Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

MSS027005A Contribute to improving environmental performance

Release: 1

INDUSTRY SKILLS COUNCILS
Creating Australia's Future

MSS027005A Contribute to improving environmental performance

Modification History

Not applicable.

Unit Descriptor

This unit of competency covers the ability to perform activities associated with the review or internal audit of the environmental performance of an enterprise. Personnel will work under the guidance of a manager or a lead auditor and the scope of activities performed will depend on their job role, the size of the enterprise, and complexity of its environmental management system (EMS) and auditing requirements. They also work under the supervision of an environmental scientist or engineer, site manager or enterprise environmental manager.

Application of the Unit

This unit of competency is applicable to environmental site coordinators, environmental managers and senior environmental officers working in a range of industry sectors such as:

- environmental monitoring, sampling and field testing (e.g. air, water, soil and noise)
- geotechnical services
- natural resource management
- occupational hygiene monitoring (e.g. air, noise and radiation)
- water supply and treatment, storm and wastewater management
- solid and hazardous waste management
- site remediation or rehabilitation
- resource efficiency (e.g. energy, water and waste auditing).

Note that the term 'manager' is used to refer to management of a function, project and /or program and does not necessarily imply line management.

Licensing/Regulatory Information

Not applicable.

Pre-Requisites

Not applicable.

Employability Skills Information

Not applicable.

Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Not applicable.

Elements and Performance Criteria

1	Plan review/audit activities with manager or lead auditor	1.1	Review legislative and/or regulatory compliance requirements and relevant enterprise policies and procedures
		1.2	Clarify objectives and scope of the activities planned together with the risks, constraints and resources available
		1.3	Clarify site, sections, work areas, functions and/or practices to be reviewed/audited
		1.4	Confirm own role and responsibility for specific review/audit tasks
		1.5	Plan the review/audit activities to minimise workplace disruption and ensure they can be safely conducted within agreed time intervals/timeframes
2	Prepare for assigned review/audit activities	2.1	Gather background information relevant to site, sections, work areas, functions and/or practices to be reviewed/audited
		2.2	Scrutinise the relevant review/audit criteria, tools and evidence requirements to enhance own objectivity and attention to detail
		2.3	Identify any technical and equipment requirements for review/audit and if support personnel are required
		2.4	Inform all personnel involved and arrange meetings or appointments, as necessary
3	Conduct assigned review/audit activities	3.1	Collect a representative sample of site documentation
		3.2	Collect sufficient information from observations and interviews to provide reliable evidence of

			environmental performance
		3.3	Work cooperatively with personnel to maximise their ownership of the review/audit and identify opportunities to improve environmental performance
		3.4	Keep accurate records of observations and interview responses
4	Analyse information and evaluate performance	4.1	Analyse information to identify significant performance trends, patterns, gaps and areas of risk
		4.2	Recognise instances of non-conformance/non-compliance and identify options for improving performance
		4.3	Evaluate performance against specified benchmarks and support conclusions with appropriate evidence
		4.4	Seek manager or lead auditor's advice when issues or problems are beyond own scope of responsibility/competence or when input from environmental specialists may be required
5	Report review/audit results	5.1	Document results in accordance with relevant standard/enterprise procedures and compare with initial objectives
		5.2	Confirm results with manager/lead auditor
		5.3	Report results to appropriate personnel for action in accordance with enterprise procedures

Required Skills and Knowledge

Required skills
Required skills include: • interpreting legislative/regulatory requirements and relevant audit standards, policies, procedures and plans • planning, organising and evaluating environmental review/audit activities • clearly explaining environmental performance requirements and review/audit procedures • communicating effectively with site personnel and encouraging their active participation • working systematically, with close attention to detail • analysing information and drawing logical, evidence-based conclusions • clearly documenting results, required actions and options for improvements • seeking advice when issues/problems are beyond scope of competence/responsibility • providing accurate, complete and timely reports and briefings • recognising hazards, assessing risks and working safely
Required knowledge
Required knowledge includes: • environmental protection/management/audit terminology, concepts, principles and relevant examples of best practice • legislative/regulatory requirements and compliance strategies • key aspects of enterprise environmental management systems/policies/procedures/plans • procedures for conducting environmental performance review/audit activities • procedures for site sampling, environmental monitoring and testing and reporting of results • hazards and risks relevant to review/audit activities and specified control measures • correct use of review/audit tools (e.g. performance criteria, checklists and benchmarks) • common examples of environmental non-conformance/non-compliance, and corrective/preventative actions and strategies for improving environmental performance • common issues and problems that may arise when conducting environmental review/audit activities and the recommended actions in each case • relevant health, safety and workplace emergency response procedures

