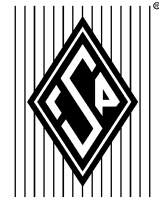


# Implementing the CSP Minimum Educational Requirement for Associate Degrees in Safety and Health



June 2001

## BACKGROUND

Since January 1, 1998 all candidates for the Certified Safety Professional are required to meet a minimum educational level and cannot qualify for the CSP on experience alone. The educational standard is:

Holding a bachelor's degree in any field  
or  
An associate degree in safety and health.

As has been the practice for CSP candidates for some time, there is a sliding scale of credit for degrees based on the field of study. The model degree is a bachelor's degree in safety from an Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) accredited program. The model degree gets 48 points (based on 48 months of study).

For other than the model degree, BCSP awards partial credit based on a general comparison to the content of the model degree standard published by BCSP. Bachelor's level safety degrees which are not accredited by a commission of ABET receive 36 points.

Associate degrees receive one-half of the credit available to a bachelor's degree in the same field. Associate degrees in safety and health which are ABET accredited (the process has just been inaugurated) receive 24 points and those which are not ABET accredited receive 18 points.

Candidates make up any point deficiency with additional experience beyond the four years also required to qualify for the CSP. Candidates need 48 points to sit for the Safety Fundamentals and 96 points to sit for the Comprehensive Practice Examination. Experience credit is earned at the rate of 1 point for each month of acceptable professional safety experience.

With the implementation of the CSP educational standard, some have raised questions relating to associate degrees in safety and health and how BCSP implements this part of the educational standard.

## PURPOSE OF THIS SUMMARY

The purpose of this summary is to discuss the implementation practices of BCSP for associate degrees in safety. The discussion appears in a question and answer format.

### **How does BCSP interpret "safety and health degrees"?**

BCSP views the practice of safety in a broad sense and applies a similar philosophy in deciding what an associate degree in safety and health means. BCSP considers fields closely related to safety and health to be part of the safety domain. Degree titles do not always reflect accurately what course content is required for the degree.

For example, degrees in safety, industrial hygiene, occupational safety and health, environmental health and safety, environment, health physics, fire protection, or fire prevention are likely to be acceptable "safety and health" associate degrees.

## **How does BCSP decide which safety, health and related degrees are acceptable?**

Initially, BCSP tried to use degree titles at the associate level. However, BCSP has found that some students with a degree title which includes “safety” do not have a single safety course. BCSP has also found that some applicants with associate degrees with titles reflecting a related field and not having the word safety have had several safety courses. As a result, BCSP found that reliance on degree titles alone was not sufficient to decide which associate degree met the minimum standard of an “associate degree in safety and health.” The degree title is helpful, but not reliable.

BCSP has now changed procedures to rely on a review of courses within the degree to determine what associate degrees in safety and health (or closely related fields) will be acceptable. In addition to the title, BCSP will evaluate the applicant’s transcript to decide whether the associate degree in “safety and health” standard is met. The following policy will be applied:

***There must be at least four courses (with at least 12 semester hours or 18 quarter hours) of study in safety and health*** for the degree to be acceptable in meeting the minimum educational requirement for the CSP. Course titles will be evaluated to ensure that subject matter from the following list comprises the four courses or 12 semester hours of study:

- general safety
- safety management
- safety compliance
- safety technology
- occupational safety
- safety relating to a particular industry (such as construction, insurance, manufacturing, transportation, health care, etc.)
- safety and health communication and/or training.

The comparison of course titles to the above subject areas are interpreted with reason.

The overall objective is to ensure that those holding an associate degree in safety and health are prepared for entry into safety practice or advancement in their safety responsibility.

