

<b>NZOHS Board Paper</b>	
Title of Paper:	Summary of Member Feedback – Proposed Membership Criteria Bylaw Update
Author:	Miriska Gerber - President
Date of Meeting:	Due to the timing of this work, and to support a planned launch by 1 July, this paper will be circulated to Council via email for review and approval using a digital voting platform, rather than being considered during a formal Council meeting.
Purpose:	Decision Required

## 1. Purpose

This paper is being presented to Council to provide a summary of member consultation feedback received on the proposed Membership Criteria Bylaw updates and to seek Council’s review and approval of the final revised bylaw. Approval is sought to enable publication and implementation of the updated bylaw from 1 July.

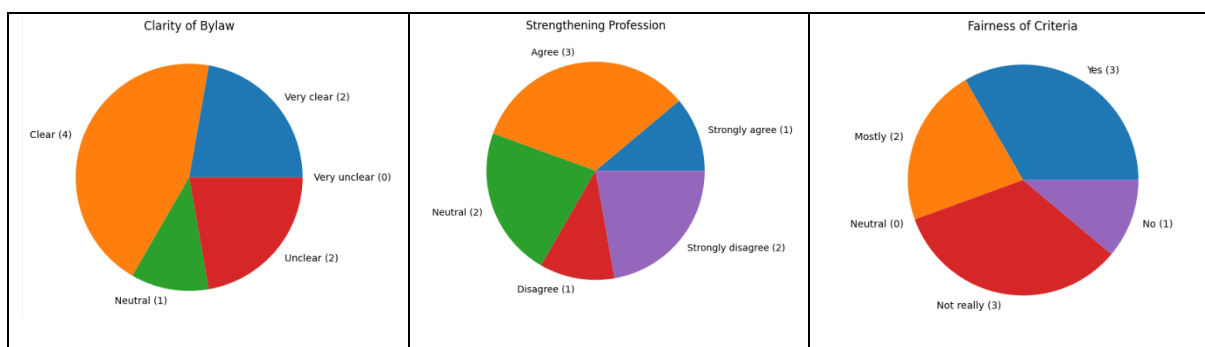
## 2. Feedback Received

Total responses received: 9

### Responses by current membership grade

Membership grade	Number of responses
Associate	2
Technician	4
Full	1
Fellow	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>

## Overall response



## **Key themes from member feedback**

### **1. Broad support for strengthening standards, but concern about rigidity**

Six respondents supported the intent to strengthen membership standards, improve competency expectations, and maintain professional credibility. However, these respondents also raised concerns that the criteria should not become overly rigid, exclusionary, or difficult for competent practitioners with non-linear pathways to meet.

*(Council acknowledges this feedback and notes that maintaining flexibility while upholding professional standards has always been a key consideration throughout the development of the revised criteria. Council will continue to consider a range of appropriate pathways and experiences when assessing suitability across the various membership grades, while also ensuring NZOHS continues to meet its obligations and requirements as a HASANZ member association.)*

### **2. Technician supervision wording was the strongest concern**

Five respondents raised concerns regarding the wording stating that Technician members cannot practise occupational hygiene without supervision from a Full/Fellow member or IOHA-NAR certified occupational hygienist. Feedback indicated this could:

- blur the distinction between Associate and Technician membership;
- create an “apprenticeship model”;
- disadvantage smaller consultancies, regional practitioners, and non-OH companies developing internal capability;
- be interpreted very literally by clients, WorkSafe, or others;
- potentially affect work opportunities for Technician members.

*(A key suggestion was to either remove this wording or define “supervision” much more clearly. The updated draft includes clearer wording and additional context around what is meant by supervision in this setting, including clarifying the distinction between supervision, mentoring, and independent practice expectations for Technician members.)*

### **3. Mentoring and access issues, especially in regions**

Three respondents raised concerns that requiring supervision or mentoring may be difficult in regions without practising Full/Fellow hygienists. One respondent specifically noted difficulty accessing the NZOHS mentoring programme, suggesting the pathway needs to be practically achievable before supervision-based requirements are introduced.

*(This may partly reflect confusion between mentoring and supervision, as these are not considered the same, and this distinction will be clarified further in the updated draft. It is also noted that the NZOHS mentoring programme has recently been refreshed, with the intention of improving accessibility to mentors and addressing some of the feedback received regarding limited mentor availability, particularly across regions.)*

### **4. Request for clearer plain-English wording**

Four respondents felt the bylaw was understandable in intent but too formal or open to interpretation. Suggested improvements included:

- plain-English guidance;
- clearer worked examples;

- clearer definitions;
- better explanation of what has changed;
- clearer communication of the practical implications for each membership grade.

