

Candidates Manual for the CIEH
Professional Examinations under
Curriculum 2003

Candidates Manual for the Professional Examination

Introduction

1. This manual is designed to help you, the candidate, better understand the process of the Professional Examination and to hopefully smooth your passage through it.
2. By this time you should be considering and preparing for the Professional Examination you should have:
 - a) Concluded or be very close to concluding your academic studies
 - b) Registered with the Environmental Health Registration Board (EHRB)
 - c) Successfully completed your Experiential Learning Portfolio (ELP)
3. The CIEH Professional Examination consists of two elements:
 - a) A case study examination
 - b) A professional interview.
4. There are normally three opportunities to sit the case study in each calendar year; namely, Easter, summer and late autumn. A number of venues are likely to be used simultaneously (e.g. London, Manchester, Belfast, Cardiff etc.)
5. There are normally five or six professional interview sessions in a calendar year, the majority taking place during the summer months. Again different venues are used for each interview session.
6. Most of the Case Study examinations, and some of the interviews, are held in university premises. However, other premises (such as hotels) are used from time to time, particularly for interviews.
7. It is entirely your choice as to which venue(s) you select for the case study examination and for the professional interview – it does not have to be the same venue for both. Furthermore, it doesn't have to be at, or near, the university where you studied or the nearest venue to where you undertook your work-based experiential learning. It is also your choice as to the order in which you decide to take the two elements and the time interval between them.

Applying to sit the examinations

8. You must make a separate application for each of the examination elements and each application must be submitted at least six weeks before your chosen 'sitting.' If you apply 'late', your application for your chosen session will be rejected. Dates and venues of both elements are on the appropriate application form which you can download from the CIEH website (www.cieh.org). Application forms are also sent each year to all accredited Universities.
9. The application forms also contain other appropriate details; for example, if you have any 'special needs' that need to be met in order to allow you to sit the examinations, then use the space provided on the application form and let CIEH know. Please note that CIEH will only be able to respond to your special needs if you advise us in advance of the examination and via the application form.
10. Once you have submitted a complete application CIEH will contact you to confirm the time, date and venue.
11. If you obtained 'Full Registration' when you registered with EHRB you will have nothing further to pay for your first (and hopefully only) attempt at each examination element. However if you obtained only 'Partial Registration' when you registered with EHRB, then you will have to pay separately for each examination element. If you're uncertain then contact the Education Unit for further advice (020 7 928 6006). Details of current examination fees can also be obtained from the Education Unit using the same number.
12. Any resits will have to be paid for separately.

The Case Study Examination

13. It is usual for examinations to start at 10.00 a.m. and you should arrive by 9.30 a.m. at the latest. This may sound simple and obvious but please bear in mind that travelling even short distances can involve unexpected hold-ups and car parking difficulties and, even though you may be familiar with the venue, the route to the examination room may have changed since your last visit!
14. When you arrive at the venue please make yourself known to the CIEH administrator. She/he is formally required to check your identification so please bring your passport or driving licence or Student Union card etc. – if you don't have proof of identity you may not be allowed to sit the exam!
15. Shortly before the start time of the examination you will be asked to enter the examination room and take your seat. You will be asked to leave any coats, bags, mobile phones (switched off) in a particular area of the examination room. Normally your desk will be designated by your own personal examination pack showing your name and registration number.

16. Once you are seated, the invigilator will address all candidates on the subject of exam conduct. In addition, your desk will also contain a page of written instructions for candidates.
17. The case study exam is an 'open book' format examination; so you may take into the room any materials which you feel may assist you in completing the task(s). However, there will usually be adequate information contained within the 'reading pack' that is normally provided by CIEH to enable you to undertake the tasks without recourse to vast quantities of additional material.
18. Prior to the start of the examination the invigilator will ask you to open your examination pack and check the contents which will normally comprise your case study file and the reading pack.
19. At the allotted time the invigilator will inform you that you may start the examination, which is in two parts:

Part 1 - 10 a.m. to 12 noon – is the 'reading and preparation' phase. This is the time for you to study the case file and any other appropriate materials and to make any notes that you feel will assist you in the afternoon – plenty of note paper will be made available for you.

