



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

PSPSOHS608A Conduct an OHS audit

Revision Number: 3

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Modification History

Release	TP Version	Comments
3	PSP12V1	Unit descriptor edited.
2	PSP04V4.2	Layout adjusted. No changes to content.
1	PSP04V4.1	Primary release.

Unit Descriptor

This unit covers conduct of an internal or external OHS audit that may or may not be part of certification against a recognised benchmark.

In practice, conducting an OHS audit may overlap with other generalist or specialist public sector work activities such as promoting ethical practice, applying government systems, influencing opinion, fostering leadership, managing resources, managing compliance with legislation.

No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of endorsement.

Application of the Unit

It includes developing an audit plan and tools to gather OHS information and data, ensuring client/management liaison and briefing, arranging access to information, setting up entry and exit meetings, and coordinating evaluation/audit and audit team against time lines and the submission of reports.

The unit applies to the auditing of systematic approaches to managing OHS, which may or may not be formalised as part of an OHS management system, and can apply to internal or external benchmarks. The scope and benchmark criteria for the audit will be agreed before the commencement of OHS information and data gathering and may address all areas of the organisation or an identified function, business or geographical area.

OHS audits may be conducted by an individual or by a team and may be concurrent with other management system audits or conducted as a stand-alone exercise.

This unit does not cover the evaluation that is an integral part of an OHS audit as this is addressed in unit PSPSOHS609A Evaluate an organisation's OHS performance. People having responsibility for an OHS audit will require both these units.

Licensing/Regulatory Information

Not applicable.

Pre-Requisites

Not applicable.

Employability Skills Information

This unit contains employability skills.

Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Elements describe the essential outcomes of a unit of competency.

Performance criteria describe the required performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element. Where ***bold italicised*** text is used, further information is detailed in the range statement. Assessment of performance is to be consistent with the evidence guide.

Elements and Performance Criteria

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
1 Plan an OHS audit	1.1 The scope, objectives and benchmarks of the audit are defined. 1.2 Relevant documentation such as preliminary material on the operation of the organisation is identified and obtained. 1.3 Resources required to conduct the audit are identified and arranged. 1.4 Timing, schedule and responsibilities for the audit are assigned.
2 Develop an OHS audit plan	2.1 Nature of information and data collected provides valid and reliable evidence of the systematic approach to managing OHS and risk controls within the context of the organisation. 2.2 Sources of evidence include key personnel and stakeholders. 2.3 Information and data collection strategies address issues of security, confidentiality, impartiality and equity. 2.4 Information and data collection strategies include opportunities for corroborating evidence. 2.5 The audit plan is developed, documented and submitted to client. 2.6 The audit plan is modified as a result of client input and to adapt to contingencies.
3 Develop an OHS audit tool	3.1 Audit tool(s) accurately reflect the criteria of the benchmark, nature of risks and identified relevant information and data types. 3.2 Audit tools focus on evaluation of performance of the OHS management processes. 3.3 Audit tools can be used with consistent outcomes by all members of the audit team. 3.4 Audit tools enable collection of evidence in a timely and efficient manner. 3.5 Audit tools are modified as a result of preliminary trial/s.
4 Gather information, data and OHS records	4.1 A broad range of workplace personnel are consulted during evidence gathering activities throughout the audit. 4.2 Types and sources of evidence gathered are compared with the audit plan, and reasons for discrepancies are identified. 4.3 Alternative methods are identified and utilised when evidence is not forthcoming, using planned methods. 4.4 Information and data reliability is checked with a number of sources.
5 Undertake OHS audit activities	5.1 Preliminary evaluation is undertaken. 5.2 Audit plan is re-submitted to client for comment as appropriate. 5.3 Issues concerning the audit plan are negotiated with the

ELEMENT**PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

- client and documents amended where required.
- 5.4 Initial meetings and worksite familiarisation are undertaken.
- 5.5 Progress of the audit plan is monitored with the client and/or audit team members to ensure resources are being used as planned, and that the audit objectives and audit time lines are being achieved.
- 5.6 Records of evidence and findings are progressively documented in an appropriate format and retained.
- 5.7 Hazards identified during the audit are reported promptly to the appropriate person/s, including supervisor and/or person in control of the workplace.
- 5.8 Own health and safety is addressed during the audit in accordance with organisational requirements and standards for safe work practices.
- 5.9 Information and data collection and evaluation activities comply with legal requirements and are carried out ethically.
- 5.10 Exit meetings with key personnel and stakeholders are undertaken as appropriate.
- 6 Report on the outcomes of the OHS audit**
- 6.1 Summary audit findings and recommendations are presented to the clients at the ***closing meeting***, after consultation with key personnel and stakeholders.
- 6.2 Results of the evaluation are compared against the audit criteria.
- 6.3 ***Objective evidence*** is presented with clear and concise findings, including benefits to be achieved by adoption of the audit report recommendations.
- 6.4 Where challenges to the report are anticipated, further explanations to promote acceptance are prepared.
- 6.5 Corrective action and ***follow-up processes*** are recommended to the client.

