

Guidance Notes on
Application for Recognition of Academic Qualification for the purpose of
Registration as a Safety Officer under the Factories and Industrial
Undertakings (Safety Officers and Safety Supervisors) Regulations

1 Background

1.1 The Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Safety Officers and Safety Supervisors) Regulations (“the Regulations”) was enacted in 1986. Amendments to the Regulations have been made in 1994 and 2002 to extend its coverage to shipyards and container handling operation respectively.

1.2 Under the Regulations, subject to the conditions mentioned in the Fourth Schedule to the Regulations, proprietors of the industrial undertakings (“IU”) listed in the First Schedule to the Regulations (i.e. construction sites, shipyards and container handling) are required to employ a full time registered safety officer (“RSO”) in accordance with regulation 14 of the Regulations.

1.3 The Third Schedule to the Regulations prescribes the scheduled qualifications for registration as a safety officer (“SO”). In addition to the relevant experience to be obtained, a person should have a recognized degree, post-graduate diploma, higher diploma, diploma or certificate in occupational safety and health; or a recognized certificate in construction safety for registration as SO.

1.4 The purpose of this Guidance Notes is to provide guidelines for the application for recognition of the academic qualifications of SO training course (i.e. the degree, post-graduate diploma, higher diploma, diploma or certificate mentioned in section 1.3) by the Commissioner for Labour (“the Commissioner”) for the registration as SO under the Regulations.

2 Course objective

2.1 The objective of the course is to provide trainees with sufficient knowledge and training to enable them to perform the duties of a SO under the Regulations competently.

3 Learning outcomes

3.1 SOs play an important role of assisting the proprietors of IU in promoting the safety and health of persons employed in the workplaces. They shoulder high responsibility to advise the proprietors in safeguarding the life and limbs of the workforce. There is high social expectation on the competence of the SOs, therefore, the Labour Department (“LD”) attaches great importance to the quality of SO training course as high quality training is the foundation for building up the expected performance of safety professions.

3.2 The SO training course shall be designed to provide a systematic training for those who are working, or planning to work, in the field of occupational safety and health (“OSH”) and wish to become a RSO in Hong Kong. It will provide trainees with the comprehensive professional training and knowledge in dealing with OSH matters so as to resolve OSH problems effectively.

3.3 Upon successfully obtaining the recognized academic qualifications, the trainees should be able to:

3.3.1 Describe the legal requirements under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, Cap. 509; the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance, Cap. 59 and their subsidiary legislation;

3.3.2 Inspect the IU for the purpose of determining whether or not there is any machinery, plant, equipment, appliance or process or any description of work carried on in the IU which is of such a nature as

to be liable to cause risk of bodily injury to any person employed in the IU and recommend what actions ought to be taken;

- 3.3.3 Investigate and report to the proprietor the circumstances of any accident or dangerous occurrence in the IU and make recommendations to the proprietor to prevent similar cases;
- 3.3.4 Assist in the supervision of any person employed in the IU as a safety supervisor; and
- 3.3.5 Advise the proprietor of the IU on the implementation of a safety management system including the assistance in:
 - (a) establishing, revising and reviewing a safety and health policy;
 - (b) organizing safety and health training programme;
 - (c) devising in-house safety rules and regulations;
 - (d) implementing safety and health plans, programmes, arrangements and measures;
 - (e) establishing a safety committee and implementing its recommendations;
 - (f) job hazard analysis, evaluation of potential hazards and the identification of hazardous conditions and hazardous exposure; and
 - (g) conducting safety promotion, health assurance and personal protection programmes.

4 Course contents

4.1 The curriculum of the course should be able to equip the trainees with the competence and skills required to perform their duties as a RSO in workplaces. The

curriculum should include, but be not limited to, the topics of OSH legislation in Hong Kong; occupational safety topics; occupational health topics; and safety and health management.

(I) OSH legislation in Hong Kong and its applications

This topic aims to provide the trainees with the knowledge about the legal system in Hong Kong and the legal requirements stipulated in prevailing OSH legislation including:

- (a) The legal system in Hong Kong
- (b) The Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance, Cap. 59, and its subsidiary legislation
- (c) The Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, Cap. 509, and its subsidiary legislation
- (d) The general duty provisions of proprietors/employers and workers/employees as well as the safe system of work
- (e) Other legislation that may have relevance to the duties of RSO, e.g. the Boilers and Pressure Vessels Ordinance, Cap. 56; the Builders' Lifts and Tower Working Platforms (Safety) Ordinance, Cap. 470; the Dangerous Goods Ordinance, Cap. 295; the Gas Safety Ordinance, Cap. 51 and their subsidiary legislation etc.

(II) Occupational safety

This topic aims to provide the trainees with the fundamental concepts, skills and techniques to cope with the safety hazards that may be present in different workplaces. The following are some examples:

- (a) Accident causation models and its application
- (b) Hazard identification, risk management and their application
- (c) Hierarchy of control and its application
- (d) Inspection techniques
- (e) Accident investigation

- (f) Behavioral based safety
- (g) Fire prevention
- (h) Roadwork safety
- (i) Work on/over water
- (j) Container handling safety
- (k) Ship building and repairing safety
- (l) Other topical issues, e.g. machinery safety, lifting safety, work-at-height, safe use of chemicals, electrical safety, confined spaces safety etc.

