



PRESS SENIOR MACHINE OPERATOR
MQF/EQF LEVEL 3
INFORMATION HANDBOOK

ON

**The process of validation of informal and non-formal
learning for Press Senior Machine Operators**

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 Post-Press Senior Machine Operator validation process. Successful candidates acquire an *Award as Press Senior Machine Operator* pegged at Level 3 of the Malta Qualifications Framework and the European Qualifications Framework.

Eligibility:

Candidates who are interested in acquiring the *Award as Press Senior Machine Operator* 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 S.L. 327.432 of 2012 which regulates the Validation of Informal and Non-formal Learning. The Assessment Board may request a reference letter to confirm the years of experience claimed by the candidate and reserves the right to contact the Institution and/or referee at will.

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 in Press Senior Machine Operator* 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 by clicking [here](#).

PSMO301: Improve individual and team performance at work

1. Guide colleagues to improve personal and team performance.
2. Carry out safe working practice using appropriate equipment.
3. Review and evaluate regularly the success of personal and team performance.

PSMO302 Control maintenance of equipment

1. Plan cleaning operations to balance maintenance and production requirements.
2. Obtain the correct materials and equipment need for maintenance.
3. Communicate clearly with colleagues to ensure:
 - a. maintenance programme is done on time and without undue delay;
 - b. cleaning materials and equipment are used in a way to minimise waste and pollution;
 - c. cleaning agents and waste materials are disposed of correctly;
 - d. machines are free from waste and cleaning materials following maintenance or cleaning operations;
 - e. machines are safe to operate following maintenance operations.
4. Safely diagnose and correct machine faults that are within the job's responsibility.
5. Promptly report machine faults which fall outside the job's responsibility.
6. Report accurately the estimated down time needed to rectify those faults, which are stopping production.
7. Report accurately the details of machine faults and production down time.

PSMO303 Possess advanced knowledge on printing materials, pre-press and post-press processes

1. Understand the different forms of communication technologies (print, electronic and multimedia).
2. Distinguish between the different types of print media used.
3. Distinguish between the range of printing substrates available for printing.
4. Identify and state the paper substance, calliper, size and grain direction.
5. Understand the affect of paper surface quality to print gloss.

6. Identify problems that could arise in offset litho and post-press production from the quality of the paper.
7. Relate to the processing line from pre-press to post-press in the company.
8. Ensure that outputted work is according to specifications for post-press processes and communicate in pre-press terms for determining typefaces and justification layouts.

PSMO304 Possess advanced knowledge on printing plates and inks

1. Identify between image and non-image areas of the plates and the interaction of these with the damping solution and ink.
2. Protect and store plates prior to printing:
 - a. handle plates carefully so that damage does not occur;
 - b. check that the conditions are suitable for storing plates in terms of light, heat, humidity and cleanliness;
 - c. store plates at the press side under the conditions approved by the company;
 - d. keep the storage area at the safe light level, so that the plates do not deteriorate;
3. Retrieve plates for printing:
 - a. examine the plates under approved lighting conditions;
 - b. select and carefully check that the plates have the correct images and colour(s) for the job
 - c. thoroughly check that the plate's processing and quality of image meet production's requirements;
 - d. clean the plates, using approved methods and materials, so that they are fit for production work;
 - e. use approved methods and materials to make any modifications which it is his job to make;
 - f. identify and report to the appropriate person any modifications outside own responsibility.
4. Check that there are enough materials of the right type for the job.
5. Maintain batch-to-batch consistency within the tolerance level by own company.
6. Produce the number of batches required in time to meet production needs.
7. Handle inks, solvents and varnishes safely.
8. Check, through correctly using an approved test, that the mix meets the specification.
9. Produce the sample with the minimum of wastage.
10. Clearly and correctly mark the container and store inks in accordance with own company's procedures.
11. Store inks, solvents and varnishes in the approved containers and in conditions that minimise deterioration in quality.
12. Keep storage areas safe to use and easy to access.
13. Dispose of any stock that is no longer fit for purpose, safely and in a way that avoids harm to the environment.

14. Understand the influence of ink additives as well as to pH buffering, alcohol and other additives to the water dampening solution on surface tensions and ink drying time.

PSMO305 Prepare multi-unit sheet-fed offset lithography machines.

1. Check the readiness/availability of paper and plates for the job.
2. Identify the job details either from the job instructions or from a sample of the job.
3. Set the paper transports for different type of paper stocks so that:
 - a. the job stock is loaded, fed and forwarded without misses or doubles and in register control;
 - b. the transport operates safely and efficiently at the required running speed;
 - c. sheets are delivered squarely and form an even pile.
4. Fit plates, blankets and rollers correctly so that:
 - a. each plate is properly secured and square to the cylinder;
 - b. each blanket is properly secured and under correct tension and contact pressure;
 - c. each roller is properly placed in its identified location and secured under the correct contact pressure to its adjacent roller or to the plate.
5. Set inline auxiliary equipment according to manufacturer's instructions and job's requirements.
6. Report promptly problems either relating to mechanical faults or material supply.
7. Check the absence of risks and take all the precautions necessary to prevent injury whilst setting the paper transports or fitting plates, blankets and rollers.
8. Ensure that the machine and work are safe and ready for production and stop the machine in an emergency situation.
9. Regularly check that the blankets, inking and damping rollers are in working condition and set to the correct pressure specifications.
10. Regularly check that the machine is clean enough to prevent marking or damage to the product during operation.
11. Regularly clean filters, gripper pads, cylinders, rollers, damp covers, recirculation equipment, etc.
12. Ensure that all guards are correctly fitted, that none of the safety barriers have been compromised and that the machine is safe to operate.
13. Maintain a list of parts or consumables that are likely to require periodic replacement and identify those parts that may be required at short notice.
14. Identify the person(s) who are able to advise on the job requirements and report back according to company's procedures.

PSMO306 Operates sheet-fed offset lithography machines

1. To start the job and check the details needed for the job.
2. Keep up the supply of sufficient paper, ink, fountain solution and other consumables throughout the run and promptly report to management if the materials provided are not correct or sufficient.
3. Run the single or two-colour offset litho machine at the required speed, safely and efficiently to produce work.
4. Obtain approval for the pass sheet.
5. Regularly check that the quality standards are maintained and test quality output either visually, by touch or electronically aided;
6. Identify problems by examining materials supplied; examining printed output; checking machine settings and checking the condition and operation of the machine.
7. Stack work safely using the approved method.
8. Promptly report any shortfalls in production or report problems in maintaining image quality
9. Follow the correct procedures for the removal of waste.
10. Forward work to the next state of the process without damage.
11. Accurately identify faults which:
 - a. affect the quality of the image;
 - b. produce shortfall in output;
 - c. create risks to health and safety

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 MFHEA. 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.