

Assessment and national report of the UK on the existing training provisions of professionals in the Healthcare Waste Management industry

REPORT: III



DEVELOPING AN EU STANDARDISED APPROACH TO VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN HEALTHCARE WASTE

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CHAPTER 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHAPTER 2 OVERVIEW OF THE VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION SYSTEM

2.1 General description of the Vocational Qualification System

Education

National priorities for further and higher education are determined by the UK and Scottish parliaments and the Welsh and Northern Ireland assemblies. Policy development, planning and implementation rest with the government departments responsible for each national education division – the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) in England, the Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI), the Scottish Government, and the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) in Wales.

In England, delivery of further education is subject to external audit and public reporting by the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Schools (Ofsted). In Scotland, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has overall responsibility for planning, funding and quality assurance of further education through its work with Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE).

DCELLS is responsible for planning, funding and promotion of all post-school education in Wales. ESTYN (the Welsh-language acronym for Her Majesty’s inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales) is the appointed authority for audit of the quality of provision and related areas.

The Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI) is responsible for planning and funding of further education provision in Northern Ireland. Inspection and audit are undertaken by the Education and Training Inspectorate on behalf of the Department.

Waste Facilities

In terms of the legal requirements for waste management facilities, the specific requirements differ in each country due to the different versions of legislation. The management of healthcare waste falls under general waste management legislation, and waste management guidance including, where necessary, hazardous waste legislation/guidance applicable in each of the four devolved nations.

Technical Competence

In the UK, under legislation and waste permitting regulations, a waste manager or operator must be able to “demonstrate competence” and this is usually done through obtaining the relevant waste management National or Scottish Vocational Qualification (N/SVQ), and the candidate can then apply for a Certificate of Technical Competence (COTC). There are other means of demonstrating competence, but this is the most common route. The competence arrangements vary in each of the four countries, but the underlying theme is that waste



operators/managers must be able to demonstrate competence.

An outline of the requirements is show below.

Scotland

The Waste Management Licensing Regulations (Scotland) 2003 were revised in March 2011. The changes made affected the means of demonstrating technical competence; it is no longer a legal requirement for a Technically Competent Person in Scotland to hold a COTC, however COTCs remain an appropriate qualification to demonstrate competence in Scotland. The SEPA regulatory officer will advise if there are other competence arrangements to be adhered to.

England & Wales

On 6 April 2008 the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2007 regulations came into force. At the same time, the Waste Management Licensing Regulations (England and Wales) 2003, were abolished and this brought about changes in the way that the Technical Competence provision can be demonstrated by the relevant manager, or managers, at the 'Permitted' waste management facility.

Several schemes are now in place called "competence schemes" which address these issues of technical competence.

NVQs can still be used to demonstrate competence, however, this system differs from Scotland and N. Ireland as it is a "risk-based system". This means that the qualifications required to demonstrate competence and to satisfy legal requirements will differ depending on the type of waste facility. High risk facilities (e.g. thermal treatment of hazardous waste) will be required to undertake a qualification with more units, than a low risk facility (e.g. recycling facility).

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, the Certificate of Technical Competence (COTC) remains the primary means for managers of appropriate Waste management facilities to demonstrate their Technical Competence in accordance with the Waste Management Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003.

2.2 Awarding Bodies

Legal requirements/ standards for issuing institutions

A degree of convergence does exist in the area of quality assurance of qualifications. England, Wales and Northern Ireland share a common qualifications system, and the regulators in each country (listed below) work together in regulating qualifications for use across the three countries. Scotland has a separate qualifications system, although there is close correlation across all four countries, particularly in the area of vocational



qualifications. Individuals attending college will be school leavers, aged 15 or over.

The following four bodies are responsible for the accreditation and standards of external qualifications and for curriculum and assessment for schools and colleges:

- England – Ofqual (Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator);
- Northern Ireland – Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA);
- Scotland – Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA);
- Wales – Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS).