## **If a CSP candidate has an associate degree in safety and health or a closely related field of study which *does not meet* the test for 4 courses with at least 12 semester hours in safety and health, how can the applicant resolve the deficiency?**

BCSP realizes that many people enter the safety and health field through job assignments or academic study, often through an associate program. BCSP also realizes that many people do not have an academic program in safety within close proximity to their place of employment. As a result, an applicant for the CSP who holds an associate degree in safety and health or a closely related field that fails to meet the 4 course (with at least 12 semester hours) test may resolve the deficiency in any of the following three ways:

1. Acquire another associate degree which meets the title and content standards. This may be possible by several means, including completion of an acceptable degree via the Internet. There are at least two schools offering associate degrees in safety via the Internet which meet BCSP requirements by title and course content (Trinidad State Junior College in Trinidad, CO and Central Maine Technical College in Auburn, ME).
2. Acquire a bachelor’s degree in any field.
3. Completing appropriate safety courses at any school which will satisfy any course deficiency in an associate degree in safety and health with at least four courses with at least 12 semester hours of appropriate safety and health study. The school must be accredited by an organization acceptable to BCSP.

Note: Courses must appear on a transcript as semester hours or quarter hours of college credit. Completion of a safety and health certificate program or courses for which college semester or quarter hour credit is not awarded will not be accepted.

**Can the completion of safety and health courses resolve the deficiency of holding an associate degree in some field other than safety, health or a closely related field?**

No. The resolution of safety course deficiencies is available only to those holding a safety and health associate degree.

Someone with an associate degree in technology, science, liberal arts, etc. that is not clearly a safety and health degree or study in a closely related field (industrial hygiene, fire protection or fire prevention, health physics, environmental health, occupational health, etc.) cannot resolve a deficiency by course work alone. The additional test for an acceptable bachelor's degree in any field or an associate degree in safety and health still applies.

**What standard does BCSP use to determine whether a degree from a college or university is acceptable?**

For degrees from U.S. colleges and universities, BCSP requires that the educational institution be accredited by a regional accreditation body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Check with your school or with CHEA ([www.chea.org](http://www.chea.org)) to determine whether your school is accredited by a regional accrediting body.

For non-U.S. colleges and universities, BCSP evaluates diplomas and transcripts for equivalence to U.S. educational standards and practices.

**What documents does BCSP use to make decisions on acceptable associate degrees in safety and health or on course titles?**

BCSP can perform an official evaluation only from an original transcript or one holding the official seal or stamp from the University. BCSP cannot evaluate copies.

Courses with grades must appear on the transcripts. The transcript must show degrees awarded and award dates.

**Who do I contact if I am not sure whether my degree does or will meet BCSP requirements for associate degrees in safety and health?**

You may want to first seek advice from the faculty affiliated with your associate degree program in safety and health. They should have a copy of this BCSP guideline for reference. You may also contact BCSP. However, BCSP cannot provide an accurate answer without a complete and original/official transcript of your course work.

**What options do I have for safety and health certification if I do not hold a degree that qualifies for the CSP?**

While you may not qualify for the CSP unless you hold a bachelor's degree in any field or an associate degree in safety and health, you may want to consider pursuing the Occupational Health and Safety Technologist (OHST) certification. If you work in construction, you may want to consider the Construction Health and Safety Technician (CHST) designation. Both are nationally accredited certifications and the qualifications for them are less stringent than those for the CSP. Neither requires a degree. Many people use the OHST and CHST as stepping stones in their career while also pursuing appropriate academic credentials.

The OHST and CHST are offered by the Council on Certification of Health, Environmental and Safety Technologists (CCHEST). CCHEST is a joint venture of BCSP and the American Board of Industrial Hygiene. CCHEST was formerly called the ABIH/BCSP Joint Committee. For details on these certifications, visit the CCHEST web site: [www.cchest.org](http://www.cchest.org).

### **How do I contact BCSP?**

Mail: Board of Certified Safety Professionals  
208 Burwash Avenue  
Savoy, IL 61874

Phone: 217-359-9263

Fax: 217-359-0055

Email: [bcsp@bcsp.org](mailto:bcsp@bcsp.org)

Web Page: [www.bcsp.org](http://www.bcsp.org)

Web Page for Associate Degree Policy:  
[www.bcsp.org/assoc.html](http://www.bcsp.org/assoc.html)