
RSPH Level 2 Certificate in Mortuary Support for Mortuary Workers (Funeral Service Operatives and Funeral Directors)

June 2025

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) 71 hours
Total Qualification Time (TQT) 132 hours

Ofqual Qualification Number:

Description

The objective of this qualification is to support Mortuary Workers operating in a funeral services setting, to develop an understanding of the skills and knowledge required to support the safe and effective operation of a mortuary setting. This includes understanding the scope and importance of their role in areas such as infection control, health and safety, teamwork and communication, and the preparation and operation of a mortuary setting.

This qualification is suitable for individuals who work as funeral directors or funeral service operatives, who for purposes of best practice and achieving consistency across all mortuary settings, develop their skills and knowledge within these areas.

This qualification is the first important step to combining relevance of the Funeral Director Code of Practice, underpinned by quality-managed ways of working and standardised training within a funeral service setting.

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Unit 1 – Health and Safety and Infection Control for Mortuary Workers

Guided Learning Hours: 21 hours

Total Unit Time: 30 hours

Unit Level: 2

Unit reference number: A/651/4679

Summary of Learning Outcomes:

To achieve this qualification a candidate must:

- 1. Understand the growth, multiplication and life cycles of bacteria, fungi and viruses in funeral service mortuary settings, *with reference to:***
 - 1.1 The types of bacteria, fungi and viruses commonly encountered in funeral service mortuary settings
 - 1.2 The conditions necessary for the optimal growth and multiplication of bacteria and fungi
 - 1.3 The life-cycles of bacteria, fungi and viruses commonly encountered in a funeral service mortuary setting

- 2. Understand the chain of infection and how microorganisms can spread between individuals in funeral service mortuary settings, *with reference to:***
 - 2.1 The impact of infestations that may develop in a mortuary setting
 - 2.2 The ways in which microorganisms can spread between individuals
 - 2.3 The impact of mortuary practice on the risk of infection and spread of disease

- 3. Understand the potential risks and effects of hazards that can be present in a funeral service mortuary setting, *with reference to:***
 - 3.1 Biological hazards
 - 3.2 Chemical hazards
 - 3.3 Physical hazards
 - 3.4 Radiological hazards

- 4. Understand legislation, codes of practice, roles and responsibilities in relation to health and safety that are relevant to Funeral Service Mortuary Workers, *with reference to:***
 - 4.1 Key legislation and codes of practice
 - 4.2 Key responsibilities for employers
 - 4.3 Key responsibilities for employees
 - 4.4 Procedures for reporting and reporting accidents in a mortuary setting

Content:

1 Understand the growth, multiplication and life cycles of bacteria, fungi and viruses in funeral service mortuary settings

- 1.1 *The types of bacteria, fungi and viruses commonly encountered in mortuary settings:* To cover blood-borne viruses, including hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV; fungi with disease-causing examples, including *Candida spp.* and aspergillus; gut bacteria with disease-causing examples, including *E. coli* and *Clostridium*.
- 1.2 *The conditions necessary for the optimal growth and multiplication of bacteria and fungi:* The impact of nutritional, pH, water and temperature-based factors on the growth and multiplication of bacteria and fungi.
- 1.3 *The life-cycles of bacteria, fungi and viruses commonly encountered in a mortuary setting:* Key stages of life cycles of bacteria, fungi and viruses covered in 1.1; to cover binary fission of bacteria; multiplication of yeasts by budding; fungal growth, spore formation and germination.

2 Understand the chain of infection and how microorganisms can spread between individuals in a funeral service mortuary setting

- 2.1 *Infestations that may develop in a mortuary setting:* types of infestation that may take place, such as maggot or insect; potential impact of infestations on the spread of infection within a mortuary setting.
- 2.2 *The ways in which microorganisms can spread between individuals:* Infection routes including contact, ingestion, inhalation, and inoculation; potential sources and reservoirs of infection in mortuary settings.
- 2.3 *The impact of mortuary practice on the risk of infection and spread of disease:* actions, errors or omissions that can either increase or reduce the risk of infection or spread of disease, to cover cleaning, testing, waste collection and disposal, personal hygiene of funeral service mortuary workers.

