

THE FIBROPTIC INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

SAMPLE "LEVEL II" QUALIFICATIONS



The Fibreoptic Industry Association

www.fia-online.co.uk

THE QUALIFICATION SCHEME



INTRODUCTION

The FIA Qualification Scheme, launched September 2005, adopts a revolutionary but highly integrated approach to personal qualifications, training course provision and training provider quality assurance within the fibre optics industry. The scheme has the principal aim of improving the levels of expertise within industry and seeks to deliver benefits, both tangible and intangible, to all involved. The details of the scheme and all the associated documentation are to be found on a designated area of the FIA web-site at www.fia-online.co.uk/equals01.htm.

The Qualification Scheme addresses three inter-related areas:

- learner development, via a series of qualification stages with associated status "Awards" that reflect increasing levels of education and skill levels;
- training courses, via the approval of specific agendas and assessment systems to enable the progression of learners from one stage to the next;
- training provision via the appointment of Certified Trainers employed by Approved Training Providers.

TO LEARN MOREREAD ON

THE FIBROPTIC INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

(a Company Limited by Guarantee)

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SAMPLE "LEVEL III" QUALIFICATIONS



THE QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications comprise a base, Level I, award but concentrate on four higher level awards. Learners at Level I shall have obtained one or more of the following baseline qualifications: City & Guilds 3466-01, 3466-02, 3466-03, 3466-04, 3666-02, 3666-03, 3666-04.

Learners at Level II have Technician status and will have obtained a Level II qualification plus a recognised industry award (including manufacturers awards) and an appropriate health and safety qualification such as:

- "ECA: Health & Safety Assessment";
- "NEBOSH Health & Safety Diploma Part One";
- "Health & Safety Award (NVQ Level III)";
- "SELECT: Safe Working in the Electro-Technical Industry";
- "AMICUS: Working Safely Together in the Electro-Technical Industry";
- "IOSH: SPA Passport Course";
- "CCNSG: Safety Passport"
- "CITB: Health and Safety Assessment".

Learners can progress from this to higher levels of award by a combination of attendance and successful assessment on FIA Approved Course Units and, in the case of the highest levels, submission of a thesis and oral examination.

The status awards for the higher levels are Level III: Specialist, Level IV: Engineer and Level V: Expert. Enrolment for learners on the Qualifications Scheme is free for FIA Personal Members and carries a small fee for others.

Level III (Specialist) Awards are based on a Level II award plus an FIA Approved Unit award including an 'Advanced' NQF Level 3 Award such as City & Guilds 3663 (for CDS) or, for CMS, "Advanced OTDR Testing" or "Advanced CD & PMD Testing".

Level IV (Engineer) Awards require a Level III award plus a combination of FIA Approved Unit awards leading to either 'advanced' education in the communications industry to Level IV or "advanced" training courses of a duration twice the length of a Level III award.

A key feature of the FIA approach is its flexibility to adapt to the relevant skills required for a job function. One's job should not prevent anyone from achieving any level of FIA Award and no irrelevant training needs to be undertaken in order to gain that award.

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SAMPLE "LEVEL IV" QUALIFICATIONS



COURSE UNITS AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The scheme encourages the approval of new course units and even allows the development of new, alternative, routes to higher level awards. This flexibility is essential to meet the needs of a diverse industry. Without such a flexible approach, high level qualifications would either be absent, due to the relatively small numbers of learners, or inappropriate to many learners. Training providers are encouraged to submit the agenda/syllabus and assessment criteria for each of the courses they operate for inclusion at the appropriate level within the Qualification Scheme.

In order to maintain the FIA Award status achieved by successfully completing the high level awards, a minimum of eight hours continuing professional development must be registered each year based on a wide range of technology orientated events and training courses.

APPROVED TRAINING PROVIDERS

Organisations providing the principal courses/units are required to be FIA Approved Training Providers and use FIA Certified Trainers to deliver the training. FIA Approved Training Provider status is renewed annually and in order to gain and retain this approval, the organisation is required to be an FIA Corporate Member and commit to using only FIA Certified Trainers on any course units leading to awards that are recognised within the FIA Qualification Scheme. In addition, applicants shall be either a City & Guilds Centre approved for the delivery and assessment of 3666 or 3662 series qualifications or, alternatively, be willing to undergo and successfully complete initial and subsequent annual audits by FIA staff.

CERTIFIED TRAINERS

Certified Trainers have to be knowledgeable in all aspects of fibre optics to a level beyond that required to pass the City and Guilds 3666 scheme. They also have to be qualified, trained or experienced as trainers and practically experienced in the field of fibre optics. Certified Trainers are required to pass a written FIA examination and to have a qualification to show that they have achieved a suitable level of expertise as a trainer. There are a number of trainer qualifications and certification schemes that will satisfy the FIA requirements and in order to encourage the uptake of such professional qualifications the FIA is allowing significant periods of grace in this area. The Certified Trainer is provided with a Photo ID Card that requires renewal every two years.

QUALITY ASSURANCE via LEARNER FEEDBACK

Learners completing course units as part of their career progression are required to provide feedback, covering the quality of both training and facilities to the FIA Qualification Scheme Directorate. This provides effective quality assurance controls for the entire system.

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SAMPLE "LEVEL V" QUALIFICATIONS



LEVEL V STATUS

Level V status represents the pinnacle of the FIA Qualification Scheme. Except in exceptional circumstances, candidates for the FIA Level V Award status must first have achieved the FIA Level IV status Award.

There are two alternative routes to achieving the Level V Award as detailed below, both of which involve an oral examination/interview by a specially convened FIA Level V Award Examination Panel. The FIA understands that this is an unusual examination format for most candidates. However, the FIA believes it is important for candidates gaining Level V (Expert) status to be able to articulate their expertise and, in one case, write a clear report/thesis on a technical subject.

One way of attaining a Level V Award is first to achieve a Level IV Award and then submit a technical thesis or report (5,000 words minimum - 10,000 words maximum) on a fibre optic or cabling topic. The candidate can select their own report/thesis topic, or may request a short list of appropriate topic titles from the FIA. The Level V Award will be judged on the thesis itself and an oral examination based on the thesis and any Units taken as part of the FIA Qualifications Scheme. The purpose of the oral session is to establish that the thesis is the candidates' own work and that the candidate has retained a good proportion of the knowledge imparted during earlier course units. The candidates are assessed on report writing skills, presentation skills, knowledge of presented materials and depth of subject knowledge.

A second option is open to learners who have achieved two Level IV Awards are able to submit to an oral examination based on the content of the Units taken. The examination by the Examination Panel will comprise questions on technical issues relevant to the areas of fibre optic cabling that the candidate works in or has studied. The candidates are assessed on their presentation skills and depth of subject knowledge.

THE BENEFITS OF THE QUALIFICATIONS SCHEME

Immediate benefits of the Qualifications Scheme are web-based listings of companies supporting the scheme, FIA members with "Certified" employees and separately, pending employers permission, "Certified" personnel including those Level V Award "experts" for clients requiring consultants in specialist areas.

The more intangible benefits include improved job prospects and increased competitiveness through the use of "Certified" personnel. Corporate members are able to use the Qualification Scheme logo on corporate letterheads and promotional literature. "Certified" personnel are able to feature the relevant Qualification Award "status" on their business cards.

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