Examiners' Report

NEBOSH INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**UNIT IA:
INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF
HEALTH AND SAFETY**

JANUARY 2018

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Introduction

NEBOSH (The National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health) was formed in 1979 as an independent examining board and awarding body with charitable status. We offer a comprehensive range of globally-recognised, vocationally-related qualifications designed to meet the health, safety, environmental and risk management needs of all places of work in both the private and public sectors.

Courses leading to NEBOSH qualifications attract around 50,000 candidates annually and are offered by over 600 course providers, with examinations taken in over 120 countries around the world. Our qualifications are recognised by the relevant professional membership bodies including the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) and the International Institute of Risk and Safety Management (IIRSM).

NEBOSH is an awarding body that applies best practice setting, assessment and marking and applies to Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Accreditation regulatory requirements.

This report provides guidance for candidates and course providers for use in preparation for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content and the application of assessment criteria.

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General comments

Many candidates are well prepared for this unit assessment and provide comprehensive and relevant answers in response to the demands of the question paper. This includes the ability to demonstrate understanding of knowledge by applying it to workplace situations.

There are other candidates, however, who appear to be unprepared for the unit assessment and who show both a lack of knowledge of the syllabus content and a lack of understanding of how key concepts should be applied to workplace situations, which is an essential requirement at Diploma level.

This report has been prepared to provide feedback on the standard date examination sitting in January 2018.

Feedback is presented in these key areas: responses to questions, examination technique and command words and is designed to assist candidates and course providers prepare for future assessments in this unit.

Candidates and course providers will also benefit from use of the 'Guide to the NEBOSH International Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety' which is available via the NEBOSH website. In particular, the guide sets out in detail the syllabus content for Unit IA and tutor reference documents for each Element.

Additional guidance on command words is provided in 'Guidance on command words used in learning outcomes and question papers' which is also available via the NEBOSH website.

Candidates and course providers should also make reference to the Unit IA 'Example question paper and Examiners' feedback on expected answers' which provides example questions and details Examiners' expectations and typical areas of underperformance.

Question 1 **Outline** reasons for introducing health and safety management systems. **(10)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 1.3: Outline the uses of, and the reasons for, introducing a health and safety management system.

Overall this question was not well answered. Many candidates structured their answer around the moral, legal and financial reasons for managing health and safety. While some marks were awarded, few candidates were able to offer the outline required to achieve good marks.

Better answers would have included points such as supporting continual business improvement, ensuring that health and safety is given the same importance as other business objectives, or alignment with other management systems.

Candidates need to be able to demonstrate a depth of understanding of management systems in organisations rather than memorising a specific list related to moral, legal and financial reasons for managing health and safety.

Question 2 (a) **Outline** the behavioural attributes of the following types of leadership:

(i) transformational; **(4)**

(ii) transactional. **(4)**

(b) **Explain** why leadership styles need to vary in practice. **(2)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 7.1: Explain the types of health and safety leadership, their advantages; disadvantages and likely impact on safety performance.

Although a relatively new addition to the syllabus, understanding leadership styles is an important area of knowledge and skill for a safety practitioner.

In part (a) many candidates did not appear to recognise the terminology of 'transformational' and 'transactional' in the leadership context. Those candidates who did were able to outline attributes such as visionary and good communicator for 'transformational' and the more directive attributes including reward and punishment for the 'transactional' style.

In part (b) many candidates recognised that in practice the style should vary in order to get the best out of the situation. However, few referenced the work of Hershey and Blanchard on situational or contextual leadership as part of their answer, which is specifically mentioned in the new syllabus.

A thorough understanding of the learning outcomes and the supporting technical content from the syllabus is essential in order to be successful at this level.

Question 3   The consequences of human failure can be immediate or delayed.

(a)   **Explain** the differences between active failures and latent failures. **(6)**

(b)   (i)   **Give** examples of an *active* failure. **(2)**

(ii)   **Give** examples of a *latent* failure. **(2)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.1: Outline theories/models and use of loss causation techniques.