3 Understand the potential risks and effects of hazards that can be present in a funeral service mortuary setting

- 3.1 *Biological hazards:* to cover exposure to infected blood, body fluids or tissues; inoculation or puncture wounds from biological material; possible impact of those hazards on health of mortuary workers.
- 3.2 *Chemical hazards:* to cover exposure to chemicals such as formaldehyde, disinfectants, fixatives and solvents: possible impact of those hazards on health of mortuary workers.
- 3.3 *Physical hazards:* to cover puncture wounds from sharps or needlestick

injuries; risk from unguarded or poorly maintained equipment; moving and lifting of deceased person; slips, trips and falls from sources such as fluids on the mortuary floor; possible impact of those hazards on health of mortuary workers.

- 3.4 *Radiological hazards*: to cover potential hazards such as radionuclides following medical treatments and implants; possible impact of those hazards on health of mortuary workers.

4 Understand legislation, codes of practice, roles and responsibilities in relation to health and safety that are relevant to Funeral Service Mortuary Workers

- 4.1 *Key legislation*; Requirements of Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, to include section 2 (safe plant and safe systems of work; safe handling, storage and transport of articles and substances; necessary information, instruction, training and supervision; safe place of work, with safe access and egress; safe working environment with adequate welfare facilities; requirement for a health and safety policy and consultation with employees), section 3 (requirement for employers to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of others), section 7 (requirement for employees to take reasonable care of themselves and others and to co-operate with their employer), section 8 (offence to recklessly or intentionally interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety) and sections 37 and 38 (personal prosecution of managers); role and legal standing of approved codes of practice and guidance.
- 4.2 *Key responsibilities for employers*: Responsibility of employers to comply with health & safety legislation, to include safeguarding the H&S at work of the deceased person, employees, non-employees and visitors; provision of personal protective equipment, suitable and sufficient training, first aid facilities; ensuring safe systems of work are in place and risk assessments are carried out as appropriate.
- 4.3 *Key responsibilities for employees*: Responsibility of employees to comply with health and safety legislation and procedures with regard to the health and safety of themselves and others; need to co-operate with the employer by reporting any health and safety issues and accidents and near misses or ill-health; responsibility to correctly use PPE and report any defective or missing personal protective equipment.
- 4.4 *Procedures for reporting and reporting accidents in a mortuary setting*: Events that would qualify as an accident or near miss; reasons for investigating accidents, incidents and near misses; individuals within the setting that should be made aware of accidents or near misses; legal requirements for reporting and recording incidents and the information that should be included.

Assessment

The knowledge and understanding of the candidates will be assessed by a multiple-choice examination. The multiple choice examination is provided by RSPH.

A candidate who is able to satisfy the learning outcomes **will achieve** a score of at least 20 out of 30 in the examination.

Strong performance in some areas of the qualification content may compensate for poorer performance in other areas.

The examination consists of 30 questions.

The duration of the examination is 45 minutes.

Unit 2 – Effective communication and teamwork for Funeral Service Mortuary Workers

Guided Learning Hours: 25 hours

Total Unit Time: 51 hours

Unit Level: 2

Unit reference number:

Summary of Learning Outcomes:

To achieve this qualification a candidate must:

1. Understand the importance of effective communication *with reference to:*

- 1.1 The importance of effective communication within a team
- 1.2 The communication skills that are effective in working within a team
- 1.3 Barriers to successful communication that may affect a team and the strategies for overcoming them.

2. Understand the role of effective communication for Funeral Service Mortuary Workers, *with reference to:*

- 2.1 The types of communication used by a Mortuary Workers
- 2.2 The individuals and groups that a Mortuary Worker is likely to communicate with
- 2.3 Factors that may affect communication with the bereaved
- 2.4 The communication skills that can support communication with the bereaved

3. Understand the importance of effective teamwork, *with reference to:*

- 3.1 The importance of effective teamwork within an organisation
- 3.2 The teamwork skills that are effective in working within an organisation
- 3.3 Barriers to successful teamwork within a team and the strategies for overcoming them

4. Understand the role of effective teamwork for Funeral Service Mortuary Workers, *with reference to:*

- 4.1 The aims and objectives of the team within a mortuary setting
- 4.2 The roles and contributions of different individuals to achieving aims and objectives
- 4.3 Monitoring own contribution to achieving the aims and objectives of the team
- 4.4 Identifying areas of development in own contribution to achieving the aims and objectives of the team

