

VRQ Assessment

Background

The VRQ is an academic-type qualification delivered in a “guided learning” setting. It consists of 6 Units, with Units 1 to 5 being common across all of the facility types, whilst Unit 6 has six versions 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e and 6f. The relevant ‘Unit 6’ is chosen to match the specific requirements of the learner.

Unit 6a: Physical treatment (e.g. for your typical skip operation)

Unit 6b: Biological (e.g. composting, AD)

Unit 6c: Thermal (e.g. autoclave)

Unit 6d: Remediation of contaminated land

Unit 6e: Landfill of inert waste

Unit 6f: Mechanical Biological Treatment

Each Unit is made up of a number of Learning Outcomes, each of which must be addressed in order for you to pass the overall qualification.

What you need to know

4.1 Environmental Protection in Waste and Resource Management	
Level: 4	
Credit Value:3	
Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1. Understand the principles of sustainable waste management	1.1 Explain the meaning of the term “sustainable waste management”
	1.2 Summarise three principles of sustainable waste management
	1.3 Describe two factors or issues that could prevent waste being managed in the most sustainable manner
2. Understand the Waste Hierarchy and its application in the sustainable management of waste and resources	2.1 Describe the Waste Hierarchy
	Explain the five stages within the Waste Hierarchy
	Identify one treatment method under each of the following headings: Physical, Chemical ,Thermal, Biological
	2.4 Explain which stage of the Waste Hierarchy each of the treatment methods identified relates to
	2.5 Explain four environmental impacts of diverting waste or resources away from Landfill

How you will show what you know

Unit Assessments

Each Unit is assessed by answering a series of questions. We will provide reference material to assist, but you will also be expected to undertake some self-study in your own time.

Completion of the Questions

The work for each Unit will normally be completed in your own time and therefore it is difficult to predict how long each will take to complete, but as a guide it is suggested that you should expect to spend at least a day on each Unit, although this will clearly vary from learner to learner.

The questions will be provided as “word” documents, downloadable from the invitation only VRQ website and your answers should be typed into the relevant spaces. The learner name should be included in the “header” and then saved and sent to the Centre, ideally by email (to admin@envirolead.co.uk).

The work is done under ‘open-book’ conditions, which means that you can use all sources of information available to you for further learning. However, it is really important that you reference anything copied directly from books, leaflets, course materials, company materials, websites, etc. In each case you should put where the copied work is taken from: page number, author, date of issue or web link. This is to assist the Marker in checking your work and also to prevent cases of plagiarism from arising.

For example.....

“Legislation has been introduced which impacts on the way that the waste hierarchy is implemented in England and Wales. This is known as the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 and there is now a requirement to include a declaration on waste transfer paperwork in order to confirm that the waste management hierarchy has been applied in relation to the waste being transferred <https://www.gov.uk/waste-legislation-and-regulations> (accessed 10/03/2014).

The way that this has been referenced enables someone to see the source (a Defra webpage) and also the date it was accessed. This enables them to check the information and also to establish that it has not been plagiarised (copied without giving an appropriate reference to the source).

Submission Period

There is no effective submission period, although if the qualification is not achieved within 12 months from the date of registration with WAMITAB, then you will be required to re-register. If this should happen then the work completed to date will carry over and you will have a further 12 month period.

Once you are happy to submit the work it should be emailed to admin@envirolead.co.uk for logging and subsequent marking. It is worth bearing in mind that the marking is undertaken on a submission date basis. This means that you will effectively go into a queue and your work will be marked at the earliest opportunity, but you do need to be aware that this may take a number of weeks as it will depend upon the other submissions from other learners that are waiting ahead of you. You need to consider this if you are relying upon completion by a certain date to satisfy Regulator requirements.

Pass Mark

There is not a traditional pass mark for the Unit Questions. They are basically assessed against the Assessment Criteria as either being “Sufficient” or “Not Yet Sufficient” i.e. an effective 100% pass mark! Therefore you will have to read and consider the requirements very carefully, taking particular note of whether the question asks you to *explain, list, describe* etc. A glossary of descriptors is included in Annex 1 at the end of this document and we would recommend referring to it in order to ensure that you are addressing the question with the correct level of information and detail.

Top Tips

To try and ensure that your submissions get through the marking process with a minimum amount of reworking required, we would suggest the following Tips:

- *Answer the Question that is being asked-* this might seem obvious but people often go off on a tangent. The Marker has used the example of being asked to explain how you boil an egg- if this was a question, then you wouldn't start by explaining how to breed chickens and run a farm! Therefore keep to the point!
- *Do not go overboard-* the answer needs to be sufficient, but doesn't have to be page after page of information. Remember that more is not necessarily better!
- *Reference any sources-* this is important as the marker might need to check where you got the information from. If it is a document make it easier for them by putting in the page number in as well as the hyperlink. If you don't include this information you might find the work coming back to you!
- *Make your Sources Relevant-* bear in mind that it is qualification for England Wales. Therefore make your reference sources relevant- Scotland may have different legislation and guidance, as will the US!
- *Don't cut and paste-* don't be tempted to cut and paste a section from a document or website. We are really looking for you to read it and then put it into your own words. This is important as often you might need to adapt it slightly to reflect the Question, your site etc.
- *Write clearly and coherently-* it can be helpful to get someone else to read your answers before you submit. If they know nothing about the subject then that might be even better as the marker is looking for the answer to be explained in simple terms and not in complex jargon.
- *Don't assume the marker will know what you are thinking!-* this follows on from the other bullet points, as you will need to make sure you explain yourself clearly in the answer, without assuming the marker will know what you are on about. For example, you might say 'the EA regulate us' and although the marker obviously knows that this is the

Environment Agency, they need to know that you know!!...say 'Environment Agency (EA)' and then it is clear.

