

Queensland Health, Health Practitioner Core Competency Descriptor

Environmental Health Officer

DISCIPLINE DESCRIPTOR:

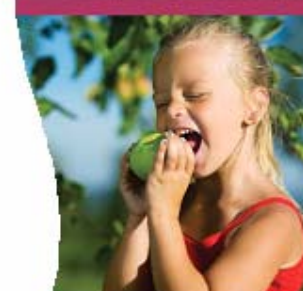
An Environmental Health Officer (EHO) is an internationally recognised health professional who recognises, evaluates and controls issues that impact on both the natural and built environment and human health, through:

- Ensuring environmental health risks are identified and managed
- Responding to health issues raised by stakeholders
- Maintaining effective monitoring and surveillance systems
- Contributing to the management of a sustainable environment
- Providing evidence-based public health information and advice to members of the public, colleagues and others
- Intervening when public health and safety has been compromised
- Implementing appropriate interventions when public health and safety problems exist to protect and promote health and prevent illness
- Enforcing public health legislation for which Population Health, Queensland Health has responsibility

EHOs are appointed generally as 'authorised officers' under relevant State legislation and exercise a number of powers delegated by the Chief Executive, Queensland Health. An EHO must be eligible for appointment under all of the following legislation:

- Health Act 1937;
- Food Act 2006;
- Public Health Act 2005;
- Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998; and
- Pest Management Act 2003.

An EHO possesses a degree or other qualification that is accredited by the Australian Institute of Environmental Health (see attachment 1), combined with relevant experience and/or postgraduate qualifications that are relevant to the practice of environmental health.





CORE COMPETENCIES:

1. Knowledge in Practice

1.1 Knowledge of environmental health prevention, promotion and protection concepts and strategies including but not limited to health status of populations, inequalities in health status and the determinants of health (biological, social, cultural, environmental, economic and physical).

1.1.1 Knowledge of principles of physical, chemical and biological sciences including principles of anatomy and physiology

1.1.2 Knowledge of applied sciences including:

- Occupational health and safety
- Aspects of applied mathematics (including biostatistics and epidemiology)
- Environmental toxicology, (including vector control)
- Environmental health risk assessment
- Microbiology (including management of relevant communicable and food borne diseases)
- Construction and related design and approval processes

1.2 Use of evidence and research to target and inform environmental health interventions and influence access to and delivery of health services.

1.3 Knowledge of state, national and international developments in environmental health prevention, promotion and protection strategies.

1.3.1 Knowledge of basic government functions, governance and principles of law

1.3.2 Knowledge of local, national and international environmental health policies and legislation (including its interpretation and application) as they impact on environmental health practice in Queensland

1.3.3 Knowledge of legislation, standards and other regulatory tools for which Population Health, Queensland Health, has responsibility in subject areas including food safety, pest management, tobacco control, the regulation of drugs and poisons, disaster management, public health, outbreak management and communicable disease control

1.3.4 Knowledge of appropriate interventions as required when breaches of legislation are detected (including letters, notices, licence revocations, the use of Prescribed Infringement Notices, and prosecution)

1.4 Understand how the determinants of health (biological, social, cultural, environmental, economic and physical) influence the health and well-being of the population and the interaction

between public policies, lifestyles, consumption patterns, urbanisation and health.

1.6 Knowledge of project management principles (including scope, time, cost, procurement, quality, risk, human resource, and communication management) as they apply to environmental health interventions.

2. Environmental Health Law

2.1 Knowledge of theoretical and practical environmental health enforcement practices

2.1.1 Knowledge of investigation methodology and procedures

2.1.2 Knowledge of enforcement methods that are applicable to Environmental Health Officers, such as:

- Evidence gathering
- Conducting legal interviews
- Establishing elements of an offence
- Obtaining a warrant
- Issue of a complaint and summons
- Presenting a brief of evidence and appearing in a court of law
- The use of Prescribed Infringement Notices

2.1.3 Apply the principles of good legal practice, including using policies, procedures and precedents to enhance practice

2.2 Knowledge of the use of legislative appointments, delegations, legal powers and enforcement tools to protect and promote the health of the community.

