

VRQ's – Technical Competence and New Technologies

What are they, and how do they work?

VRQ stands for Vocationally Related Qualification. These combine elements of both NVQ's and academic qualifications by consisting of classroom learning - where the theory is delivered, and then a work based project. Both parts form part of the qualification. VRQ's are delivered at level 3, and HLA's (Higher Level Award) at level 4 - both take the same format, just under a different name.

There are currently 3 qualifications of this nature in the waste industry:

New Technologies

A VRQ level 3 - Principles and Practices of Sustainable Waste Management - developed by Defra and CIWM to help educate people new to the industry about waste management - especially the new waste treatment technologies for biodegradable waste. Available at several different WAMITAB centres across the country, they consist of 5 days of classroom based learning which can be supplemented by site visits. The work based project needs to be completed within 2 months, and apply the knowledge learnt in the classroom to a situation, either real life, or theoretical. More information available on <http://www.ciwm.co.uk/pma/2838>

A HLA level 4 - Waste Treatment Technologies - developed by CIWM and Defra to complement the VRQ above - focuses far more on the new technologies available, their advantages, disadvantages, and how they can fit into an integrated waste management system. Aimed at those who have to make decisions concerning the technologies they will implement. Available at several different WAMITAB centres across the country, they consist of 5 days of classroom based learning which can be supplemented by site visits. The work based project needs to be completed within 2 months, and apply the knowledge learnt in the classroom to a situation, either real life, or theoretical. More information available on <http://www.ciwm.co.uk/pma/2838>

Technical Competence

A VRQ level 3 to demonstrate Technical Competence for medium risk facilities. This VRQ is currently under development as part of the CIWM/WAMITAB proposals for the EP regulations. This VRQ will cover elements needed to manage facilities, including policy and legislation, permitting requirements, health and safety, and technical aspects - a compulsory section and specific option (physical and chemical treatment, biological treatment or thermal treatment). This qualification will again consist of 5 days of classroom based learning, and a work/site based assignment focusing on the practical aspects needed to run a site (this could be based on a planned site if the site is not yet open). This VRQ is currently under development and will hopefully be ready late spring/early summer 2008, delivered at a number of centres across the UK. The CIWM/WAMITAB full proposal for reforming technical competence can be read on <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/envpermitprog4/pdf/epp11-operator-competence-scheme.pdf>.

For more information on any of the above, please contact education@ciwm.co.uk