



WORK HEALTH & SAFETY

Industry Report



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The Australian government website www.business.gov.au defines Work Health and Safety (WHS) as "managing the risks to the health and safety of everyone in your workplace including your workers, customers, visitors, and suppliers."

Safe Work Australia develops policy for WHS and workers' compensation to improve standards across the country which is then regulated and enforced by each state or territory.

WHS roles within any organisation are of primary importance since work health and safety impacts both the productivity and welfare of every individual.

Tasks and duties include:

- Promoting healthy and safe work practices.
- Ensuring state-of-the-art health and safety compliance across the whole organisation.
- Identifying, recording, and reporting hazards, accidents, injuries, and health issues.
- Assisting with investigation of accidents, studying possible causes and providing advice.
- Conducting health and safety training sessions for management, supervisors, and workers.
- Assisting with rehabilitation of workers after accidents and overseeing successful return.
- Coordinating emergency procedures and first-aid crews.
- Developing WHS plans and monitoring compliance.
- Inspecting workplace and related tools and equipment to ensure regulatory compliance.

Psychosocial Hazards ISO45003

Organisations are also now bound by new legislation regarding psychosocial hazards in the workplace based on the International Standard ISO45003 which aims to protect the emotional wellbeing of the employee at work. This awareness has resulted in many new and exciting career opportunities within the WHS sector.

Whilst WHS responsibilities are relevant and required across all industries, roles are most commonly advertised in these sectors/industries:

- Civil construction
- Building construction
- Mining
- Oil & Gas
- Engineering
- Heavy Industries
- Transport
- Government
- Agriculture

INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

According to IBIS World.com the WHS industry is estimated to be worth \$2.3 billion, and employs close to 14,500 workers across Australia.

Seek.com.au puts the salary range of a WHS Officer at \$80,000 - \$100,000 and a WHS Manager at \$140,000 - \$160,000. It also predicts an industry wide growth of 15.9% over the next 5 years.

WorkSafe Australia showed that 127,800 serious workers' compensation claims were made in 2021-2022 with a median compensation paid of almost \$16,000, costing industry \$2.1 billion across the country, let alone the cost to lost productivity.

Sadly, in 2023 we lost over 170 people to workplace incidents. That's 170 families whose loved one did not return from work, and exponentially more family, friends and colleagues who will be affected by the ongoing grief of loss.



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cost on employees, works, and the community. These include both direct and indirect costs.

Direct cost includes items such as workers' compensation premiums paid by employers or payments to injured or incapacitated workers enforced by each state or territory.

Indirect costs include items such as lost productivity, loss of current and future earnings, lost potential output and the cost of providing social welfare programs for injured or incapacitated workers.

Workers bear the brunt of these injuries personally – sitting at around 77% of the cost. The community picks up 18% and employers come in at 5%.

WHS SKILLS & QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

There is no mandated minimum qualification to enter the WHS sector. However, WHS job ads largely require the successful applicant to hold formal qualifications in Work Health and Safety, regardless of the level of the role.

In practice, the entry level standard of qualification is Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety, and the Diploma or Advanced Diploma for management level positions.

Churchill Education offers the following WHS qualifications:

- BSB41419 - Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety
- BSB51319 - Diploma of Work Health and Safety
- BSB60619 - Advanced Diploma of Work Health and Safety

All qualifications are explained later in this report, plus how you can achieve them through recognition of prior learning - based on your career experience.

When it comes to essential skills, there is a focus on these qualities:

Communication skills – you need to be able to tailor your written and verbal communication to your audience and be persuasive. Achieving WHS outcomes is always a team result so it is important you can influence others in achieving the best.

Collaboration – this is where you have the ability to work effectively with a team. Listening is an important feature of collaborating, as is negotiating.

Leadership – change is often required in order to maintain the highest standards of workplace health and safety, and this requires leadership.

Analytical thinking – not only do you need to be able to learn legal, technical and regulatory information, you have to be able to analyse it and apply it to a real working environment.

Relevant work experience - the focus on qualifications in job advertisements is also combined with a requirement of experience in the sector. As a general rule, for Diploma equivalent positions, five years' experience is consistently mentioned as a minimum standard.

Prioritise own work commitments with the team objectives – self-management is vital in an operating environment where deadlines and audit timelines are common.

Attention to detail – in these roles, the small details can have just as a big an impact on workplace health and safety as the larger objectives.

Technological literacy – as technology continues to offer more to workplaces, it is important that you can use common computer programs and technological tools in WHS and interpret reports.

Anecdotally, physical fitness seems standard in people successful in this field – after all, this work focuses on health too. It would be wise to hold a Senior First Aid certificate and a current drivers' licence too.



