

Curriculum 2025–2030

OHS QUALIFICATION TRAINING 15 CREDITS



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1. Starting points of the training

The core tasks of occupational health care are the promotion of work ability, functional capacity and health, work disability prevention and tasks related to the health and safety of working conditions in collaboration with workplaces. Global and societal changes and shifts in work life are challenging occupational health care to develop its operations and co-operation with the social welfare and health care sector. Workplaces are required to have the skills to identify and manage new and traditional health risks and resources. The increased competence requirements of work life and technological development have influenced the way we work. Remote work, hybrid work, multi-location work, diverse employment relationships and the accelerating pace of work or work life are part of current life. Maintaining and promoting the well-being, health and work ability of employees increases the productivity of the workplace and creates societal impact.

Close co-operation with workplaces, different personnel groups and the occupational health and safety organisation is the basis for effective occupational health activities. The Occupational Health Care Act (TthL1383/2001) defines occupational health care as activities to promote the following through cooperation between employers employees and occupational healthcare: the prevention of work-related illnesses and accidents; the health and safety of the work and the working environment; the health, ability to work and functional capacity of employees at the different stages of their working careers; and the functioning of the workplace community. The Government Decree on the principles of good occupational health care practice, the content of occupational health care and the training of professionals and experts (708/2013) emphasises occupational health co-operation and the promotion of work ability, work disability prevention and support for returning to work. In addition, it requires an occupational health unit-specific quality system, monitoring and assessment of activities as well as demonstration of effectiveness in accordance with good occupational health care practices.

Occupational health care plays a key coordinating role in supporting the work ability and return to work of employees as well as in preventing and reducing incapacity for work. The person's existing work ability is supported by identifying resource, workload and hazard factors and by influencing them in the work community, working conditions, work environment and at the individual level. Decreased work ability and prolonged incapacity for work can be prevented in occupational health co-operation by identifying the threat to work ability at an early stage and addressing it through treatment, work-related rehabilitation and support for returning to work. The development of the social welfare and health care service system will clarify the roles and co-operation of different operators.

Operations in accordance with good occupational health care practice require multiprofessional and multidisciplinary co-operation. The multiprofessional occupational health care team consists of occupational health physicians, occupational health nurses and occupational physiotherapists as professionals as well as occupational health psychologists as experts. Other occupational health care experts include those with a higher education degree in occupational hygiene, social welfare, ergonomics, technology, agriculture, occupational ophthalmology, nutrition, speech therapy or sport sciences or a similar vocational qualification, who have also completed at least

two credits of OHS qualification training. Occupational health care specialists also include medical specialists whose specialist qualification is not in occupational health care.

The Decree (708/2013) provides for the training of occupational health care professionals. Working in occupational health care requires completing a basic degree in one's own field and a qualification obtained in occupational health care supplementary training within two years of moving to occupational health care duties. The training qualifying for occupational health care (15 credits) provides qualifications in accordance with Government Decree 708/2013 to work in occupational health care as an occupational health nurse, occupational physiotherapist, occupational psychologist or part-time occupational health physician (less than 20 hours per week). The competence requirements of the training are based on the legislation related to occupational health care and good occupational health care practice in accordance with the occupational health care processes. The training is built on the knowledge and skills of the participant's previous degree in the field.

2. Objectives of the training

The objective of occupational health care training is to produce qualified professionals who can develop work life and respond to its challenges. The training supports the participant's expertise, critical thinking and development-oriented approach as a member of the community. The training strengthens the individual's professional competence, promotes the quality of occupational health co-operation and provides workplaces with solutions that serve work life.

Objectives of occupational health care training:

- The participant is able to apply the legislation governing occupational health care activities and evidence-based information and use methods that have been proven to be effective to ensure high-quality occupational health care and occupational health co-operation.
- The participant develops occupational health care activities in multiprofessional and multidisciplinary co-operation with various operators as well as in occupational health care co-operation with workplaces.
- The participant acts in a client-oriented and independent manner in accordance with the ethical principles of occupational health care

3. Pedagogical starting points

3.1. Pedagogical principles/starting points guiding the training

Occupational health care training utilises participatory and exploratory learning, where peer learning is key. Learning becomes more diverse and efficient in a group where each member actively participates in finding and sharing information. The training encourages active participation, which makes it possible to deepen learning together. In occupational health care studies, the instructors, other experts and training participants work together to create a learning environment that is open to new ideas and encourages critical thinking and discussion.

Occupational health care training takes into account the special features of continuous learning and emphasises the importance of previous training and experience in the learning process. The participants' previous competence is used as a tool for learning new skills. The aim is to continuously update and construct knowledge and skills, which deepens the participants' understanding. The training emphasises research and development activity so that the participants are prepared to meet the demands of the future and the changing work life. In addition, emphasis is placed on the ability to operate and develop one's skills in multiprofessional, multidisciplinary and multicultural co-operation situations and to assume ethical and moral responsibility in occupational health co-operation.

3.2. Participation requirements

The participant is responsible for their own learning, acts as a responsible member of the group and adopts a collaborative, problem-solving approach. Studying requires planning, commitment and strong self-regulation of the participant's own activities. The learning process includes reflecting on one's actions, receiving feedback and the opportunity to discuss matters from different perspectives.