CCEA is also an Awarding Body for qualifications in Northern Ireland. SQA is also an Awarding Body that develops and validates SQA branded qualifications including National Qualifications (Access, Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher Levels), Higher National Certificates and Diplomas, Scottish Vocational Qualifications and Scottish Professional Awards.

In higher education the responsibility for standards and quality rests with each institution. All institutions work with the independent Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Institutional audits and subject-level reviews are undertaken by QAA.

In terms of vocational qualifications, all approved waste management vocational qualifications, developed in line with the National Occupational Standards, must be regulated by a designated body. Following the accreditation of a qualification, the regulators systematically monitor awarding bodies against the requirements set out in the statutory regulations. The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004) sets out the requirements for regulation of awarding bodies for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority is both the regulatory and awarding body. According to the Scottish Qualifications Act 2002, ultimately the responsibility for regulating SQA's procedures lies with Scottish Ministers. The Act states that it confers 'power on the Scottish Ministers to regulate the procedures of the Authority'.

SQA is largely self-regulating in respect of how qualification and assessment standards are set, maintained, and monitored. Along with the Board of Management, there are two other advisory bodies that perform a crucial role in safeguarding qualification standards. These are:

- SQA's Advisory Council
- SQA's Qualifications Committee

SQA is also accredited to offer Ofqual-regulated qualifications. Therefore, in addition to SQA's own quality criteria and processes, these qualifications are subject to the NVQ code of practice and the QCF Regulatory Arrangements, as appropriate.



Certification (Awarding) bodies

There are various waste management courses available throughout the UK and, in order to establish the awarding body, the relevant qualification must be identified first. The educational bodies responsible for delivering qualifications in waste management include:

- Colleges
- Universities
- Trade Associations
- Approved centres

In order to have a qualification recognised in the UK and be able to transfer credits between learning courses, educational institutions and occupations, the qualification must be accredited through one of qualification awarding bodies in the UK. More than 160 institutions in the UK have the power to award qualifications. This includes colleges and universities. The main awarding bodies for waste management qualifications are:

- WAMITAB in England, Wales and N. Ireland.
- WAMITAB/SQA in Scotland

Additionally, there is the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) which is a council representing the seven largest qualification providers in the UK (which offer GCSEs, GCEs, AEs, Scottish Highers, Vocational and vocationally related qualifications):

- AQA
- City & Guilds
- CCEA
- Edexcel
- OCR
- SQA
- WJEC

ASDAN, EDI plc. and NCFE are also large awarding bodies that deliver a range of environment related qualifications.

2.3 Training Centres

Schools and Colleges

England, Wales and Northern Ireland have several exam boards, with schools and colleges able to freely choose between them on a subject-by-subject basis. Currently, there are seven exam boards available to state schools:

- AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance)



- CIE (University of Cambridge International Examinations)
- CCEA (Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment)
- Edexcel (Pearson Edexcel as of April 2013)
- ICAAE (International Curriculum and Assessment Agency Examinations)
- OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
- WJEC (Welsh Joint Education Committee)

This is unusual and, in contrast, with the exception of university degrees, all Scottish qualifications are regulated and awarded by SQA. Within the UK, most universities act as their own awarding body for the qualifications they deliver.

Other

Certificates can be awarded after completion of a recognised/accredited training programme carried out by, for example, trade association. CIWM have a range of courses in which the individual will receive a certificate for at the end.

CIWEM provide some training courses (including online) for some environmental and waste related subjects.

Training organizations

Requirements for institutions delivering training programmes

All institutions delivering training programmes or qualifications are regulated by the awarding body – and the awarding bodies are regulated by external qualifications regulators. Depending on the institution, various regulatory/quality assurance procedures will be followed.

For the delivery of vocational qualifications, one of the key roles of the awarding body is to ensure that the approved centres, delivering their qualifications, are regulated. This is done through regular external verification visits by the awarding body, to the approved centre. There is set criteria for the external verification procedure. Should the centre fail to meet any of the criteria, the centre will be given a risk-based score. If the score is within the “high risk” category, then a hold will be placed upon the centre until the issues are resolved. For a “low risk” score, the awarding body will guide the centre in the right direction in order that they can make the necessary changes. Low risk scores are common, and do not result in a hold. It is important that approved centres aim to meet all of the requirements laid out by the awarding body/bodies.

