

# NVQs in Health and Safety

## What is a National Vocational Qualification?

A National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) is a qualification that recognises the competence of a person in a work situation. They essentially give people credit for what they do in their job role on a day to day basis. Unlike traditional qualifications that rely on teaching and examinations, NVQs use performance on the job as a basis for assessment. There is an NVQ for almost every occupational area, from engineering to social care and covering a vast range of businesses from hairdressing to telecommunications. NVQs are recognised by employers nationwide, and they provide a clear route for improving skills and progressing up the career ladder.

## Which standards have to be met by NVQ candidates?

The standards set for NVQs are developed by Standard Setting Bodies, mainly employer-led, such as National Training Organisations (NTOs). The standards are contained within units that cover issues that are specific to the particular NVQ.

## Which NVQs are specific to Health and Safety?

The NVQ in Occupational Health and Safety Practice is specific to people who are actively involved in the practice or management of Health and Safety as part of their job or role. There is also the NVQ in Health and Safety Regulation which is specific to people involved in Health and Safety enforcement duties, normally from the Health and Safety Executive or Local Authorities.

## Who can take NVQs in Occupational Health and Safety?

There are 3 classifications of NVQ in Occupational Health and Safety, each aimed at people involved at different levels, therefore requiring different levels of competence:

Level 3 - suitable for those whose role includes the area of general Health and Safety practice.

Level 4 is a work-based qualification that is designed for persons who are appointed to provide Health and Safety assistance in organisations where there are significant hazards and complex risks.

Level 5 is suitable for those who have strategic management responsibility for the Health and Safety function.

Level 5 in Occupational Health and Safety Regulation has recently been developed for Health and Safety regulators, both in Local Authorities and the Health and Safety Executive, in order to enable enforcement officers to prove their competence in this specialised field of responsibility.

## What are the benefits of the NVQ in Occupational Health and Safety?

The standards not only provide the way towards a better practical understanding of Health and Safety practice, but also a benchmark for good practice in this field. Both employers and practitioners can use these qualifications to improve Health and Safety practice within their organisation. This can be achieved by reviewing current practice against the standards, planning for improvement at individual and organisation levels and then implementing the appropriate policies for better Health and Safety. The results could be seen, for example, in improved organisational image, safer working conditions, increased staff motivation and morale, and raised standards of working.

## How are NVQs assessed?

All NVQs and NVQ unit based qualifications are competence-based. This means that they are linked to a person's ability to competently perform a range of tasks connected to their work. To gain these qualifications a candidate must achieve the level of competence described in the relevant units of competence. The units of competence contain the national occupational standards for Health and Safety. Approved NVQ centres are required to employ trained assessors and verifiers who not only assess the candidate's competence, but also act as a mentor to ensure that the best advice and assistance is given during the process. Assessment is required to be carried out by a person who is both an experienced Health and Safety professional and an approved assessor, or working under the supervision of such a person.

## Why chose Business Safety Systems for your NVQ?

Business Safety Systems is widely accepted as one of the most successful NVQ providers in the UK with over 900 successful candidates. All our assessors and verifiers are members of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) and have experience in a wide range of areas of working environments. Candidates may also use our unique NVQ on-line system to help them with the process of putting together their portfolios.