility involved, and who any stakeholders might be, etc. In short, when, where and how will the performance of the required activity occur.

To what level? Is this the standard of output you would expect from a new graduate?

Level involves such things as the autonomy of action or responsibility expected, whether decisions involved will be taken individually or collectively (e.g. in some committee), the expectation of alternative options, what supporting evidence or documentation is required, how the output will be presented and the formal approval mechanisms that might apply to the activity involved.

This work on the OHS Body of Knowledge, graduate attributes and the learning outcome statements are a major initiative for the OHS profession in Australia. They are also informing international developments in the OHS profession. Educators can be part of this by reviewing the graduate attributes and learning outcomes to consider the implications for program development and teaching. OHS professionals can be part of this by reviewing the OHS Body of Knowledge, the graduate attributes and learning outcomes, considering how they may impact on their practice, education and your professional development. For recruiter, employers and regulators, your feedback on the value of these works to your development of the OHS function in organisations is invaluable.

I look forward to receiving your feedback and any suggestions for further development.

Pam Pryor
Registrar
Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board



List of learning outcomes

8	OHSBoK LO: Socio-political context - OHS law and regulation in Australia
9	OHSBoK LO: Socio-political context – Business, technological and industrial imperatives
10	OHSBoK LO: The Organisation
11	OHSBoK LO: Systems.....
16	OHSBoK LO: Hazard - Biomechanical hazards.....
17	OHSBoK LO: Hazard - Chemical hazards.....
18	OHSBoK LO: Hazard - Biological
19	OHSBoK LO: Hazard - Psychosocial hazards.....
20	OHSBoK LO: Hazard - Fatigue
21	OHSBoK LO: Bullying, aggression and violence.....
22	OHSBoK LO: Hazard - Noise and vibration.....
23	OHSBoK LO: Hazard - Electricity.....
24	OHSBoK LO: Hazard - Ionising radiation
25	OHSBoK LO: Hazard - Non-ionising radiation
26	OHSBoK LO: Hazard - Thermal environment
27	OHSBoK LO: Hazard - Gravitational hazards.....
28	OHSBoK LO: Hazard - Plant.....
29	OHSBoK LO: Hazard - Mobile plant
30	OHSBoK LO: Hazard - Vehicle and occupational driving.....
31	OHSBoK LO: Risk
32	OHSBoK LO: Models of causation - Safety.....
33	OHSBoK LO: Models of causation - Health determinants.....
34	OHSBoK LO: Control - Prevention and intervention.....
35	OHSBoK LO: Mitigation - Emergency preparedness.....
36	OHSBoK LO: Mitigation - Health impacts
38	OHSBoK LO: Practice - Model of practice
39	OHSBoK LO: Practice - The OHS professional as a critical consumer of research