



Writing a Class IV Examination -- Frequently Asked Questions

Operator Certification Advisory Council

July 19, 2018

1. Where can I find the eligibility requirements for Class IV certification?

Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Rule 3745-7-6(C)(2) contains the requirements for Class IV certification. Requirements can also be found under subtab Class IV under the Exam information tab on our website or [here](#). We encourage you to review and understand the eligibility requirements. If you have questions concerning your eligibility, please contact the Operator Certification Unit.

2. Can I review a Class IV exam of someone who has passed?

Yes. Free Class IV presentations are held quarterly in conjunction with the Advisory Council (Council) meetings in March, June, September and December. Attendees may stay after the presentation to review exemplary Class IV exams. Arrangements to review Class IV exams can be made at other times, as well. Please contact the Operator Certification Unit to schedule a time to review.

3. How many copies of my Class IV exam do I need to submit?

You are required to submit four complete Class IV exams for Council to review. Please do NOT use three ringed binders.

4. Should I include copies of the 12 most recent MORs for my facility?

No. Provide a 12-month summary of actual operating data (i.e. monthly averages and/or ranges of data such as pumping, chemical doses, treatment parameters, raw and finished water quality, plant flows, process control flow rates and solids concentrations, chemical doses, % removals, sludge volume index (SVI), mean cell residence time (MCRT), settleable solids, influent and effluent quality, etc). This data should be referred to in your discussions of the plant operation.

5. Should I include photographs of equipment, basins, buildings, etc. in my examination?

Pictures need only be included if they help to explain what you are describing in your exam. Make sure you reference the pictures in the body of the exam.

6. Can I just provide copies of my current and past position descriptions to answer questions in the “Experience” section?

No. The Council is not looking for formal job descriptions. Please provide a detailed explanation of your duties. This information should be provided in your own words.

7. Should I include copies of facility plans, annual reports, engineering reports, etc in my examination?

No. Unless otherwise indicated, your exam should not include documents prepared by others, such as facility plans, annual reports, engineering reports, etc. The exam must be in your own words, concise and address all of the above issues. It is appropriate for you to summarize these documents, if necessary, to respond to a question.

8. I’m not involved in my facility’s budgeting process, the distribution/collection system, safety program, etc. Do I still have to write on these topics since these areas are not my responsibility?

Yes. You are expected to provide responses to all areas in the class IV examination. You may have to research areas, and meet with other employees, for topics you are not familiar.

9. My facility wholesales water and does not own or operate the distribution system or only has satellite sewer systems. Do I have to write about the distribution system or satellite sewer system?

Yes. You are expected to provide response to all areas in the class IV examination. You may have to research areas in which you are not familiar.

10. Can I include charts/graphs from a co-worker’s Class IV examination in my examination?

No. The exam must be in your own words.

11. Can I use design information from “Ten States Standards” for the design vs. actual discussion of my plant if the design information for the plant is not available?

If you cannot determine the design information for your facility, then you could use “Ten States Standards.” The Council would like to see a comparison of actual conditions to design criteria for each treatment unit to assist in determining the percentage of design capacity currently being used.

12. My facility contracts out solids handling, what should I include in my examination?

You need to demonstrate a general understanding of regulations governing residual disposal and the process used to dispose of residuals. You should research your contractor’s residuals reuse/disposal practices and provide a discussion of compliance with the governing regulations. The discussion must be **in your own words.**

13. My facility uses SCADA, what level of detail do you want to see in the examination concerning the SCADA system at my facility?

Discuss how your facility is monitoring and controlling the individual treatment units using your SCADA system. Discuss your involvement in this process.

14. My facility accepts septage, what should I include in my examination?

Describe and discuss how much septage your facility receives, from where, average concentration, loadings and the impacts of the septage on your treatment plant.

15. Who evaluates the Class IV examination?

At least 4 members of the Operator Certification Advisory Council (Council) evaluate each exam.

16. Who serves on the Council?

There are eight (8) voluntary Council members who are appointed by the Director. The membership consists of two (2) Ohio EPA employees, one (1) from the Division of Surface Water and (1) from the Division of Drinking and Ground Waters; two (2) members holding valid class III or class IV public water system operator certifications and actively employed by public water systems at the time of appointment; two (2) members holding valid class III or class IV wastewater works operator certifications and actively employed by wastewater works at the time of appointment; two (2) members who are registered professional engineers and are actively employed in the field of sanitary or environmental engineering at the time of appointment.

Except for the two Ohio EPA members, no two council members can be employed by the same entity. Members of the council are appointed for a term not to exceed five years and shall not serve longer than two consecutive terms. Any vacancy occurring on the council can be filled by the Director's appointment of a member for the balance of the unexpired term. A Council member appointed for the balance of an unexpired term may be appointed for up to two additional consecutive full terms.

17. How will my examination be scored?

The four Council members reviewing the examinations use the guidance and the review checklist to determine if you have addressed the questions included in the guidance. The Council members discuss the examination and reach concurrence as to whether you passed the examination. You have three opportunities to pass the exam once approved.

18. How does Council determine which exams are reviewed each month?

It is the Council's goal to review exams within one month of the distribution of the exam to Council members. Exams are reviewed first by the number of submittal for an individual (third submittals take precedence over second submittals, second submittals take precedence over first submittals) then by the date the exam was received.

Letters regarding your exam status should be sent within three weeks after the Council meeting when the exam was discussed.

19. If I need to resubmit my exam, how long do I have to complete revisions?

You will have four months to complete your revisions.

20. Has the Council ever "failed" an applicant?

Exams not meeting the guidance criteria are returned for additional information. Upon review of three submittals, the Council determines if a recommendation should be made to the Director to deny Class IV certification. In the event of a denial, the applicant may reapply to take the examination.

21. Does anyone ever pass on the first attempt?

Yes. Many of the exemplary Class IV examinations, you have an opportunity to review, are first attempt passes.

22. Can I meet with the Council if I have questions concerning what I need to include in my exam?

Yes. Contact the Operator Certification Unit at 614-644-2752 or 866-411-OPCT (6728) to set up an appointment to meet with Council.

23. What format should I use to submit the exam?

The exam must be a typed report including discussions on experience, administration, budget, plant, system, safety, planning, research, design, staff training and development and publications. The examination must be bound and have numbered pages. **(Please do not use three ringed binders.)**

24. How long will it take to find out if I have successfully passed the Class IV exam?

In most cases, you will be informed of your results within three weeks of the Council meeting at which your exam was discussed.

25. If I don't pass the Class IV exam when I submit it, how will I know what corrections need to be made?

Four Council members review your Class IV exam and discuss what sections need to be clarified, revised, corrected or re-written. Council summarizes their comments and a letter is sent to you indicating the specific areas needing revision. You will be given four months to resubmit your Class IV with the revisions.

26. What if I am unable to meet the deadline to submit my Class IV (or the revisions)?

You would need to make a request to Council in writing explaining why you need an extension to complete your Class IV. This request must be signed, dated and received by the Operator Certification Unit prior to your submittal deadline.

27. How can I reach the Advisory Council?

Questions for the Advisory Council should be submitted to the Operator Certification Unit, 614-644-2752 or Opcert1@epa.ohio.gov. Correspondence should be mailed to: Ohio EPA-DDAGW, Operator Certification Unit, P.O. Box 1049, Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049.