Types and number of organisations providing training programmes

In 2010, there were 115 universities, 165 higher education institutions and 419 further education colleges (of which 95 were sixth form colleges) registered in the UK. Of the universities, 89 are in England (including The Open University), 10 are in Wales, 14 are in Scotland and two are in Northern Ireland. Courses include those for first and second degrees, certain graduate-equivalent qualifications, and the examinations of the principal



professional associations. These institutions also provide courses leading to important qualifications below degree level, such as Foundation degrees, Higher National Diplomas and Certificates, and Diplomas of Higher Education.

There are over 80 Approved Centres across the UK which delivers vocational qualifications to the waste management sector – this includes colleges which have the ability to deliver vocational waste management qualifications.

The main trade association for delivering waste management courses/training programmes is the Chartered Institute of Waste Management (CIWM). They may deliver these training courses as an institution, or they may use approved centres to deliver their courses/training programmes.

Some companies (waste contractors/service providers) also offer in-house training packages for waste management companies and businesses. These training packages may have been accredited by WAMITAB or CIWM. Similarly, equipment providers usually have an associated training packaged as part of the installation/commissioning of the plant/machinery.

2.4 National Occupational Standards

National Occupational Standards (NOS) are statements of the standards of performance individuals must achieve when carrying out functions in the workplace, together with specifications of the underpinning knowledge and understanding.

NOS are National because they can be used in every part of the UK where the functions are carried out.

NOS are Occupational because they describe the performance required of an individual when carrying out functions in the workplace, i.e. in their occupation (as a plumber, police officer, production engineer etc).

NOS are Standards because they are statements of effective performance which have been agreed by a representative sample of employers and other key stakeholders and approved by the UK NOS Panel.

NOS are developed for employers by employers through the relevant Sector Skills Council or Standards Setting Organisation

Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)

Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) are employer-led organisations that cover specific industries in the United Kingdom. They have four key goals:



- to support employers in developing and managing apprenticeship standards
- to reduce skills gaps and shortages and improve productivity
- to boost the skills of their sector workforces
- to improve learning supply

SSCs achieve these aims by developing an understanding of the future skills needs in their industry, and contributing to the development of National Occupational Standards, the design and approval of apprenticeship frameworks and the New Apprenticeship Standards and creating Sector Qualification Strategies. There are currently nineteen SSCs, covering about 80 per cent of the British workforce. SSCs are licensed by the government through the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).

The Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) was formerly responsible for funding, supporting and monitoring SSCs and for overseeing industries that fell outside an SSC footprint. From 1st April 2008, the SSDA was replaced by the UKCES and the Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards comprising all 19 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). The Federation is responsible for managing the process of certifying Apprentices in England, Scotland and Wales. It seeks to:

- promote professional practices among those organisations that are sector based and who set and maintain skills standards
- manage the standards of those Employer-Led Partnerships which maintain these standards to ensure high quality
- provide insight, intelligence and ideas flow between the Governments of the four nations and the SSCs

CHAPTER 3 ACCREDITATION OF NEW AWARDS**3.1 Accreditation Bodies**

WAMITAB and CIWM are the main accreditation bodies for waste management courses which have been developed by professionals/companies/approved centres within the waste management industry. The courses may cover a wide range of waste and management topics including;

- Fundamentals of waste management
- Waste minimisation
- Health and Safety
- Waste prevention
- Environmental monitoring
- Recycling
- Pollution prevention
- Legal compliance
- Technology
- Policy
- Waste management planning/strategy

It is also possible to have a customised qualification accredited, in Scotland, through SQA. These awards will be mapped to the SCQF framework, which can be directly paralleled to the EQF.

3.2 Accreditation Process

CHAPTER 4 REMARKS – CONCLUSIONS

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