(III) Occupational health

Apart from safety at work, it is equally important to ensure the well-being of persons at work by preventing them from suffering occupational diseases or any other work related health problems. Suggested contents include, but be not limited to, the following:

- (a) Introduction of occupational health and hygiene
- (b) Health risk evaluation and toxicology
- (c) Dangerous substances hazard and control
- (d) Noise hazard and control
- (e) Prevention of heat stroke
- (f) Health problem in using display screen equipment
- (g) Occupational diseases
- (h) Personal protective equipment
- (i) Basic physiology
- (j) Other health issues including the occupational exposure limits, ergonomics etc.

(IV) Safety and health management

This topic aims to provide the trainees with the knowledge of safety and health management system and the application of systemic approach to

tackle with the OSH hazards that may be present in the IUs. Suggested contents include, but be not limited to, the following:

- (a) Examples of common health and safety management models such as total loss control management, ISO 45001 etc.
- (b) The development, implementation and maintenance of safety management system under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Safety Management) Regulation, Cap. 59AF
- (c) The concept of safety audit and safety review

4.2 Sufficient duration shall be provided to complete the course contents. The total contact hours for the training programme should preferably be not less than 180 hours including lectures, tutorials, practicals and examinations.

5 Form of assessment

5.1 Applicants for recognition of academic qualifications of SO training course should ensure that only those trainees who have successfully completed the course and passed all relevant assessments be awarded the academic qualification. The form of assessment should include, but be not limited to, the following:

- (a) An appropriate attendance rate of each module (e.g. not less than 70%)
- (b) Continuous assessment (including written assignment/project/practical) with clear and suitable weightings for each subject/module (e.g. up to 50% of each subject/module)
- (c) Written examination contains structured/long questions, or supplement by multiple choice questions and/or short questions with appropriate marks allocated on each sections (e.g. 30% of multiple choice questions, 30% of short questions and 40% of structured/long questions)

6 Review of course contents and form of assessment

6.1 In light of the technological advancement and/or the socio-economic needs, the Commissioner may from time to time review the suggested contents and the form of assessment promulgated in this document for ensuring the contents of the recognized courses satisfy the social needs.

7 Training facilities and arrangements

7.1 The applicant is required to take all reasonable steps to provide a safe and comfortable physical environment for staff and service users in the training premises, and to ensure the loading, design and structural safety of such premises.

7.2 The applicant is required to take all reasonable steps to ensure the fire safety of the training premises, including the provision of adequate means of escape in case of fire, and to ensure that all the staff and service users would not be exposed to any undue fire risk.

7.3 Suitable and sufficient training aids such as white board and writing tools, overhead projector, public address system (if necessary), computing equipment etc. should be made available for use by the trainers.

7.4 Suitable and sufficient demonstration equipment should be provided during training.

8 Eligibility for recognition of academic qualifications

8.1 To achieve the learning outcomes stated in Section 3.3 and to meet the high expectation on the professionalism of RSO, it is the utmost importance that only quality assured training programmes would be recognized by the Commissioner for the purpose of registration as SO. To that aims, applicant for

recognition of academic qualification for the purpose of registration as SO under the Regulations will be:

- A local university; OR
- A local statutory body with its function including the offering of formal training in occupational safety and health or construction safety; OR
- A college registered under the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance, Cap. 320; OR
- A school registered under the Education Ordinance, Cap. 279 and having received the approval of the Permanent Secretary for Education to provide post-secondary education in Hong Kong.

8.2 Besides, the academic qualifications awarded should be at an appropriate academic standard.

9 Course monitoring

9.1 For the purpose of ensuring the recognized SO training courses are conducted in accordance with the course proposal/programme submitted to the Commissioner for recognition, the Occupational Safety Officers of LD will carry out surprise monitoring visit(s) to the lecture/examination and will check the marked examination papers if necessary.

9.2 Moreover, a representative of the LD will sit in the Board of Examination of the course for monitoring purpose.

9.3 Any non-conformance to the recognized course proposal/programme, depending on the degree of seriousness of the case, may lead to the withdrawal of recognition for the purpose of registration as SO under the Regulations by the Commissioner.

10 Appeal process be available to trainees

10.1 A formal mechanism must be in place to handle any complaint or appeal in relation to the training programme. Trainees should be informed of such mechanism at the commencement of each intake.

11 Application procedure

11.1 Any institution/organisation wishing to apply for the recognition of academic qualification for registration as SO under the Regulations is required to submit the following documents to the Registration and Staff Training Division (“RSTD”) of the LD for consideration:

- (a) Documentary proof of the identity of institution/organisation
- (b) Documentary proof of academic standard of the qualification
- (c) Details of the training programme
- (d) A set of course materials
- (e) A list of trainers/lecturers with their academic and/or professional qualifications
- (f) A sample of the certificate
- (g) Information about the training premises, equipment and facilities

Apart from the above documents, additional information may be required on a need basis.

11.2 No application fee or any other fees are payable. The entire process of application is **free of charge**.

11.3 If you do not receive our acknowledgement within 10 working days, you may check with the RSTD. The RSTD will contact you direct for any subsequent communication. The actual time taken for processing an application will depend on the completeness of the information supplied.

11.4 It is the duty of the course provider to comply with the requirements of the Copyright Ordinance, Cap. 528, in conducting the SO training course.

12 Enquiry

12.1 For enquiries on the Guidance Notes, please contact the Labour Department through:

Registration and Staff Training Division
Labour Department
Units 815-816, 8/F, Grand City Plaza,
1-17 Sai Lau Kok Road,
Tsuen Wan, N.T.
Telephone: 2151 3403
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Registration and Staff Training Division
Occupational Safety and Health Branch
Labour Department