



## OCCUPATIONAL COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT

Competence can be described as the combination of **training, skills, experience, knowledge & other qualities** that a person has and their ability to apply them to perform a task safely.

- Training is learning about a subject or being taught in a particular field.
- Skills are the abilities that person has gained.
- Knowledge is understanding of, or information about a subject that you gain by experience or study
- Experience is practical contact with facts and events over time.
- Other qualities are less easy to define. However, these attitudes & behaviours have real value and are very desirable in the workplace, they contribute to a fully rounded individual. It is these 'other qualities' that are the difference between a competent operator and an excellent operator.

### WHAT

EMPI Awards have developed their Occupational Competence Assessment (OCA). This is a comprehensive assessment based on the National Occupational Standards (NOS) comprising an observation of **Skills**, a multiple-choice test of **Knowledge**, a consideration of **training & experience** and a discussion of **other qualities**. The OCA is designed to be a robust and rigorous assessment of competence.

### WHY

Until now the industry recognised route to demonstrating competence has been a Plant Operator Card Scheme. This card scheme has run for many years, becoming a two-tier system dependent upon the eventual achievement of a level 2 VQ. The EMPI Awards OCA is a new alternative assessment of competence, giving employers in the extractive & mineral processing industries a choice.

As it is the duty of the site operator/employer to ensure the competence of their employees, the EMPI Awards OCA is paid for by the site operator/employer and retained by them, rather than by the employee. This assessment of competence is thorough, unambiguous, and highly effective.

### HOW

Due to the safety specific nature of the extractive & minerals processing industry EMPI Awards have written an assessment that is fully compliant and based on the NOS for Mobile Plant Operations in the first instance (Processing & Road Surfacing Machinery will follow in due course). The assessment is

holistic and includes an assessment of startup, operations and shut down of specific plant types whilst working safely and efficiently and having the proper regard for environmental considerations, relevant to the job function.

Assessing 'other qualities' allows operators to fully demonstrate their ability to contribute to a safe, effective and efficient workforce in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The OCA is available for most of the more commonly used plant & machinery categories.

The OCA contains a system of grading, where an operator can be assessed with a 'pass' grade as competent but can also progress onto a Credit or Distinction grade following feedback from the Occupational Competence Assessment. This feeds into a system of continuous improvement and continuing personnel development, as the Occupational Competence Assessment is renewed every three years.

#### WHO

This occupational competence assessment has been developed and is owned by EMPI Awards. EMPI Awards is an independent Awarding Organisation and is part of Philip Brain Associates Limited, widely regarded as industry experts in the development & delivery of occupational & vocational competence assessment, and regional & national winners of an inaugural Institute of Quarrying Excellence Award.

EMPI Awards is a **credible, alternative and independent** Awarding Organisation for the Extractive & Mineral Processing Industries.

EMPI Awards are recognised and regulated by Ofqual & accepted by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for End Point Assessment of Apprenticeships.

The OCA will be delivered by MinTrain, a wholly owned subsidiary of MinExp Ltd. MinExp is a compact but expert consultancy business, focusing primarily on the extractive & mineral processing industries. MinExp offer a unique blend of expertise, knowledge, and experience with additional attributes necessary to deliver solutions. Focusing upon key areas of improvement within the sector, MinExp can provide a full range of SHE services, front-line operational consultancy, as well as bespoke training, mentoring & assessment of individuals at all levels.

EMPI Awards have the responsibility for maintaining ongoing quality assurance of MinTrain's assessment delivery. EMPI Awards also approve all assessors and internal verifiers as necessary using the same principles that apply to regulated qualifications, such as VQs. A structured Terms of Reference for the Occupational Competence Assessment and an Assessment Strategy and Guidance for use by MinTrain and their associates has been produced & is managed by EMPI Awards. MinTrain will conduct all assessments in line with the requirements set out by EMPI Awards. EMPI Awards will then issue a certificate of Assessment of Competence to the site operator/employer and the employee will receive a card (100% biodegradable) confirming which equipment they have been assessed on and the grade of achievement.

## WHERE

Assessments may be conducted nationally and internationally at your place of work.

## WHEN

THE OCA has been field tested extensively during June & July 2020 and is now available. This cost-effective OCA offers several significant advantages over other assessments of competence currently available. This is because it is based on the National Occupational Standards for the job role and explores further than operational machine skills, thereby fully addressing all the qualities that a competent operator should have.

## WHAT MAKES THE OCCUPATIONAL COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT DIFFERENT?

- The OCA fully meets and is directly mapped to the National Occupational Standards.
- 'Other qualities' is key part of competence as defined by some specific legislation. EMPI Awards OCA addresses other qualities where other assessments of competence do not. Other qualities have a direct bearing on the final grade of achievement. However, achievement of VQs, other occupational assessments & CPD may also contribute to the final grade.
- The final grade is largely derived from knowledge & understanding based on a detailed, structured discussion between the assessor and the employee in addition to a comprehensive observation of performance.
- The OCA allows for progression along with development as it contains three grades of achievement: Pass, Credit & Distinction
- The OCA does not use a complex two-tier system for 'trained' (red) or 'competent' (blue) cards or the achievement of a VQ. If an employee is competent, then they are competent – you only pay once.
- Site operator/employer owns the demonstration of competence as it is their duty to ensure the competence of employees on items of plant and site(s).
- EMPI Awards will not engage in the assessment or delivery of OCA, as this could create a potential or perceived conflict of interest. EMPI Awards will however, develop; update and quality assure the assessments carried out by all third parties.

For further information about the Occupational Competence Assessment please contact Gavin Brain at EMPI Awards. Or for quotations, technical advice & availability please contact Mike Phillips at MinTrain.

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