

### **Six-month Apprenticeship Path for QDC Approval**

Under OAC 3745-04-03 paragraph (A) (4) (f): In lieu of the training set forth in paragraph (A)(4) of this rule, an applicant may serve a six-month apprenticeship under the mentorship of a level 3 QDC in the same specialty. For level 3 fish and macroinvertebrate certification, field collection and taxonomic identification must be included as part of the apprenticeship. The QDC shall monitor, assess and document the apprentice and provide an interim and final written evaluation of the apprentice to the director. The director reserves the right to perform unannounced audits during the apprenticeship period. Accepting the apprenticeship as fulfillment of level 3 QDC qualifications shall be at the discretion of the director. If accepted, the applicant must take and pass the level 3 test for the specialty following completion of the apprenticeship.

1. It is the responsibility of each prospective QDC to initiate contact with a willing mentor and make arrangements to work together during the apprenticeship period. A mentor must have active QDC status at the desired level, type and specialty, e.g., Level 3 macroinvertebrates.<sup>1</sup> A QDC mentor may be somebody with whom you work or are professionally acquainted. A list of approved Level 3 QDCs may be found online at [http://epa.ohio.gov/dsw/credibledata/current\\_QDCs.aspx](http://epa.ohio.gov/dsw/credibledata/current_QDCs.aspx). After the QDC mentor agrees to work with an apprentice, the 6-month apprenticeship may commence in accordance with these guidelines.
2. Every QDC mentor must monitor, assess and document each apprentice similarly. To begin, the QDC mentor must first provide Ohio EPA a brief written syllabus specifying the project or work goals and objectives, all relevant dates, sample site locations, sampling collection, preservation, storage, frequency, techniques, all equipment to be used, and data management.
3. Halfway through 6-month apprenticeship period, the QDC mentor must provide Ohio EPA a written evaluation which focuses upon the apprentice abilities thus far, noting where there is room for improvement, what corrections will be made and demonstrating qualitative sampling is occurring, e.g.,
  - equipment was deployed at right time in the appropriate habitat niches using the correct technique,
  - complete and proper field collection was done,
  - proper and complete data was recorded using the applicable field form,
  - all necessary identifications including taxonomic were made satisfactorily, and
  - data evaluation or results were calculated correctly.
4. At the end of the 6-month apprenticeship period, the QDC mentor must provide to Ohio EPA a final summary of the apprentice, including all work conducted and completed and indicate their readiness-to-proceed to Level 3 testing. After that, the apprentice will be contacted to arrange for testing at an appropriate time and site(s). Upon completion of testing, Ohio EPA will score each test and provide pass or fail results to the apprentice. After receiving a passing score, each apprentice may apply for the desired QDC type using the application form [http://epa.ohio.gov/dsw/credibledata/application\\_forms.aspx](http://epa.ohio.gov/dsw/credibledata/application_forms.aspx) and sign, date, mail the application to Ohio EPA for review.
5. If the QDC application is recommended to the Director for approval, a certified letter of approval for the desired QDC level, type and specialty(s) is mailed to the applicant.

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<sup>1</sup> Unlike other QDC types, macroinvertebrates includes three different specialties: Identification only, Collection and Data Evaluation only, and Collection, Identification and Evaluation.