Required Skills and Knowledge

This section describes the essential skills and knowledge and their level, required for this unit.

Required skills:

Look for evidence that confirms skills in:

- relating to people from a range of social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds and physical and mental abilities
- communicating effectively with personnel at all levels of organisation and OHS specialists and, as required, emergency service personnel
- advanced written communication including development of policies and procedures, plans
- applying continuous improvement and action planning processes
- achieving change using project management processes
- managing own tasks within time frame
- using consultation and negotiation skills, particularly in relation to developing plans and implementing and monitoring designated actions
- contributing to the assessment of the resources needed to systematically manage OHS and, where appropriate, access resources
- using language and literacy skills appropriate to the workgroup and the task
- using computer and information technology skills to access internal and external information and data on OHS
- paying attention to detail when making observations and recording outcomes.

Required knowledge:

Look for evidence that confirms knowledge and understanding of:

- roles and responsibilities under OHS legislation of employees including supervisors, contractors, OHS inspectors etc
- legislative requirements for OHS information and data, and consultation
- state/territory/Commonwealth OHS legislation (Acts, regulations, codes of practice, associated standards and guidance material) including prescriptive and performance approaches and links to other relevant legislation such as industrial relations, equal employment opportunity, workers compensation, rehabilitation etc
- structure and forms of legislation including regulations, codes of practice, associated standards and guidance material
- difference between common law and statutory law
- concept of common law duty of care
- requirements for recordkeeping that address OHS, privacy and other relevant legislation
- standards related to OHS information and data, statistics and records management including requirements for information and data under elements of systematically managing OHS
- nature and use of information and data that provides valid and reliable results on performance of OHS management processes (including positive performance indicators (PPIs) and limitations of other types of measures

- development of tools such as PPIs in assessment of OHS performance
- methods of collecting reliable information and data, commonly encountered problems in collection, and strategies for overcoming such problems
- requirements under hazard-specific OHS legislation and codes of practice
- principles of incident causation and injury processes
- hierarchy of control and considerations for choosing between different control measures, such as possible inadequacies of particular control measures
- standard industry controls for a range of hazards
- limitations of generic hazard and risk checklists and risk ranking processes
- sampling methodologies, application and related statistical measures
- principles and practices of a systematic approach to managing OHS
- requirements of OHS and standards related to systematically managing OHS
- other function areas that impact on the management of OHS
- internal and external sources of OHS information and data
- how the characteristics and composition of the workforce impact on risk and the systematic approach to managing OHS e.g.
 - labour market changes
 - structure and organisation of workforce e.g. part-time, casual and contract workers, shift rosters, geographical location
 - language, literacy and numeracy
 - communication skills
 - cultural background/workplace diversity
 - gender
 - workers with special needs
- auditing methods and techniques
- benefits, limitations and use of a range of communication strategies and tools appropriate to the workplace
- organisational behaviour and culture as it impacts on OHS and on change
- ethics related to professional practice
- methods of providing evidence of compliance with OHS legislation
- professional liability in relation to providing advice
- principles of effective meetings including agendas, action planning, chair and secretarial duties, minutes and action items
- nature of workplace processes (including work flow, planning and control) and hazards relevant to the particular workplace
- formal and informal communication and consultation processes and key personnel related to communication
- language, literacy and cultural profile of the work group

Evidence Guide

The Evidence Guide specifies the evidence required to demonstrate achievement in the unit of competency as a whole. It must be read in conjunction with the unit descriptor, performance criteria, The range statement and the Assessment Guidelines for the Public Sector Training Package.

Units to be assessed together

Co-assessed units that may be assessed with this unit to increase the efficiency and realism of the assessment process include:

- PSPETHC601B Maintain and enhance confidence in public service
- PSPGOV605A Persuade and influence opinion
- PSPLEGN601B Manage compliance with legislation in the public sector
- PSPMNGT602B Manage resources
- PSPMNGT611A Manage evaluations
- PSPSOHS609A Evaluate an organisation's OHS performance

Overview of evidence requirements

In addition to integrated demonstration of the elements and their related performance criteria, look for evidence that confirms:

- knowledge requirements of this unit
- skill requirements of this unit
- application of employability skills as they relate to this unit.