This question was generally well answered by many candidates. The concept of active and latent failures from Reason's model of accident causation appeared to be well understood. In relation to active failures candidates referred to front-line people and direct causation and precipitating the accident. Similarly, candidates referred to failures distant in time to the accident such as those made by designers in relation to the latent failures.

In part (b) of the question candidates were expected to provide two examples of each type of failure in order to achieve the full marks. Several candidates were unable to provide suitable examples and those who only provided one example in each case limited the marks that could be awarded.

Understanding accident causation is a key skill for any health and safety practitioner and there were many good answers to this question.

Question 4   Organisations are subjected to many influences in health and safety.

Identify influential parties **AND outline** how they can affect health and safety performance in an organisation. **(10)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 2.4: Explain the role non-governmental bodies and self-regulation has in securing common health and safety standards in a global economy.

Generally candidates' responses to this question were good, demonstrating an understanding of the influential parties and the way they affect health and safety in organisations. However, there were also answers that were unable to provide a suitable outline of how the influential parties were able to affect health and safety in organisations.

Better answers would have included points such as trade associations setting performance standards, pressure groups leading influential publicity campaigns and enforcement agencies checking on compliance with standards. There are also many other influential parties that would gain marks, provided they were appropriately outlined.

In order to gain good marks it is essential that candidates follow the command words and deliver the requirements of the question.

Question 5   (a)   **Outline** the purpose of task analysis.   **(2)**

(b)   **Outline** a method for carrying out task analysis.   **(8)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 5.2: Outline the use of a range of hazard identification techniques; and 8.6: Explain how job factors can contribute to improving human reliability.

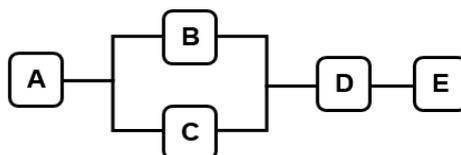This question produced a good mix of answers ranging from very good to very limited.

In part (a) many candidates were able to give good answers, with better answers also referring to the identification for the potential for human error.

In part (b) there was a varied response to the method of task analysis including the 5 steps to risk assessment and other risk assessment tools. Better answers could have included selection and observation of the task, splitting or breaking the task down into respective components, taking into account time lines of actions, producing a safe system of work, etc.

This detailed level of knowledge for specific tools to develop safe systems of work is extremely important at this level of study. While the application of generic systems and general points are useful, preparation for the examinations by candidates needs to include the detailed level of knowledge required here.

Question 6   (a)   **Describe** what is meant by 'series system' with reference to system reliability.   **(2)**

(b)   **Calculate** the reliability of the system below.   **(3)**
Show your workings at EACH stage.

Component	Reliability
A	0.99
B	0.70
C	0.75
D	0.95
E	0.80

(c)   **Outline** methods of improving system reliability.   **(5)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 5.4: Explain the analysis, assessment and improvement of system failures and system reliability with the use of calculations.

A generally well answered question with a clear separation between those candidates who knew about system reliability and those who did not.

In part (a) most candidates knew that a series system was a linked component system that would fail if one component failed (dependent on each other) and gained both of the available marks.

In part (b) candidates were asked to calculate the reliability **and** show their workings at **each** stage. However, there were several candidates who, while stating the correct answer 0.7, did not provide the workings and therefore could not gain full marks. Candidates who used the formula $R_{System} = R_A \times ((1-(1-R_B)(1-R_C)) \times R_D \times R_E$ would have achieved the correct answer. Candidates who used other means of calculating the reliability, showed their workings and came to the correct answer, were also awarded marks.

In part (c) there were some good answers that included points such as component reliability assurance, maintenance regimes, etc. However, some candidates appeared to go off track and talked about organisational reliability for which marks could not be awarded.

Practice and familiarisation with such theories and their associated calculations is an important part of the examination preparation process.

Question 7   An organisation operating in the oil and gas sector employed 5 000 people in 2015. The number of employees has reduced to 4 000 in 2016 and 3 000 in 2017. The table below shows the accident history of the organisation over the past 3 years.