*(As much of the wording has been adapted from the AIOH membership criteria, it has been decided to retain much of the wording to support alignment and consistency between the organisations. Further, as this is a formal bylaw document, an appropriate level of formality is required. Council acknowledges the feedback regarding clarity and notes that additional clarification and explanatory wording will be incorporated into the updated draft where appropriate. Additional guidance material, worked examples, and explanatory information can also continue to be developed and refined over time as the revised criteria are implemented and further feedback is received.)*

## **5. Alternative competency pathways should be considered**

Four respondents suggested the bylaw should better recognise different valid pathways into occupational hygiene, including:

- international experience;
- senior technical roles;
- specialist practice;
- management roles where occupational hygiene remains part of the work;
- non-linear career pathways;
- experienced practitioners without a traditional supervised pathway.

*(Council acknowledges this feedback and notes that the revised criteria have been aligned to the AIOH membership framework as closely as reasonably practicable. The feedback received will continue to be considered as part of the membership assessment process.)*

*It is important to note that, as part of NZOHS' obligations as a HASANZ member association, members are required to hold at least a Level 6 qualification. The revised criteria already recognise a range of pathways and experiences, including international experience, specialist practice, senior technical roles, and management positions where occupational hygiene forms part of the role. These considerations have already been incorporated into the draft.*

*However, progression through membership grades cannot be based solely on experience without an appropriate formal qualification requirement. This approach is consistent with a number of comparable international professional bodies and is therefore not considered materially different in principle. Based on this, Council considers that the current draft already substantially addresses this feedback, and no further changes to the membership pathways are proposed at this stage.)*

## **6. Full Membership process could include interview / professional discussion**

Two respondents suggested that Full Membership should include a professional interview or discussion, similar to AIOH. This was seen as a way to assess judgement, clarify evidence, and support applicants to demonstrate competence beyond documents alone.

*(This option is already available and may be utilised at the discretion of the Membership Committee where additional clarification or discussion is considered beneficial. As such, no immediate changes are proposed to the Membership Criteria Bylaw to make interviews or professional discussions a mandatory component of the Full Membership application process.)*

## **7. Report assessment expectations need more clarity**

Two respondents suggested applicants would benefit from a report assessment rubric or checklist, including how reports will be assessed against:

- methodology;
- interpretation of results;
- risk assessment;
- recommendations;
- legislative context;
- occupational hygiene principles.

*(Council acknowledges this feedback. The possibility of sharing the broader membership assessment grading rubric was discussed with the Membership Committee, and it was agreed that greater transparency around the overall assessment approach could be beneficial for members in future.*

*However, it was not considered necessary to develop and publish a separate detailed report assessment grading rubric at this stage, as the current Report Writing Guidelines and associated checklist are considered sufficient to support applicants in understanding the expected report standards and assessment considerations.)*

## **8. Alignment with international bodies**

Three respondents commented on alignment with international organisations.

Some supported closer alignment with international bodies, while others suggested NZOHS should consider stronger alignment with organisations such as AIOH or BOHS. There was also concern that significantly different criteria may affect recognition or make NZOHS membership less attractive compared with internationally recognised pathways.

*(Council notes that it has always been the intent to align the NZOHS membership pathways as closely as reasonably practicable with AIOH pathways, while still retaining the minimum Level 6 qualification requirement that NZOHS must adhere to as part of its HASANZ member association obligations.*

*Council therefore considers that the current draft already appropriately reflects this balance between international alignment and local obligations, and no further changes to the membership pathways are proposed at this stage.)*

## **9. Qualification wording needs clarification**

One specific concern was that the Full Membership qualification section could be read as requiring both a Master's in Occupational Hygiene and ICert, which may not be intended. This section likely needs layout or wording refinement to make the "AND/OR" requirements clearer.

*(Council acknowledges this as good feedback. The qualification requirements and associated "AND/OR" wording have now been clarified further in the updated draft of the bylaw to improve readability and reduce the potential for misinterpretation. To clarify, the intent of the criteria is that applicants may hold a Master's qualification OR another recognised qualifying pathway, rather than requiring both.)*

## **10. Transition arrangements need to be clearer**

Two respondents requested clearer explanation regarding how the new criteria will apply to:

- current members;
- current applicants;
- people already working toward a membership upgrade;
- those applying during the transition period.

*(Council acknowledges this as good feedback. Information regarding the transition arrangements, including how the revised criteria apply to existing members, current applicants, membership upgrades, and applicants during the transition period, has now been incorporated directly into the bylaw to provide greater clarity and avoid confusion for members who may not have seen the original communication.)*

## **11. Fellow Membership criteria could recognise wider contribution**

One respondent suggested Fellow Membership should recognise broader contributions beyond Council participation, including:

- technical leadership;
- mentoring;
- teaching;
- research;
- guidance development;
- wider professional service.