Content:

1 Understand the importance of effective communication

- 1.1 *The importance of effective communication within a team:* importance of effective communication to building a shared understanding of concepts such as team goals, individual roles and responsibilities and how they come together within a team; sharing information around how tasks are progressing and the activity that needs to take place next; possible effects of miscommunication or ineffective communication.
- 1.2 *The communication skills that are effective in working within a team:* methods such as non-verbal, para-verbal, verbal and active listening; examples of these skills and their application; key elements of reflecting back and ensuring a shared understanding; showing empathy and being non-judgemental, ensuring communication free from discrimination; consideration of individual's level of knowledge, cultural, religious and personal beliefs and circumstances.
- 1.3 *Barriers to successful communication that may affect a team and the strategies for overcoming them;* barriers to communication such as uncertainty over roles or responsibilities; level of knowledge, previous experiences, cultural, religious and personal beliefs and/or values, misinformation and disinformation, stigma; passive discrimination and judgemental language; impact of mental health; strategies for overcoming these such as team meetings, one-to-one conversations, training and support.

2 Understand the role of effective communication for Funeral Service Mortuary Workers

- 2.1 *The types of communication used by mortuary workers:* verbal and para-verbal communication, including responding effectively to first calls; providing information and updates to work colleagues and communicating with the friends, relatives and carers of the deceased person; non-verbal communication, including body language when communicating with friends, relatives and carers of the deceased person; written communication, including completing required documentation such as the mortuary register and identification bracelet and recording incidents and near misses via CAPA processes.
- 2.2 *The individuals and groups that a Mortuary Worker is likely to communicate with:* individuals and groups such as other public / private mortuary staff; friends, relatives and carers of the deceased person; other bereavement-related staff working externally to their organisation; external staff such as police, coroners and other funeral directors.
- 2.3 *Factors that may affect communication with the bereaved:* potential impact of factors such as language, technical language, age, ethnicity, culture, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status; effect of shock and distress; presence of a number of individuals; the sensory impact of the mortuary

environment.

- 2.4 *The communication skills that can support communication with the bereaved:* sensitivity, style, pace, tone and type of language required for effective communication with relatives, friends and carers of the deceased person; use of appropriate non-verbal communication; importance of environment when communicating; need for sensitivity and empathy.

3 Understand the importance of effective teamwork

- 3.1 *The importance of effective teamwork within an organisation:* synergistic effect of working as a team; ability to offer help and support to colleagues; ability to learn from knowledge and experience of others; ability to work towards shared goals that improve outcomes for all.
- 3.2 *The teamwork skills that are effective in working within an organisation:* to include skills such as tolerance and respectfulness; meeting individual deadlines and contributing to meeting team deadlines; positivity; flexibility; willingness to share knowledge and support the development of others; working collaboratively; sharing ideas and being receptive to the ideas of others.
- 3.3 *Barriers to successful teamwork within a team and the strategies for overcoming them:* potential barriers to include lack of understanding of individual roles; unclear or poorly-defined goals or objectives; poor workplace culture or morale; unrealistic workloads or time constraints; poor leadership; personal issues between team members; strategies for overcoming them to include raising concerns with management; team meetings and one-to-one meetings; planning meetings; training and team building activities.

4 Understand the role of effective teamwork in funeral service mortuary settings

- 4.1 *The aims and objectives of the team within a mortuary setting:* to cover the importance of provide effective care for the deceased person, in line with legislation, codes of practice and standard operating procedures; ensuring effective health and safety practice and infection control; providing appropriate support to the friends, relatives and carers of the deceased person.
- 4.2 *The roles and contributions of different individuals to achieving aims and objectives:* to cover the roles and responsibilities of key members of staff within a funeral service and mortuary setting, key contributions of those individuals to achieving the aims and objectives set out in 4.1.
- 4.3 *Monitoring own contribution to achieving the aims and objectives of the team:* importance of monitoring own contribution in relation to outcomes, service delivery and professional development; potential sources of feedback in assessing own contribution from sources such as managers or other team

members.

- 4.4 *Identifying areas of development in own contribution to achieving the aims and objectives of the team:* importance of identifying areas of development in relation to outcomes, service delivery and professional development; opportunities to identify areas for development from events such as feedback or appraisals; opportunities to pursue development through channels such as workplace CPD or private study.