Year	2015	2016	2017
Number of accidents	15	16	15
Number of hours worked	8 000 000	6 400 000	4 800 000
Days lost due to accidents	75	85	100

(a)   **Calculate** the accident frequency rate for **EACH** of the years.   **(6)**
        *Show your calculations at **EACH** step.*

(b)   **Comment** on why the organisation should be concerned about
        the accident frequency rate.   **(2)**

(c)   Human reliability can impact on accident rates.

        Outline ways in which:

        (i)   organisational factors can contribute to improving human
                reliability;   **(6)**

        (ii)   job factors can contribute to improving human reliability.   **(6)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 3.2: Explain the use of quantitative methods in analysing loss data; 8.5: Explain how organisational factors can contribute to improving human reliability; and 8.6: Explain how job factors can contribute to improving human reliability.

Candidates should note that calculation questions require evidence at each stage of the calculations being made. Those candidates who used the formula Accident Frequency Rate = (Number of Accidents / Number of hours worked) x 100000 in part (a) and showed their workings were awarded good marks. There were several candidates who were unaware of the correct equation to use and therefore did not gain good marks. Candidates were not penalised if they chose a different multiplier as long as they were consistent.

In part (b) answers should have suggested that despite less hours being worked accident rates stayed broadly the same and the number of days lost increased, suggesting more serious accidents.

In part (c) candidates were expected to use their knowledge to separate out organisational contributions to human reliability and job factors that contribute to human reliability. For part (c) (i), organisational factors, points such as positive safety culture, effective leadership, etc would have gained marks. For job factors in (c) (ii), better answers would have included points such as work patterns and job rotation as well as ergonomics of the job.

There were several examples of candidates providing individual factors as examples of contributions to human reliability which was not asked for and did not gain marks.

Overall, candidates gave some good answers to this question.

Question 8 (a) **Explain** the objectives of:

        (i)   active health and safety monitoring; **(5)**

        (ii)   reactive health and safety monitoring. **(4)**

    (b) **Outline** a range of active health and safety monitoring methods. **(5)**

    (c) **Outline** examples of *reactive* performance data that could be used to benchmark health and safety performance. **(6)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 4.2: Explain the need for, and the objectives and limitations of, health and safety monitoring; and 4.3: Describe the variety of health and safety monitoring and measurement techniques.

Many candidates attempted this as one of their chosen questions from Section B.

In part (a) there were several factors that overlap both active and reactive monitoring, including setting the basis of continual improvement and demonstrating commitment; while many candidates identified these points, marks could only be awarded once.

It appears that the term *objectives* in the question may have created a more challenging focus for many candidates as they offered similar answers in parts (a), (b) and (c).

In part (a) (i) points such as identify hazards and risks before the event and understand the performance of existing risk control strategies would have gained marks. In part (a) (ii) better answers would have included objectives such as historical measurement, identify cause and analyse data over time.

In part (b) candidates gained good marks by providing an outline of methods such as audits, inspections, etc. The key to good marks was to ensure that an outline was provided and not simply a list of methods, which was a common issue for several candidates attempting the question.

Part (c) referred to data that could be used to benchmark performance from reactive monitoring activities and candidates who provided outlines of data such as accident and incident numbers, enforcement activities associated with the organisation, and absence data tended to gain good marks. As with part (b) the distinguishing feature between high and low marks being awarded was often the presence of an outline as asked for in the question.

Question 9 An organisation has decided to use a behavioural change programme to improve its safety performance.

(a) **Give** the meaning of *'behavioural change programme'*. **(2)**

(b) **Outline** actions that should be taken before the behavioural change programme can be implemented. **(8)**

(c) **Outline** organisational factors that could affect the success of the behavioural change programme. **(10)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 8.7: Outline the principles, conditions and typical content of behavioural change programmes designed to improve safe behaviour in the workplace.

This question was not selected by many candidates. Those who did attempt it gave a mixed response with the majority having difficulty in articulating a depth of understanding of behavioural change programmes.