The participant is required to use and be competent in digital technology. The training uses various digital tools, such as learning platforms, computer programs and databases. The student must be familiar with the possibilities and limitations of artificial intelligence and its appropriate and ethical use.

4. Implementation principles

The training is provided by the network of universities of applied sciences and the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health in accordance with a joint curriculum. Network co-operation ensures the same content and quality of training and enables the use of the expertise of different training organisations nationwide.

Approximately one quarter of the occupational health care training (about 400 hours) is provided as face-to-face and/or remote training days, and approximately three quarters are independent online studies.

Successful completion of the training requires active participation in training and the completion of learning tasks. Tasks are evaluated as approved/to be supplemented/rejected. At the end of the training, the participant receives a certificate of competence to work in occupational health care as a professional or expert in accordance with the Occupational Health Care Act (708/2013).

5. Structure of the training

The training is divided into four modules. The different modules support each other and the achievement of the core objective.

The key content, implementation methods and assessment of each module are compiled in the online learning environment.

Module 1: Operational environment and working life competence in occupational health (2 credits)

Competence goals and assessment targets:

The participant is familiar with the operational environment of occupational health care and knows the related key regulations and current development guidelines. The participant is familiar with the occupational health care service system and its role and tasks in the social welfare and health care service system. The participant practices using different channels to find information, critically assessing information and utilising evidence-based information in their work. The participant can describe the principles of good occupational health care practice.

Contents:

- Key legislation related to occupational health care activities and principles of good occupational health care practice
- Occupational health care as part of the social welfare and health care service system
- Occupational health care processes
- Principles of finding information and evidence-based activities

Structure of the module: learning materials, learning tasks, task to be assessed and training days

Assessment: approved/to be supplemented

Module 2: Competence for the recognition and evaluation of health hazards, workload and resources at work (5 credits)

Competence goals and assessment targets:

The participant knows how to implement a workplace survey process in occupational health co-operation in accordance with good occupational health care practice. The participant knows how to use justified methods for identifying and assessing hazards and disadvantages related to working conditions as well as workload and resources. The participant recognises and knows how to assess the significance of working conditions for health and work ability in co-operation with a multiprofessional team based on the information obtained. The participant knows how to act in accordance with occupational disease legislation and understands the importance of occupational health co-operation in identifying key work-related illnesses and occupational diseases. The participant knows how to apply the information collected in the workplace survey to determine the needs for health examinations, identify other needs of occupational health activities and plan occupational health co-operation activities.

Contents:

- The workplace survey process and the launch of operational planning in occupational health co-operation
- Identification of health hazards and harms as well as stress factors and resources and assessment of their significance for health and work ability
- Prevention of reproductive health hazards
- Responsibilities and roles of occupational health care professionals and experts in the occupational disease process and the prevention and identification of other key work-related illnesses

Structure of the module: learning materials, learning tasks, task to be assessed and training days

Assessment: approved/to be supplemented

Module 3: Competence for assessing, maintaining and promoting wellbeing, working and functional ability (5 credits)

Competence goals and assessment targets:

The participant knows how to act as an expert in co-operation with the workplace and use appropriate methods for maintaining and promoting health, work ability and functional capacity based on the needs of the workplace. The participant is familiar with occupational health examination practices based on occupational safety and work ability. Based on the medical examination, the participant knows how to assess the need for guidance and counselling and draw up a personal health plan in co-operation with the employee and the multiprofessional team. The participant knows how to identify work ability risks and knows the operational models for work disability prevention and return to work. The participant knows how to act in work disability prevention and supporting return to work in accordance with the principles of good occupational health care practice. The participant knows how to identify the client's need for rehabilitation in a timely manner and how to refer them to appropriate rehabilitation services. The participant can co-ordinate work ability support at the individual and workplace level and use multidisciplinary networks and their services to support the employee's work ability.

Contents:

- Principles for assessing work ability and the need for rehabilitation, support and management models, rehabilitation and social insurance services, social welfare and health care co-operation
- Counselling, guidance and feedback to the workplace
- Different types of occupational health examinations in occupational health care
- Compensation practice in accordance with good occupational health care practice
- Occupation-oriented medical care

Structure of the module: learning materials, learning tasks, task to be assessed and training days

Assessment: approved/to be supplemented

Module 4: Competence for evaluation and development work (3 credits)

Competence goals and assessment targets:

The participant knows how to assess and develop their activities and the core and service processes of occupational health care according to evidence-based information and good practices. The participant identifies the special characteristics and needs of different occupational health care clients and knows how to plan and assess effective, high-quality and cost-effective activities in occupational health co-operation based on the client's needs. The participant knows how to draw up an occupational health care action plan in multiprofessional and multidisciplinary co-operation and set goals in occupational health co-operation, taking into account the workplace's resources and needs. The participant learns how to develop, innovate and market multiprofessional occupational health services and their own professional competence in occupational health co-operation in accordance with good occupational health practice.

Contents:

- Occupational health care quality management, development of activities and services and impact assessment
- Preparation, follow-up and evaluation of the action plan and setting the objectives of occupational health activities in occupational health co-operation
- Marketing of occupational health care services and own expertise

Structure of the module: learning materials, learning tasks, task to be assessed and training days

Assessment: approved/to be supplemented

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