*(Council acknowledges this feedback. Contributions such as technical leadership, mentoring, teaching, research, guidance development, and wider professional service are generally considered part of the broader contribution expected from senior members and volunteers within the profession.*

*Specific expectations, roles, and responsibilities associated with Fellow Membership have already been identified for further development and are intended to be addressed as part of the future review of the Roles and Responsibilities Bylaw, rather than within the Membership Criteria Bylaw itself.)*

## **12. Application support tools were suggested**

Three respondents suggested introducing additional applicant support tools, including:

- membership-grade-specific checklists;
- clearer online application guidance;
- report assessment rubric;
- applicant guidance notes;
- clearer feedback/resubmission process for declined applications.

*(Council acknowledges this as valuable feedback. A number of these support tools have already been discussed and development is underway, including the introduction of an online membership application form with clearer guidance and application logic to better support applicants through the process. For example, applicants will not be able to progress through certain sections unless the required information has been completed.*

*While these improvements sit outside the Membership Criteria Bylaw itself, they are intended to support clearer and more user-friendly application processes.*

*In relation to the suggestion for a separate report assessment rubric, Council's position remains that the existing Report Writing Guidelines and associated checklist are currently sufficient to support applicants in understanding the expected report standards and assessment considerations.)*

### **13. Other Inclusions**

During ongoing Council discussions, the lack of formal guidance around temporary membership hold arrangements has been identified on several occasions. This review process provided a suitable opportunity to incorporate a dedicated section outlining the temporary membership hold process, including how approved hold periods relate to maintaining membership status without requiring reapplication upon return.

### **Overall summary**

The feedback shows general support for strengthening NZOHS membership standards, but with clear concerns about practical implementation, especially for Technician members, supervision requirements, regional access to mentors, and alternative pathways for experienced practitioners. The most important issue to resolve before finalising the bylaw appears to be the Technician scope/supervision wording, followed by improving clarity, transition arrangements, and applicant guidance.

### **3. Ask to Council**

Council is requested to:

- Review the updated Membership Criteria Bylaw and supporting consultation feedback summary.
- Provide any final feedback or comments by Friday, 5 June.
- Approve the updated Membership Criteria Bylaw for publication and implementation from 1 July.
- Approve the associated transition arrangements and supporting administrative updates required to implement the revised membership pathways and application processes.

### **4. Financial Implications**

There are no significant direct financial implications associated with the adoption of the updated Membership Criteria Bylaw. Most of the work has been completed voluntarily by Council and the Membership Committee as part of normal governance activities.

Minor administrative costs associated with updating supporting documents, online application processes, and communications are expected to be managed within existing operational budgets and do not require additional budget approval at this stage.

The updated criteria are expected to provide long-term value through improved professional credibility, clearer membership pathways, stronger alignment with international organisations, and continued compliance with HASANZ member association requirements.

## 5. Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Members disagree with aspects of the revised criteria	Reputational / member dissatisfaction	Member consultation completed, feedback considered, and additional clarifications incorporated into the updated draft.
Confusion during transition period	Operational / application inconsistencies	Transition arrangements clearly outlined in the bylaw and supporting communications.
Reduced alignment with HASANZ or international bodies if no update occurs	Compliance / reputational	Revised criteria aligned as closely as practicable with AIOH while maintaining HASANZ obligations.
Inconsistent interpretation of criteria or application expectations	Operational	Additional guidance, online application improvements, and clarification wording to be progressively implemented.
Delaying implementation	Operational / strategic	Digital Council approval process proposed to support planned 1 July implementation.

## 6. Alignment with Strategy / Constitution / Bylaws

The proposed updates support NZOHS' strategic direction by strengthening professional standards, improving transparency and consistency in membership pathways, and enhancing the credibility of the profession.

The revised bylaw aligns with NZOHS' Constitution and broader governance framework, while also supporting NZOHS' obligations as a HASANZ member association. The changes further support alignment with comparable international occupational hygiene organisations, particularly AIOH, and contribute to maintaining a respected and recognised professional membership structure.

## 7. Stakeholder Engagement

The proposed Membership Criteria Bylaw updates have been developed through engagement with Council and the Membership Committee over the past six months. Member consultation was undertaken through a formal consultation process, including circulation of the draft bylaw and an online feedback form.

A total of nine member responses were received across various membership grades, with feedback reviewed and considered by Council. Relevant clarifications and amendments have been incorporated into the updated draft where appropriate.

The revised criteria also considered alignment with external stakeholders and obligations, including HASANZ requirements and comparable international occupational hygiene organisations, particularly AIOH.

## 8. Implementation Plan / Next Steps

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Final Council review and feedback	Council	By 5 June
Finalise updated Membership Criteria Bylaw	President	June
Council approval via digital voting platform	Council	June
Update supporting documents and online application processes	Council, MC & Admin	June–July
Publish updated bylaw and communicate to members	Secretary, President & Admin	1 July
Commence transition period arrangements	NZOHS & MC	From 1 July

## 9. Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Council approves the updated Membership Criteria Bylaw.

## 10. Attachments

- Draft Updated Membership Criteria Bylaw