In part (a) answers should have made reference to a programme aimed at changing the frequencies of safe and unsafe behaviour.

Part (b) related to the planning and activities required to help ensure the delivery of a suitable programme. This could have included points such as worker consultation, communication, pilot programme, etc and many candidates recognised these as important actions. However, the level of detail provided in the outline often meant that answers were limited, and in the marks that could be awarded.

Part (c) assessed the depth of understanding of organisational factors that would actually limit the success of a programme. Since the question did not specify positive or negative success, marks was awarded for either positive success factors or negative factors, although better answers were limited.

While there may be topics in an examination that candidates are less familiar with, applying knowledge and principles can be a rewarding approach. However, with this approach the principles must be given context in relation to the question asked, in this case a behavioural safety programme, and the command word of the question followed, in this case 'outline'. Providing vaguely associated words such as 'consultation' and 'communication' without context will not gain marks at this level of examination.

Question 10 (a) A manufacturer wants to introduce a permit-to-work system at a factory that operates continuously over three shifts.

Outline the key issues that will make an effective permit-to-work system at the factory. **(10)**

(b) An audit takes place a year later. The audit shows many permits-to-work have not been completed correctly, or have not been signed back.

Outline possible reasons why the permit-to-work system is not being followed. **(10)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 6.3: Explain the development, main features and operation of safe systems of work and permit-to-work systems.

Overall, the question was well answered with candidates providing good information on both what makes an effective permit system as well as reasons for the system not being followed.

In order to gain good marks in part (a) candidates needed to provide an outline of issues such as defining activities requiring permits, consultation with workers, specific procedures for shift handover, etc. Fewer candidates used the scenario to give context to the answer and there was evidence of candidates listing issues rather than providing an outline, as required in the question.

In part (b) candidates appeared to be more familiar with the reasons a permit-to-work system may not be followed and gained marks by mentioning reasons such as lack of specific training in permit requirements, production pressures, poor safety culture, etc. Again, listing instead of outlining was evident on several scripts, restricting the marks that could be awarded.

Examination technique and understanding how to answer questions, as well as the technical content, are key to gaining good marks in any examination and the NEBOSH International Diploma is no exception. Candidates need to clearly demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of a topic.

Question 11   An organisation is expecting the arrival of contractors to start work on a project within a large chemical manufacturing site. The work does **not** include any confined space working or work at height.

The health and safety implications of the work, level of risk and additional information have been assessed by the organisation and communicated to the contractor management team. The contractors have been selected based on evaluation of competence, health and safety policy, risk assessments and method statements.

The organisation and contractor management teams have assessed the risks to the organisation's workers, contractor's workers and the public based on the planned work.

Outline practical ways of managing contractors:

(a)   in relation to provision of training when they initially arrive on site for work;   **(7)**

(b)   during work;   **(10)**

(c)   on completion of work.   **(3)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 7.5: Explain the requirements for managing third parties in the workplace.

Contractor management is a key part of the modern workplace and essential in maintaining good health and safety performance.

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of contractor management and more specifically the kind of management controls to be put in place during the various stages of the contract work.

In part (a) many candidates gave good outlines that included induction training and site familiarity as part of their answers. Other areas included extending the induction training to cover issues such as use of identity badges, site contact arrangements, specific controls to be used permits-to-work, etc. It appeared that those candidates who had practical experience of organising contractor inductions were able to broaden out their answer to gain good marks.

In part (b) the contract work has moved to the delivery phase and therefore the management controls would need to reflect this. Better answers referred to active monitoring of the contract work, change management procedures, checking compliance, etc. In some instances candidates adopted the position of the contractor and began to describe how the contractor would operate, which was not part of the question and therefore did not gain marks.

Part (c) related to the completed work and several candidates referred to clean up operations after the contractors had left the site. Management actions such as reviewing the work on completion for technical content, as well as the health and safety performance of the contractor, would have gained marks. It would have been appropriate to mention the contractor appointment processes and any lessons learned procedures.