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WHS QUALIFICATIONS & RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

In this section we give you an explanation of each of our WHS qualifications, the difference between each level, and examples of position titles relevant to each.

BSB41419 - CERTIFICATE IV IN WORK HEALTH & SAFETY

This is a standard level of training for safety officers. It is comprised of 10 units of competency – five of which are core units (or compulsory) and five elective units (which allows some range to match your experience or interests to particular units).

There are no pre-requisites to enrol in the Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety.

The core units put a focus on the fundamentals of Work Health and Safety responsibilities: starting with the importance of complying with laws, to contributing to identifying, managing and controlling risks and hazards.

The success of Work Health and Safety programs is to be found in the adoption of WHS practices by the general workforce. This knowledge is covered in two core units of competency before also addressing the importance of rendering assistance when responding to WHS incidents.

Examples of Position Titles relevant to Certificate IV level work:

- Work Health and Safety advisor
- Health Safety & Environment (HSE) Advisor
- WHS Officer
- WHS Coordinator
- HSE Coordinator
- Safety Health & Wellbeing Officer

What is the Difference between the Certificate IV and Diploma?

At Certificate IV level, you are relatively young in your Work Health and Safety career. On a day to day basis, you work under limited supervision, identifying risks and you may provide some guidance to others relating to Work Health and Safety matters.

You have the technical skills and can deal with the facts in front of you, heading to your supervisor for more direction when you need it. The successful candidate will be required to maintain the company's safety management system, implement policies, strategies and operating procedures that support prevention of incidents in accordance with legislation.

This can mean completing checks of WHS management systems and reviewing the results. From there, someone working at Certificate IV level can be required to analyse the results and reporting the outcome up the chain to your supervisor.

At Diploma level, you are going to be responsible for a team and giving direction about the WHS practices in your workplace. When complex problems present, you will be the person tasked with considering them and ensuring an effective resolution as you design and continuously improve a WHS system.

Typically, people who are operating at a Diploma level in a WHS role have in-depth experience that has been progressively built up in the industry, giving them a substantial knowledge base to draw upon.



CASE STUDY: WHS & Project Management Qualifications = Career Recognition

30-year-old Graduate Workplace Health and Safety Officer, Michelle, achieved two national qualifications through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – a Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety (WHS) and a Certificate IV in Project Management Practice.



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BSB51319 - DIPLOMA OF WORK HEALTH & SAFETY

To complete the Diploma of Work Health and Safety through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), you need to demonstrate that you have the skills and knowledge to manage risks (including identifying hazards), manage legal responsibilities in a WHS context, and investigate and report on health and safety incidents.

At the Diploma level you are also educating and leading initiatives to improve health and safety measures in a workplace. There is a focus on your communication skills, analytical abilities to resolve complex WHS problems and using your best judgement to make decisions. You will have people who report to you on WHS issues and look to you for direction and resolutions.



CASE STUDY: Work-Life Balance for Working Mothers Senior Constable Jaimie achieved two top diplomas through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) including a Diploma of WHS based on her work with WA Water Police.

To be eligible for the diploma, you need to have the five core units from the Certificate IV in WHS. Alternatively, you can gain these units through RPL.

Units of Competency

The Diploma of Work Health and Safety has nine units of competency, five of which are core (or mandatory) units, and four elective units.

Core units address:

- Management across WHS consultations
- Systematic management of WHS risks
- WHS incident investigations
- Developing, implementing and maintaining systems that manage WHS in the workplace.

Examples of Position Titles relevant to Diploma level work:

- Environmental Health Officer
- OHS Adviser, Coordinator or Officer
- WHS Adviser, Coordinator or Officer
- WHS Manager
- Health & Safety Training Officer
- Health Safety & Environment (HSE) Advisor
- HSE Coordinator
- HSE Superintendent
- HSE Manager
- Safety, Health & Wellbeing Advisor
- Health, Safety, Environment & Training Coordinator
- Health, Safety, Environment & Quality Manager
- Health, Safety & Wellbeing Manager
- Occupational Health & Safety Project Officer
- Coordinator, Safety
- Occupational Hygienist
- Workplace Rehabilitation Officer

What is the Difference between the Diploma and Advanced Diploma?

When looking at Diploma level work, a key starting point is that the WHS worker is following the systems, policies and processes that an organisation already has in place. Execution at Diploma level involves identifying risks, consulting, and investigating incidents.

For example, at a Diploma level, you can be completing investigations into WHS incidents and you present your findings and recommendations to your supervisor. A supervisor's consideration of what is required in response to a WHS incident will be operating at an Advanced Diploma level of strategic analysis.

At the Advanced Diploma level, the responsibility is to create the Work Health and Safety approach that protects the working environment. The Advanced Diploma leads through evaluating the WHS systems, policies and procedures and implementing the activities that the Diploma level workers will be executing.