Assessment

The knowledge and understanding of candidates will be assessed by centre-devised assignments.

This could include coursework, task-based controlled assessment or written examination.

Unit 3 – Preparation and operation of a mortuary for Funeral Service Mortuary Workers

Guided Learning Hours: 25 hours

Total Unit Time: 51 hours

Unit Level: 2

Unit reference number: R/651/4685

Summary of Learning Outcomes:

To achieve this qualification a candidate must:

- 1. Understand the scope of practice for the role of a Funeral Service Mortuary Worker *by being able to meet the following criteria:***
 - 1.1 Explain the scope of practice for Mortuary Workers
 - 1.2 Outline why it is important to recognise the scope of practice for Mortuary Workers
 - 1.3 Outline the legislation, standards and codes of practice that set the scope of practice for a Mortuary Worker
 - 1.4 Outline how to access support or guidance in fulfilling the role of a Mortuary Worker

- 2. Understand standing operating procedures for the preparation and operation of a funeral service mortuary *by being able to meet the following criteria:***
 - 2.1 Describe standard operating procedures for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and equipment
 - 2.2 Describe standard operating procedures for the storage of a deceased person
 - 2.3 Outline standard operating procedures for the storage of equipment and materials
 - 2.4 Describe standard operating procedures for the removal, receipt and release of the deceased person
 - 2.5 Outline standard operating procedures for the maintenance and access of records
 - 2.6 Describe standard operating procedures for ensuring the security of a mortuary setting

- 3. Understand how to prepare for the visitation or viewing of the deceased person, *with reference to:***
 - 3.1 Outline standard operating procedures for preparing for the visitation or viewing of the deceased person
 - 3.2 Outline the importance of checking the identity of the deceased person, relatives, friends, and carers prior to visitation or viewing

- 3.3 Explain why it is important to take account of any religious or cultural considerations when preparing for a visitation or viewing
- 3.4 Explain why it is important to take protective measures when preparing a for a visitation or viewing

4. Understand how to provide support to individuals visiting or viewing the deceased person, *with reference to:*

- 4.1 Outline how to communicate information in a sensitive manner
- 4.2 Identify sources of support and guidance that individuals can be referred to if required

Content:

1 Understand the scope of practice for the role of a Funeral Service Mortuary Worker

- 1.1 *The scope of practice for Mortuary Workers:* core roles and responsibilities of Mortuary Workers as set out in legislation, standards and codes of practice; boundaries of the role; points at which the role might overlap with the roles of others in the mortuary setting.
- 1.2 *Why it is important to recognise the scope of practice for Mortuary Workers:* importance outlined, with reference to proper skills and knowledge, deceased person outcomes, infection control, health and safety.
- 1.3 *Legislation, standards and codes of practice that set the scope of practice for a Mortuary Worker:* local policies within own setting, roles and responsibilities set out in own job description; codes of practice to refer to the-Funeral Director Code of Practice.
- 1.4 *Access support or guidance in fulfilling the role of a Mortuary Worker:* formal sources of support or guidance, with reference to communicating with managers or consulting standards, codes of practice, organisational procedures and protocols; informal sources of support or guidance, such as peer support.

2 Understand standing operating procedures for the preparation and operation of a mortuary

- 2.1 *Standard operating procedures for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and equipment:* standard operating procedures for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and equipment at own place of work identified and outlined.
- 2.2 *Standard operating procedures for the storage of the deceased person:* standard operating procedures for the storage and care of the deceased person at own place of work identified and outlined.
- 2.3 *Standard operating procedures for the storage of equipment and materials:* standard operating procedures for storage of equipment and materials at own place of work identified and outlined.
- 2.4 *Standard operating procedures for the receipt and release of the deceased person:* standard operating procedures for the receipt and release of the deceased person at own place of work identified and outlined.
- 2.5 *Standard operating procedures for the maintenance and access of records:* standard operating procedures for the maintenance and access of records at own place of work identified and outlined.
- 2.6 *Standard operating procedures for ensuring the security of a mortuary setting:*

standard operating procedures for ensuring the security of a mortuary setting identified and outlined.