While there were good answers to this question there were several candidates who had difficulty applying simple management concepts to contractor management that could have given them reasonable marks.

Examination technique

The following examination techniques are consistently identified as the main areas in need of improvement for candidates:

Candidates misread/misinterpreted the question

Careful and thorough preparation for the examination is vital for candidates. Accredited course providers should assist candidates in setting out and applying sound revision and examination practice and preparation techniques to ensure that they are well prepared for the examination. This includes ensuring that candidates carefully read the question to determine exactly what is being asked and answer accordingly.

Examiners noted that there was evidence of candidates not understanding the question that was asked and therefore providing an answer that was not relevant to the question.

The range of English language skills demonstrated in the examination by candidates varies enormously. Examiners often find themselves faced with scripts where candidates do not appear to have understood the question and struggle to write a coherent answer in English. Candidates for this examination should satisfy the required IELTS Level 7 language requirements. Course providers are reminded that it is incumbent on them to provide appropriate advice and guidance to candidates to help ensure that they stand a reasonable chance of success in the study of the NEBOSH Diploma.

There were numerous examples of quite long, detailed answers that suggest practical experience but do not focus on the question being asked. This may be a result of candidates either not reading the question properly, or because of possible language issues where candidates do not understand what the question is asking.

The examination is assessing candidates on their understanding of 'managing' health and safety and a number of candidates did not seem to grasp this resulting in long, detailed answers on such issues as 'what to look for in an audit' rather than how to prepare for and manage an audit.

Examiners ask questions based on the syllabus. Points, no matter how valid, but unrelated to the question being asked, will not attract any marks. Candidates should note that where there is emphasis in a question (eg by the use of italics) it is to guide candidates towards a particular point. Reading and re-reading the question encompasses taking due note of this emphasis.

Candidates' handwriting was illegible

The examination situation is a stressful time for candidates and while the examination is not a test of the English language or handwriting, scripts must be legible for Examiners to mark them fairly. As the examination progresses, candidates can become both mentally and physically tired. In an increasingly electronic age, professional people do not have the same need to write text in longhand. However, to pass this examination it is an essential and necessary part of the preparation to rehearse writing questions in full and in the time allocated.

When practicing examination technique, candidates should hand-write their answers and get feedback from their course providers on legibility (as well as how they performed).

Course providers need to identify those candidates whose handwriting is illegible and provide them with appropriate advice. Examiners cannot award marks for answers that they are unable to read.

Candidates unnecessarily wrote the question down

There are 15 minutes to answer a 10-mark question in Section A and 30 minutes available to answer a 20-mark question in Section B of the question paper. This time will be required for reading, re-reading and understanding the question, developing an answer plan on the answer booklet and finally committing the answer to the answer booklet. The efficient use of time is essential in order to answer the 9 questions within the 3 hours available. The majority of Examiners reported that candidates felt it necessary to write the question out in full, before providing the associated answer, and this limits the time available. Course providers should remind candidates that it is not necessary to include a question with their answer.

Good examination technique is followed where the candidate frames the answer in the context of the question, rather than rewriting the whole of the question. As with the other examination technique points above, good examination technique is developed through practice and good preparation.

Candidates repeated the same point but in different ways

In some cases candidates tended to make the same point more than once, eg training. Once a valid point has been made and the mark awarded Examiners will not be able to award the mark again. Unless otherwise stated, most questions require candidates to respond with a wide range of issues to gain high marks. Consequently candidates should take care when using terms that contain numerous points that should be made separately.

Accredited course providers should brief candidates on examination technique by way of understanding what points are mark worthy in an answer and those that are not.

Candidates did not respond effectively to the command word

A key indicator in an examination question will be the command word, which is always given in **bold** typeface. The command word will indicate the depth of answer that is expected by the candidate.

Generally, there has been an improvement in response to command words, but a number of candidates continue to produce answers that are little more than a list even when the command word requires a more detailed level of response, such as 'outline' or 'explain'. This is specifically addressed in the following section dealing with command words, most commonly failure to provide sufficient content to constitute an 'outline' was noted. Failure to respond to the relevant command word in context was also a frequent problem hence information inappropriate to the question was often given.