Evidence Guide

Overview of assessment	Competency must be demonstrated in the ability to perform consistently at the required standard.
Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit	Assessors must be satisfied that the candidate can competently and consistently apply the skills covered in this unit of competency in new and different situations and contexts. Critical aspects of assessment and evidence include: • following relevant standards and/or enterprise procedures for review/audit activities • consulting effectively with interested parties and keeping them informed about the review/audit process • obtaining sufficient information to draw valid conclusions about environmental performance and providing sound recommendations • providing clear, timely reports that enable effective action to be taken.
Context of and specific resources for assessment	This unit of competency is to be assessed in the workplace or a simulated workplace environment. Assessment should emphasise a workplace context and procedures found in the candidate's workplace. This unit of competency may be assessed with: • *MSS027001A Coordinate environmental management activities.* The competencies covered by this unit would be demonstrated by an individual working alone or as part of a team. Resources may include: • background information for site • current site documentation • relevant legislation, codes, standards, enterprise environmental management policies, plans and procedures • enterprise review/audit procedures and tools • access to site personnel • access to a computer, internet, enterprise reports, published case studies and research.
Method of assessment	The following assessment methods are suggested: • review of results of review/audit activities and the supporting documentation prepared by the candidate • feedback from site personnel, lead auditor or

	manager that the candidate follows relevant audit standards and procedures
	• oral/written tests involving environmental management terms, principles and quantities, and enterprise procedures for review/audit activities
	• analysis of case studies involving environmental performance issues/problems within scope of responsibility
	• observation of the candidate interacting with site personnel during review/audit activities.
	In all cases, practical assessment should be supported by questions to assess underpinning knowledge and those aspects of competency which are difficult to assess directly.
	Where applicable, reasonable adjustment must be made to work environments and training situations to accommodate ethnicity, age, gender, demographics and disability.
	The language, literacy and numeracy demands of assessment should not be greater than those required to undertake the unit of competency in a work-like environment.
Guidance information for assessment	

Range Statement

Codes of practice	Where reference is made to industry codes of practice, and/or Australian/international standards, it is expected the latest version will be used
Legislation, standards, codes, procedures and/or enterprise requirements	**Legislation, standards, codes, procedures and/or enterprise requirements may include:**
	• federal legislation, such as:
	• Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
	• Australian Heritage Council Act 2003
	• Native Title Act 1993
	• state/territory government legislation and regulations and local government by-laws, policies, and plans dealing with:
	• land use, acquisition, planning and protection

	• environmental protection
	• cultural/heritage protection
	• vegetation management
	• nature conservation and wildlife/plant protection
	• water and water management
	• soil conservation
	• pollution and contaminated sites
	• fisheries, forestry and mining operations
	• Australian and international standards, such as:
	• AS/NZS ISO 14000 Set:2005 Environmental management standards set
	• AS/NZS ISO 19011:2003 Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing
	• EMS, site plan and information about applicable legislative requirements and approval requirements
	• information about site processes and work schedules
	• information about emergency preparedness and response
	• monitoring procedures and management actions to prevent/control environmental impacts or risks
	• sampling and in-situ measurement procedures (e.g. water, air, noise and soils)
	• job hazard analyses
	• safe work procedures and work method statements
Scope of review/audit activities	Scope of review/audit activities may include:
	• components of an initial environmental review (IER) prior to establishing an EMS
	• periodic inspection against environmental management plan requirements for:
	• monitoring and measurement
	• materials and energy usage
	• materials storage and handling, and spills
	• wastewater management
	• air emissions management
	• noise management
	• chemical waste management
	• solid waste management
	• scheduled review/internal audit of site, section, function or work area
	• scheduled review/ internal audit of components of an enterprise EMS, such as:
	• non-conformity, corrective/preventative actions
	• competence, training and awareness programs

	- control of records - supplier or contractor performance - emergency preparedness and response - adequacy of environmental management for new or changed operations, processes and work activities - investigation of a complaint, environmental incident or suggested improvements
Information	Information may include: - enterprise environmental management policies, procedures, plans and actions - enterprise work instructions - background information, such as: - previous internal review/audit reports - previous external audit reports - records of complaints, incidents, non-conformance/non-compliance and the corrective and/or preventative actions taken - site documentation, such as: - minutes of meetings - log books, records of environmental monitoring and test results, and regular performance reports - records of equipment use, calibration and maintenance - records of training - instructions for contractors and suppliers - external reports (e.g. external experts and regulator) - records of observations, inspections and interviews
Review/audit results	Review/audit results may include: - observations - findings - examples of best practice - non-conformances/non-compliances with options for corrective and preventative actions, and improvements
Occupational health and safety (OHS) and environmental management requirements	OHS and environmental management requirements: - all operations must comply with enterprise OHS and environmental management requirements, which may be imposed through state/territory or federal legislation - these requirements must not be compromised at any time - all operations assume the potentially hazardous nature of samples and require standard precautions to

	be applied
	• where relevant, users should access and apply current industry understanding of infection control issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and State and Territory Departments of Health

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Unit Sector(s)

Environmental

Custom Content Section

Not applicable.