2.3 Knowledge of the history and approaches to law and the application and enforcement of environmental health specific legislation and other relevant statutes on protecting community and individual health

2.4 Knowledge of national, state and local government environmental health and related functions and the principles of law, including an understanding of the system of governance

2.4.1 Knowledge of legal, governmental and administrative frameworks, within which the environmental health system operates, including limitations and constraints

3. Health Intervention Planning and Implementation

3.1 Develop evidence based options to address a specific environmental health issue and assess the implications of each option to formulate appropriate and measurable program goals, objectives and strategies.





3.1.1 Use environmental health knowledge to contribute to the development of evidence based options for environmental health interventions in fields including drugs and poisons, food safety, pest management, tobacco, disaster management, outbreak management and communicable disease control

3.1.2 Application and interpretation of statutory requirements and implementation of efficient and effective programs/and or remedies for breaches of legislation for which Population Health has responsibility

3.2 Understand the principles and processes of policy development and implementation in promoting and protecting health and preventing disease and injury within the scope of environmental health practice

3.2.1. Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of policies within the scope of environmental health practice

3.3 Plan and implement multi-strategy population health interventions to contribute to defined policy and program outcomes.

3.3.1 Participate in state-wide environmental health planning, strategy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation within a population health program area

3.3.2 Apply the project management body of knowledge when planning and implementing environmental health interventions.

3.4 Identify risks and apply principles of risk management.

3.4.1 Utilisation of formal and informal methodology to identify and assess risks for environmental health issues and interventions

4. Needs Analysis and Assessment

4.1 Identify the environmental health issues that exist in and impact on populations.

4.2 Identify behavioural, environmental and organisational factors that promote or compromise health.

4.3 Identify relevant and appropriate sources of information about environmental health hazards and disease risk

4.3.1 Collect, assess and critically analyse relevant research and other information in decision making about environmental health hazards and disease risk

4.3.2 Use risk frameworks that utilise scientific methodology of environmental health risk assessment to inform

practice, and promote outcomes that minimise environmental health and disease risks to populations

- 4.4 Collect, manage and analyse data to determine appropriate environmental health implications, uses, gaps and limitations in information on environmental health and communicable disease issues.
- 4.5 Interpret the meaning of information, considering the current ethical, political, socio-cultural and economic context.
- 4.6 Recommend specific actions based on analysis and interpretation of information.
- 4.7 Report and communicate through appropriate channels to inform population health policy and practice.

5. Partnerships, Collaboration and Advocacy

- 5.1 Identify partners and other stakeholders through a process of proactive and responsive engagement.
- 5.2 Participate in, develop and maintain sustainable community and professional partnerships to enhance population health outcomes.
- 5.3 Collaborate with partners and other stakeholders in the planning and delivery of clinical services to achieve positive population health outcomes.
- 5.4 Advocate on issues of environmental health significance to influence healthy public policy and practice across sectors and jurisdictions.

6. Cultural Competency Skills and Health Equity

- 6.1 Consider population diversity and health inequality and apply culturally- relevant and ethical approaches based on the Cultural Respect Framework when planning, implementing and evaluating population health interventions.
- 6.2 Interact sensitively, effectively and professionally with people from diverse cultural, socioeconomic and education backgrounds.
 - 5.2.1 Provide leadership and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Environmental Health Workers and Animal Management Workers within Communities and Population Health





6.3 Understand and respect cultural differences when engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

6.3.1 Carry out environmental health activities for which a legislative appointment is required



7. Communication

7.1 Communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders and populations by using appropriate resources, techniques and technologies.

7.1.1 Prepare written and oral reports, presentations and submissions for members of the public, staff within other government departments, other EHOs, and management about a range of environmental health issues

7.1.2 Provide education, mentoring and support for other EHOs and colleagues as required



7.2 Apply interpersonal skills in communication with colleagues, partners and the public.

7.3 Inform and influence individuals and communities by using appropriate media, community resources and social marketing techniques.



7.4 Provide expert advice on environmental health matters to management, colleagues and partners, members of the public and other stakeholders



8. Leadership

8.1 Communicate and apply shared visions, missions and values as well as building capacity, improving performance and enhancing the quality of the working environment.

8.2 Contribute to team and organisational quality and performance standards, through ethical practice that acknowledges and respects the dignity, culture, values, beliefs and rights of individuals and populations.