Part 2 - 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. – is the 'actual examination' phase. At the start of this phase you will be provided with information on the tasks you will be required to complete and also with your examination answer book(s) and any other material which may be appropriate.
20. A lunch break will be taken between 12 noon and 1-00p.m. No restrictions are placed on you during this time.
21. The Case Study examination will be intervention based and will cover at least two different intervention groups.
22. Past case study papers together with marking guidance are available for you to download from the CIEH website (www.cieh.org) You are strongly advised to have a look at these papers in advance of your sitting. In the main the examiner will be looking for you to apply yourself to the required interventions and a detailed knowledge of legislation or technical information is not a pre-requisite; nevertheless, this will be one of your final assessments and, as such, the attainment of a broad and deep understanding of environmental health processes and procedures is expected.
23. The examination, in its entirety, will be undertaken under examination room conditions – these do not apply during the lunch break.
24. You will normally be advised of the date when you can expect to receive your results from CIEH. Please don't be tempted to ring up to try to get your result before that time.

25. Results will be classified as Distinction, Pass or Fail. You can find details of the classification criteria in the current version of the Examination Regulations.

The Professional Interview

26. Aim to arrive early for your interview – even if you are familiar with the venue. You will have been given details of the venue and the start time of your interview when you received confirmation of your application.
27. If you arrive late, without prior notice, you may not be allowed to take the interview. If you do get a problem on the way to the interview which may delay you, then please call the Education Unit of CIEH and advise the CIEH administrator – he/she may be able to make an adjustment to the timetable so you can be accommodated on the same day – but this cannot be guaranteed.
28. On arrival you will be met by a member of the CIEH administration team who will ensure that you are who you say you are and will arrange for safe keeping of any mobile phones, handbags, coats etc.
29. It is possible that the moderator may meet you at the same time. The moderator may also sit in for a part or the whole of your interview. If he /she does so it is to make sure the examiners do their job right and he / she will not be assessing you.
30. At your appointed time one of the examiners will meet you and escort you to the interview room where you will be introduced to the second examiner.
31. The normal layout of the interview room is a table with the two examiners sitting at one side and you sitting opposite. On the table will be a clock, some water and cups, a copy of the examination regulations, notepaper and pens.
32. The examiners will explain the process of the interview. Listen carefully to your instructions and if you're in any doubt please do ask at this stage
33. You will be presented with three scenarios (e.g. a food poisoning case, a complaint of noise, a young family living in a house affected by dampness etc). The examiners will then leave the room for 20 minutes, usually agreeing a 'return time' with you. During this 20 minute period you will have the opportunity to study the three scenarios and to make any notes you wish – you can refer to your notes during the interview. At the expiration of 20 minutes the examiners will re-enter the room and the interview, which will last between 30 and 45 minutes will commence.
34. During the interview the examiners will want you to determine an order of priority, in terms of public health significance, for the three scenarios. You will be asked to explain the reasoning behind your choice. The examiners may ask you a number of 'what if' questions, some of which may lead you to consider

changing your original order of priority, others may not! The examiners will not try to trick you, but they may test your reasoning and professional justification skills. You will then be asked to choose one of the scenarios to talk about in detail. The choice is entirely yours – it is not related to the significance which you indicated in relation to the priorities. Choose the one you feel most comfortable with.

The examiners will then discuss your chosen scenario with you and will be looking for you to demonstrate to an acceptable level:

- a) A professional attitude /approach
- b) An ability to determine an appropriate course of action / intervention in respect of the scenario
- c) An ability to identify and articulate others with whom you should be working
- d) A wider understanding of the potential/actual health impacts that surround the scenario

Do not expect the interview to follow the above order. You are likely to find that the interview becomes a 'conversation between colleagues'. This is perfectly normal.

- 35. Do use the 20 minutes wisely to make notes – it is not a lot of time but it is adequate to enable you to jot down a few keywords, bullet points etc. referring to why you think one scenario is more significant than the others, which scenario you will choose and some of the main issues which you think arise out of that scenario.
- 36. Remember you can refer to your notes during the interview.
- 37. Bear in mind that you may be cast in any role as an EHP (newly qualified.) This need not necessarily be in the role of a local authority EHO. It may be as a consultant, or as an advisor to a large commercial chain, or as someone working for the NHS etc. Expect this and do not be phased by it.
- 38. There are no trick questions – try to consider what you would do, or what should be done, in the real world of environmental health. The interview is not a test of detailed technical or legal knowledge; although there may be some reference to legislation etc.
- 39. Remember that our examiners are all EHPs and colleagues – if there's anything you don't understand, then please ask.
- 40. At the end of the interview you will be given the opportunity, if you wish, to add anything to what you've discussed – just in case you think the examiners have 'skated' over something which you think is important. It's worth just spending a few seconds glancing at your notes at this point rather than rushing out of the room – although you're not obliged to add anything unless you wish to do so!

41. Don't forget to collect your mobile phone etc. before you leave the venue!

42. Results will be sent to you within 21 days of the date of the assessment and will be classified as Good Pass, Pass, Marginal Fail or Fail. You can find details of the classification criteria in the Examination Regulations.