



**LIMESTONE BLOCK AND HOLLOW CONCRETE  
BLOCK LAYER– MQF/EQF LEVEL 3  
INFORMATION HANDBOOK**

**ON**

**The process of validation of informal and non-  
formal learning for Limestone Block and Hollow  
Concrete Block Layer**

### **The Assessment Board:**

The Assessment Board is appointed by the Minister responsible for Jobsplus by means of Article 26 of the Employment and Training Services Act 2018 to ascertain proficiency or competency in a particular occupation.

This handbook describes the competences that candidates need to possess before sitting for the Limestone Block and Hollow Concrete Block Layer validation process. Successful candidates acquire an *Award as Limestone Block and Hollow Concrete Block Layer* pegged at Level 3 of the Malta Qualifications Framework and also the European Qualifications Framework and which is endorsed by the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE).

### **Eligibility:**

Candidates who are interested in acquiring the *Award as Limestone Block and Hollow Concrete Block Layer* can apply for their knowledge, skills and competences to be assessed, recognised and validated if they possess the necessary competences and skills as defined in this handbook.

The prospective candidate must have **3 years experience** in the respective field. This is in line with the L.N. 295 of 2012 which regulates the Validation of Informal and Non-formal Learning process. Prior to the assessment candidates need to present an official Employment History to confirm the years of experience to the Assessment Board. Candidates applying for the Skill Card through the Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC) are exempt from submitting the Employment History.

The Assessment Board is free to contact the Institution and/or referee at will in order to confirm experiences and training claimed by the candidate.

### **Initial Assessment Plan:**

The Assessment Board will conduct an induction session for candidates interested in acquiring the *Award as Limestone Block and Hollow Concrete Block Layer*, and review the portfolio and the experience presented to plan the appropriate assessments according to the individual's experience and needs. During the induction session, the candidate is also instructed on how to collect evidence used as a proof of their practical experience.

Evidence sources may include:

- Work Activity
- Witness Testimony
- Health & Safety Documents/ Reports/ Procedures
- Photographic Evidence / Risk Assessments / Instructions
- Work-based confirmation of evidence not observed by assessor.

### **Assessment Criteria:**

The Assessment Criteria for the validation process are based on the National Occupational Standards. Following is an abstract of the list of competences that the candidate must possess prior to applying for the validation process. For further information you can download the National Occupational Standards from the following link:  
<https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/services/Documents/VINFL/NOS%20-%20Building%20and%20Construction/NOS%20for%20Block%20Laying%20MQF%20Level%203.pdf>

### **SBL 301: Health and safety during work practices**

1. Carry out safe working practices to prevent hazards and to ensure the safety of one self, workers and members of the public.
2. Carry out safe working practices when using appropriate equipment and materials to prevent damages to work areas and injuries to oneself and 3rd parties.
3. Carry out the safe erection, use and dismantling of simple access platforms less than 2m high.
4. Set up safety barriers and adequate edge protection around a work environment to protect colleagues and members of the public.
5. Use protective clothing and safety equipment according to specifications issued by manufacturers and know the whereabouts of first-aid and fire fighting equipment.
6. Use, handle and store materials hazardous to health in a safe manner and with proper labelling.
7. Assist safety officer or any other competent person in carrying out a risk assessment to cover the job assigned and the working area and fully understand the content of all relevant reports.
8. Locate and switch-off temporary or fixed electrical switch gear, systems isolating valves as instructed in the health and safety procedures.
9. Ensure that the site is not accessible to unauthorized persons at all times and according to standard procedures.

### **SBL 302: Identification of systems, equipment and components**

1. Distinguish between type of different masonry units and their uses based on technical properties and characteristics.
2. Distinguish between damp Proof Course and damp Proof Membrane based on technical specifications.
3. Distinguish between a range of metal wall-ties when applicable.
4. Distinguish between a range of insulating material when applicable
5. Distinguish between any other materials needed to properly execute job.

### **SBL 303: Reading of drawings and calculations**

1. Read and interpret plans and specifications to select type of hollow concrete blocks or any other masonry units.
2. Read and interpret plans to establish important building datum grids and levels.
3. Calculate the quantities of hollow concrete blocks or any other masonry units bricks required to meet work schedules and work load.
4. Calculate the quantity of consumables required to meet work schedules and work load.
5. Check and investigate deviations and misalignments against tolerances given.

### **SBL 304: Laying of limestone and hollow concrete blocks to line**

1. Measure, mark and cut to size hollow concrete blocks with appropriate equipment.
2. Lay hollow concrete blocks (to line) to form single and double walls with specified ties as required.
3. Lay hollow concrete blocks to construct columns and insert reinforcement where necessary.
4. Set out datum grid lines and levels to lay hollow concrete blocks within specified tolerance
5. Form 'joint-finish' as limestone or hollow concrete block laying courses progress to meet doors and windows opening tolerances.
6. Assemble and use appropriately access working platforms.
7. Lay hollow concrete blocks to form tall walls to meet specified tolerance such as joint alignment, level alignment, vertical alignment at corners and within bays, and lateral alignment.
8. Lay hollow concrete blocks to form lift shafts within specified tolerance and insert reinforcement bars and infill with concrete as necessary.
9. Use the spirit level, plumb line, piano wire ('lenza'), straight edge and builders square ('skwerra') to lay bricks within tolerance specified.
10. Check shafts for skewed misalignments.
11. Install reinforced steel bars in bricks as given instructions where applicable.

**Mode of Assessment:**

A candidate will be assessed on all the above listed competences. Assessment will be made up from different components, namely:

**A. Practical Work**

Practical work could be assessed by a task created to simulate the work environment. During the practical test a candidate will be asked to perform a number of tasks in line with the assessment criteria. Assessment can either be held in a simulated workshop or on site. Information on the assessment venue will be provided by Jobsplus prior to the assessment. Multiple sessions might need to be scheduled.

**B. Knowledge and Understanding**

Candidates will be assessed on knowledge and understanding orally during an interview and/ or in writing through a written test paper.

**C. Interview to verify product evidence and supplementary evidence**

During the interview the Board will continue assessing candidates in relation to their knowledge, skills and competences in the respective occupation. Candidates are encouraged to present photographic evidence, workbooks or logbooks to illustrate their work.

To successfully pass from the assessment, candidates need to proof their competences in all enlisted criteria as defined in the National Occupational Standards. Following assessment candidates will receive a formal result slip issued by Jobsplus in collaboration with NCFHE. The result slip will indicate whether the candidate has obtained a Pass or a Fail in all criteria. Nonetheless persons who fail any of these criteria will have the possibility to sit for a re-sit.

**Resits:**

Candidates who do not pass from any of the enlisted criteria will be guided for further development in the failed criterion/criteria.

The areas of further development may include:

- Health & Safety Course (Safety Card)
- MCAST / Jobsplus Training Programmes
- On-Site Training
- Evidence of Training

The failed criterion/criteria will be communicated in the result slip issued by Jobsplus. Date, time and venue of re-sit would be communicated to the candidate by Jobsplus. The candidate will be guided by the Assessment Board with respect to the areas for improvement prior to the re-sit.

**Appeals:**

Candidates who fail the assessment and wish to contest the decision taken by the Assessment Board can submit a formal request for further feedback to Jobsplus. An appeal can be lodged within 10 working days from the result slip issued by Jobsplus. In the eventuality that the candidate's final result is changed following the appeal, a new result will supersede the previous one.