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BSB60619 - ADVANCED DIPLOMA OF WORK HEALTH & SAFETY

To enrol in the Advanced Diploma of Work Health and Safety, you must hold all the core units from Diploma of Work Health and Safety or equivalent competencies.

There are eight units of competency in the Advanced Diploma. 5 core (mandatory) and three elective units of competency.

Examples of Position Titles relevant to Advanced Diploma level work:

- WHS Practitioner
- HR Practitioner
- WHS Manager
- HSE Manager
- Senior HSE Advisor
- Work Health and Safety Auditor
- Work Health and Safety Manager
- Work Health and Safety Specialist
- Senior Consultant – WHS and Risk Management

In addition to roles that hold clearly focused WHS positions, you will also see professionals in these fields gaining Advanced Diplomas of Work Health and Safety:

- WHS Consultants who come into an organisation to offer WHS advice and who need to have their skills and knowledge independently verified.
- Human Resource Management specialists who are building or reflecting their specialised knowledge in WHS.
- Upper management who need to understand more about WHS responsibilities and work closely with WHS divisions.



CASE STUDY: Moving Up in WHS with Qualifications That Match Experience

WHS professional Caitlin, achieved an Advanced Diploma of Work Health and Safety, and a Diploma of Quality Auditing based on her career experience with RPL.

The core units cover these areas in WHS management:

- You are applying legislative frameworks for Work Health and Safety (which by necessity involves interpreting legislation and determining how that works in practice).
- WHS management systems are developed, implemented and maintained on an ongoing basis Coordinating and facilitating WHS activities, giving strategic consideration to consulting and gaining buy-in from stakeholders and other WHS professionals.
- Implementing risk management strategies addressing WHS risks.
- Evaluating the overall performance of organisations in Work Health and Safety.

Key responsibilities of a WHS leader at a strategic level (mirroring the core units of the Advanced Diploma):

- Creating the WHS framework for the organisation
- Strategic planning and management
- Guiding best practice
- Expect leadership abilities



CASE STUDY: You are Your Own Brand: Matching Qualifications to Experience

Senior Consultant (WHS), Ray Boekelaar achieved six top qualifications through RPL including the Advanced Diploma WHS and Graduate Diploma of Strategic Leadership.

Using RPL qualifications as credit towards university studies:

Many people who have gained qualifications with Churchill Education have used them to gain credit towards further education, including Bachelor degrees or Masters at university. All nationally recognised qualifications can be used for credit transfer. Most universities state that the amount of credit granted depends on the specific application of an individual.



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WHAT OTHER QUALIFICATIONS COMPLEMENT A WHS CAREER?

It makes sense that a career in Work Health and Safety focuses on acquiring Work Health and Safety qualifications. But what other qualifications are also valued in this field?

In preparing this report, we spent considerable time reviewing online job advertisements and position descriptions to see what other skills and qualifications employers are looking for.

The specialist complementary skills and qualifications we often found mentioned were:

- Leadership and Management skills
- Quality Auditing qualifications
- Security and Risk Management qualifications
- Human Resources qualifications
- Incident Investigation qualifications

From there, it helps to align the qualifications to a similar level that sits with your Work Health and Safety qualification.

Certificate IV Level

If you are at Certificate IV level in Work Health and Safety, then you could consider adding some academic recognition of your skills and knowledge in one or more of the following qualifications:

For WHS positions in business and people management:

BSB40210 Certificate IV in Business
BSB40420 Certificate IV in Human Resources
BSB40520 Certificate IV in Leadership & M'ment

**For WHS positions requiring specialist/
technical skills:**

CPP40719 Certificate IV in Security & Risk M'ment
PSP40416 Certificate IV in Gov't Investigations

Diploma Level

If you are at Diploma level in Work Health and Safety, then you could consider adding some academic recognition of your skills and knowledge in one or more of the following qualifications:

For WHS positions in business and people management:

BSB50120 Diploma of Business
BSB50320 Diploma of Human Resource M'ment
BSB50420 Diploma of Leadership and M'ment

**For WHS positions requiring specialist /
technical skills:**

CPP50611 Diploma of Security and Risk M'ment
TLI50415 Diploma of Logistics
BSB51615 Diploma of Quality Auditing

Advanced Diploma Level

If you are at Advanced Diploma level in Work Health and Safety, then you should consider adding some academic recognition of your skills and knowledge in one or more of the following qualifications:

For WHS positions in business and people management:

BSB60120 Advanced Diploma of Business
BSB60320 Advanced Diploma of HRM
BSB60420 Advanced Diploma of L'ship and M'ment

Book a Free Qualification Appraisal

Find out if your WHS experience can be translated into qualifications through Recognition of Prior Learning. Click here to apply or call us on 1 300 793 002.