8.3 Understand the context and the environment in which decision making occurs in relation to population health interventions.



8.4 Understand the contribution and role of other government and community partners for improving the health and wellbeing of the population.



8.5 Promote and contribute to reflective practice, professional development and an active collegiate learning environment.

8.6 Build the capacity of communities and organisations to improve environmental health outcomes by sharing knowledge, tools, expertise and experience.

8.7 Recognise the competencies and qualities that make successful leaders.

9. Evaluation, Research and Knowledge Translation

9.1 Utilise relevant literature and research findings to improve evidence based practice.

9.1.1 Use knowledge of epidemiology, biostatistics and scientific methods to inform and improve environmental health practice

9.2 Locate and systematically review the information and assess its quality and usefulness for the purposes of public health research, policy and practice.

9.3 Conduct research and evaluation according to research and project management principles.

9.4 Select and design appropriate evaluation and research methods and instruments.

9.5 Monitor programs, objectives and strategies based on the analysis of data.

9.6 Analyse quantitative and qualitative data to understand program effectiveness

9.7 Report and communicate findings through appropriate channels to contribute to the evidence base and promote population health outcomes.

10. Use of Technology

10.1 Uses appropriate technology and software to collect and analyse data relevant to Population Health.

10.2 Uses appropriate technology to communicate effectively.

10.3 Awareness and use of current and emergent technology in delivering population health services.





11. Management and Administration

- 11.1 Apply financial human and operational management frameworks to population health interventions
- 11.2 Manage population health interventions and strategies within quality, time and budget constraints.
 - 11.2.1 Develop and carry out environmental health auditing
- 11.3 Demonstrate skills that foster collaboration and support, partnership and team building to achieve population health outcomes.

12. Learning and Development

- 12.1 Understand the importance of and engage in the activities of lifelong learning and development
- 12.2 Maintain professional currency.
- 12.3 Support and develop the competence and professional development of colleagues.

Primary source:

- Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada Release 1.0 (Public Health Agency of Canada)
- Australian Institute of Environmental Health (2006) Environmental Health Course Accreditation Policy

Secondary sources:

- Competency Standards for Public Health Practice 2007 (Public Health Education Research Program)
- Public Health Practice in Australia Today, A statement of core functions (National Public Health Partnership)
- Sparrow, M. 2000. The Regulatory Craft Washington: The Brookings Institution

Version Control: Public Release V1.0

Attachment 1

| QUALIFICATION | INSTITUTION, COUNTRY |
|--|--|
| Royal Society of Health Diploma of Health Inspection | Royal Society of Health, United Kingdom |
| Associate Diploma in Health Surveying | Queensland Institute of Technology, Queensland |
| Royal Society of Health Diploma, Inspector of Meat and Other Foods | Royal Society of Health, United Kingdom |
| Diploma in Environmental Health | Technical Education Division, Education Department of Western Australia. |
| Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Health) | Western Australian Institute of Technology |
| Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Health) | Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia |
| Bachelor of Science (Environmental Health) | Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia |
| Bachelor of Science (Environmental Health) / Bachelor of Science (Environmental Biology) | Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia |
| Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Health) | University of Western Sydney (Hawkesbury) New South Wales |
| Bachelor of Science (Environmental Health) | Griffith University, Queensland |
| Bachelor of Public Health (Environmental Health) | Griffith University, Queensland |
| Bachelor of Health Science (Environmental Health) | Queensland University of Technology |
| Graduate Diploma in Environmental Health (with suitable undergraduate science subjects) | Queensland University of Technology |





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| Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Health) | Queensland University of Technology |
| Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Health) | Flinders University, South Australia |
| Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Health) | Swinburne University of Technology, Victoria |
| Bachelor of Health Science (Environmental Health Management) | Swinburne University of Technology, Victoria |
| Bachelor of Health Science (Public Health and Environmental Health) | Swinburne University of Technology, Victoria |
| Bachelor of Public Health (Environmental Health) | Latrobe University, Victoria |
| Bachelor of Environmental Health | Massey University, New Zealand |
| Graduate Diploma in Environmental Health (with suitable undergraduate science subjects) | Massey University, New Zealand |