3 Understand how to prepare for the visitation or viewing of the deceased person

- 3.1 *Standard operating procedures for preparing for the visitation or viewing of the deceased person:* standard operating procedures for preparing for the viewing of the deceased person at own place of work identified and outlined.
- 3.2 *Importance of checking the identity of the deceased person, relatives, friends, and carers prior to a visitation or viewing:* importance outlined, with reference to the emotional wellbeing of the relatives, friends and carers viewing the body.
- 3.3 *Importance of taking into account of any religious or cultural considerations when preparing for a visitation or viewing:* importance outlined, with reference to the beliefs, wishes and perspectives of the deceased person and their relatives, friends and carers.
- 3.4 *Importance of taking protective measures when preparing for a visitation or viewing:* importance outlined, with reference to health and safety and infection control.

4 Understand how to provide support to individuals visiting or viewing the deceased person

- 4.1 *Communicate information in a sensitive manner:* importance of factors such as style, pace, tone and type of language in communicating sensitively; importance of empathy in understanding individuals' actions or reactions when viewing the deceased person; use of appropriate non-verbal communication.
- 4.2 *Sources of support and guidance that individuals can be referred to if required:* appropriate sources of official support and guidance identified such as NHS, police and outside agencies; bereavement and support agencies locally and nationally.

Assessment

The knowledge and understanding of candidates will be assessed by centre-devised assignments. This could include coursework, task-based controlled assessment or written examination.

Centre Guidance:

Registration of Candidates:

Candidates must be registered with RSPH and have a candidate number before any work can be submitted to RSPH for external assessment.

Candidate registration forms can be downloaded from the Centre Area of the RSPH website (www.rsph.org.uk).

Recommended Prior Learning:

There is no recommend prior learning for this qualification.

Submission of Centre Assessed Work:

Evidence for attainment of Unit 2 and Unit 3 must be centre assessed and externally verified. Assessed evidence should be submitted to RSPH with an *assignment submission form* (available from RSPH when candidates are registered for the qualification) signed by the candidate and a completed *candidate assessment summary form* for each unit of the qualification. Assignment submission forms and candidate assessment summary forms can be downloaded from the Centre Area of the RSPH website (www.rsph.org.uk).

All centre assessed candidate work for the qualification must be completed and submitted to RSPH within two calendar years of registration (the *registration period*). In the event that candidate work does not meet the requirements of the assessment criteria or learning outcomes the candidate has a period of three months in which to repeat the assessment or submit any additional evidence requested, or by the end of the registration period, whichever is the shorter. An additional fee will be charged for the repeat of assessments.

In exceptional circumstances RSPH may extend the registration period for a candidate or cohort of candidates.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration:

Centres that have candidates requiring reasonable adjustments or special consideration should consult RSPH's *Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration* policy, this is available from RSPH and RSPH's web site (www.rsph.org.uk).

How to apply to offer this qualification:

To become a centre approved to offer this qualification, please complete the 'Centre Application' which you can find on our website in the Qualifications and Training section. If you are already an approved centre, please complete the 'Add an additional qualification form' in the Centre area on the website www.rsph.org.uk. Please ensure that you include details of your internal verification procedures if candidate work will be centre assessed by more than one individual. You will need to attach relevant CVs to this application. Please contact the Qualifications Department at centreapproval@rsph.org.uk if you need any assistance.

Progression

On completion of this qualification, learners will be able to implement the knowledge they have gained in the funeral service mortuary setting that they are in. Learners could further their learning by attending industry specific CPD events.

Recommended Qualifications and Experience of Tutors and Assessors:

RSPH recommends that tutors have teaching experience and a qualification in a relevant subject area. Assessors and internal verifiers for this qualification must meet the requirements of the assessment strategy of Skills for Health.

Suitable qualifications for the RSPH Level 2 Certificate in Mortuary Support for Funeral Services Mortuary Workers include:

RSPH Level 3 Diploma in Healthcare Science (Anatomical Pathology Technology)
RSPH Level 4 Diploma in Healthcare Science (Anatomical Pathology Technology)
Honours Degree in a relevant biological subject
Fellowship of the Royal College of Pathologists

Other Information:

All RSPH specifications are subject to review. Any changes to the assessment or learning outcomes will be notified to Centres in advance of their introduction. To check the currency of this version of the specification, please contact the Qualifications Department or consult the RSPH website.

Centres must be registered with RSPH.

Any enquiries about this qualification should be made to:

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