Resources required to carry out assessment

Resources essential for assessment include:

- legislation, policy, procedures and protocols relating to OHS audits
- workplace documentation, case studies and workplace scenarios to capture the range of situations likely to be encountered when conducting an OHS audit.

Where and how to assess evidence

Valid assessment of this unit requires:

- a workplace environment or one that closely resembles normal work practice and replicates the range of conditions likely to be encountered when conducting an OHS audit, including coping with difficulties, irregularities and breakdowns in routine
- conduct of OHS audits in a range of 3 or more contexts or occasions, over time, with at least 1 audit having a broad scope.

Assessment methods should reflect but not exceed workplace demands, such as literacy, and the needs of individuals who might be disadvantaged.

Assessment methods suitable for valid and reliable assessment of

this unit must use authenticated evidence from the workplace and/or training courses and may include a combination of two or more of:

- workplace projects
- simulation or role plays
- case studies and scenarios
- observation.
- portfolios.

The assessment environment should not disadvantage the candidate and where the person has a disability the principle of reasonable adjustment should be applied during assessment.

For consistency of assessment

Evidence must be gathered over time in a range of contexts to ensure the person can achieve the unit outcome and apply the competency in different situations or environments.

Range Statement

The range statement provides information about the context in which the unit of competency is carried out. The variables cater for differences between States and Territories and the Commonwealth, and between organisations and workplaces. They allow for different work requirements, work practices and knowledge. The range statement also provides a focus for assessment. It relates to the unit as a whole. Text in *italics* in the Performance criteria is explained here.

Benchmarks may include:

- Australian or international standards
- standards developed by OHS authorities
- industry standards
- standards developed internally by the organisation or by commercial organisations

Relevant documentation may include:

- OHS legislation, codes of practice and guidance material
- industry standards
- organisational documents

Resources may include:

- specialist personnel
- equipment

Information and data collected may be in hard copy or electronic and may include:

- management system documentation including policies and procedures, position descriptions and duty statements
- operational documentation including completed forms, schedules, checklists, log books, minutes of meetings, action plans, maintenance reports and health surveillance records
- claims, legal reports, complaints, hazard logs and incident and injury reports, enforcement notices and actions
- reports and management reviews
- previous management system reports and industry risk profiles
- interviews with management, supervisors, work groups, employees and other parties across a range of levels and roles including health and safety representatives, OHS committee members and design personnel and contractors, where appropriate
- observations in the workplace, work operations and records
- training materials and records
- for surveillance audits, information and data should include changes since last audit such as new equipment, processes, products, substances or projects

A systemic approach to managing OHS involves:

- a comprehensive set of processes that are combined in a methodical and ordered manner to minimise the risk of injury or ill health in the workplace; and for example may include:

- processes of OHS planning
- allocation of resources
- communication and consultation
- hazard management
- record keeping and reporting
- training and competency
- and review and evaluation for ongoing OHS improvement

Key personnel and stakeholders may include:

- management, persons in control of the workplace, supervisors
- employees and other parties across a range of levels and roles including health and safety representatives, OHS committee members, design personnel and, where appropriate, contractors
- customers/clients

Audit plan includes:

- scope of audit
- personnel involved
- time lines
- meetings to be scheduled, people to be interviewed
- locations to be inspected
- information and data required to be on hand
- sampling methodology including statistical measures

Audit tools:

- are the instruments for collecting evidence and conducting the analysis and evaluation (they are not the same as the audit criteria or benchmarks) and may be:
 - developed specifically for the purpose
 - adapted from existing tools
 - purchased or accessed from existing tools
- and include:
 - performance checklists
 - sets of questions to be asked
 - descriptions of required characteristics to be checked
 - limitations for and instructions for use

Alternative methods may involve:

- interviewing
- alternate sampling methodologies
- discussion groups
- surveys
- observation
- alternative information and data
- modified audit checklists
- how evidence deficiencies will be addressed

Preliminary evaluation may include:

- off-site consultations
- reviews of relevant organisational documentation, information and data

Audit closing meetings are:

- usually conducted within an agreed period after the client has viewed the written report

Objective evidence may

- information and data obtained through observation,

be defined as:

measurement, tests or other means

Follow-up processes
usually comprise:

- an agreed meeting date with the client organisation, following sufficient time for implementation of corrective actions; and may include:
 - checks of the rigour of original audit findings
 - verification of effectiveness of recommendations and control action/s, particularly in correction of non-compliance/s
 - provision of new non-conformance report/s if required

Unit Sector(s)

Not applicable.

Competency field

Specialist Occupational Health & Safety.