Resubmission if the work is considered “Not Yet Sufficient”

If the work submitted is considered to be insufficient, then you will be contacted by either the marker, or trainer and the areas requiring additional information will be identified. You will then be able to revise and re-submit the relevant part of your answers.

Further information on this will be provided as part of the resubmission instructions you will receive, but one important point is to not be disappointed if it happens! As the pass mark is effectively 100% it is certainly not unusual for work to have to be resubmitted once, or even twice or more. In the resubmission you will be told the questions you have got correct and the ones where more work is required. You will be provided with as much guidance as possible on what is needed, which might be simply a reference, or some clarification.

Timescales for resubmissions: there is no specific timescale for resubmission, except the 12 month period mentioned previously.

Number of resubmission attempts: there is no limit on the number of resubmissions that can be made.

Learning or Literacy Issues

We would ask you to advise us at registration of any learning or literacy issues which may have an impact on successful completion of the Course. This is important as we may be able to adapt the provision to support you through the Course, subject to further guidance from WAMITAB, as appropriate.

Is the VRQ right for you?

There are a number of issues to consider before deciding whether to enrol on the VRQ. The following questions might help with your decision:

1. Are you self-motivated as you will need to do a lot of work on your own and in your own time?
2. Do you have access to the internet? This is important as you will need to access materials online.
3. Do you have a decent academic ability? This does not necessarily mean that you need formal qualifications, but you will certainly need to be able to interpret the requirements of the questions; read background documents/web sources and then express your answers clearly in your own words. You will also need to include suitable reference sources to support your answers.

Annex 1: Glossary of Likely Meanings of Words Used in the Assessment/Marking Criteria

Explain: show an understanding of the content/process mentioned. Include what it is, how it works, what it looks like, what it does, how it happens, why it happens, relevant reasons. The answer should make it plain or comprehensible.

Describe: provide a vivid picture of what it is. Use of imagery, adjectives and adverbs make it vivid and more understandable. Describe may also convey an idea and impart facts.

Evaluate/Justify: learner must look at whatever the required content/process, etc is and suggest other the relevance/significance/ possible outcomes/results/ possibilities. It is the process of exploring, checking and suggesting a likely outcome with reasons

Analyse: look at something/a process/etc using given classifications/principles to gain a further understanding

Demonstrate: a doing verb which requires the learner to show he can actually do whatever the AC requires. The learner will have to provide evidence of him/her actually doing the requirements of the AC/task. It is about application of knowledge and skills rather than just talking about them. The evidence for this can be the learner discussing the task with an assessor and then showing that he has done it by nature of documentation, video, etc. It is not enough to actually just write about it unless the task requires such evidence as the production of a balance sheet, health and safety guidance, etc

List: produce a number of relevant items which apply to the question. Further description is not required.

Identify: for most ACs this requires the learner to list and describe what is required or relevant to produce a required outcome or requires the learner to make choices to achieve a particular aspect of their job. At levels 4, 5 and 6 this would require the learner to say what is available, make the choice and then to explain or justify why the choice was made.

Develop: Build a process or activity or understanding either from scratch or forward from the existing product into something workable.

Manage: after a development process ensure that the product/process etc works using relevant management techniques. This is very much a “doing” activity.

Apply: put something into action – a “doing” task which requires “real” evidence from a workplace scenario.

Implement: A “doing” task. After a development process, ensure that the product/process is actually employed and/or used by self and others during work activities.

Differentiate: look at the characteristics of an item or situation and explain the differences.

Distinguish: look at the characteristics of an item or activity and explain the difference. Use this evaluation to pick an appropriate item/activity in the context of the requirements of the assessment criteria.

Compare: look at the characteristics of an item or activity and note the similarities and differences. This is more often used at level 1 and 2.

Critically Compare: look at the characteristics of an item or situation, note the similarities and differences and their respective positive and negative aspects. In some cases, the can include the use of the comparison in context as the basis for decision making. This is generally used at level 3 and above.

Recognise: be aware of, familiar with and able to identify an activity or product.

Terms often used to provide a qualitative benchmark for assessment evidence

Appropriate – provide evidence which is specific to the assessment criteria and relevant to the operation.

Suitable – Due consideration has been given to the context of the site/waste type/operation/safety regulations in the formulation of the response/evidence.

Compliant/compliance – Evidence/response meets clearly defined operational and/or regulatory guidance in relation to the work activity.

Constructive – Possibilities for positive improvement have been considered, perhaps with examples of suggested improvements and the positive/negative aspects of the work activity.

Proper – that which would be expected based on the regulatory/operational/procedural guidelines for the work activity.