Course exercises should guide candidates to assessing the relevant points in any given scenario such that they are able to apply the relevant syllabus elements within the command word remit.

Candidates provided rote-learned responses that did not fit the question

Examiners report a high incidence of candidates writing down answers they have memorised from previous Examiners' Reports. These answers often relate to a similar, but different question, to which the memorised answer is not wholly applicable. For example, it may require a different aspect of the topic or relate to a different scenario.

Candidates are expected to apply their knowledge and understanding to the actual question given, not the question they think they see. This is why it is extremely important that candidates understand and are able to apply their knowledge, and not just memorise. Course providers should help candidates apply their knowledge to a range of different scenarios to aid understanding of the topic.

Candidates did not allocate enough time to the question

Some candidates were unable to give answers of sufficient depth to warrant good marks and sometimes spent more time on questions carrying fewer marks than was warranted by the command word.

Candidates need to take note of the fact that answers in Section A are worth 10 marks and those in Section B are worth 20 marks. The Examiners' expectation is that more detailed answers are required in Section B. Some candidates spend a disproportionate amount of time in writing long answers to Section A questions at the expense of time spent on the more in-depth answers demanded in Section B. Proper preparation and 'mock' examinations can help to correct this.

Accredited course providers should ensure that candidates are given adequate opportunity to develop examination skills to ensure that answers are provided to the depth and breadth required.

Structured Answers

It is important for candidates to structure their answers as this helps cover all the requirements of the question without losing focus. It is good examination technique to look for the principles or the concepts that underpin the topic and to use those as a basis for delivering a structured answer.

Candidates answered by posing a question

Candidates need to resist the temptation to present their answers as merely a series of questions. 'Outline' requires candidates *'To indicate the principal features or different parts of'* and this is not done through posing questions to the Examiners.

Command words

Please note that the examples used here are for the purpose of explanation only.

The following command words are listed in the order identified as being the most challenging for candidates:

Outline

Outline: To indicate the principal features or different parts of.

Most candidates are familiar with the requirements of 'outline'. However, a number of candidates expect that by listing or giving bullet points that will be sufficient. At this level of qualification candidates are expected to be able to construct sentences around their answers.

An 'outline' question requires candidates to give the main issue and then provide the key features in the context of the question. Where a question that requires candidates to '**outline** the issues to be addressed in the development of an audit system' the response should provide adequate context to the issues in order to gain the marks. An answer that merely includes issues such as 'scope, training, commitment, etc' will not gain good marks since while the issues are relevant there is no context to the issues in relation to the question asked.

Candidates should provide context to the point being made to demonstrate understanding of the subject.

As required by a Diploma level qualification candidates should be able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the subject matter and therefore be able to summarise and contextualise technical points in the field of health and safety. Those candidates who did provide good outlines to questions demonstrated understanding of the topic without going into too much detail.

If asked to '**outline** the purpose of local exhaust ventilation' in a given scenario, an answer such as 'contaminant removal, exposure limits' would be insufficient as this represents a listed answer. However, removal of contaminant at source (as far as possible) and ensuring exposure limits are not exceeded would higher gain marks.

If asked to '**outline** how health risks from exposure to lead should be managed…' in a given scenario, an answer such as medical tests, PPE, RPE would be insufficient as this represents a listed answer. However, surveillance tests for lead in blood/urine, the use of PPE such as overalls, the use of RPE such as respirator with appropriate particulate/fume filters would gain marks.

Explain

Explain: To provide an understanding. To make an idea or relationship clear.

Many candidates are still not properly prepared for this command word. A list of points (no matter how relevant) will not satisfy Examiners when the command word is 'explain'. So for example, where candidates were asked to explain the circumstances where heat and smoke detectors would be inappropriate, Examiners were looking for candidates to explain that heat detectors would be inappropriate in environments where temperatures fluctuate suddenly during normal work activities. Just saying 'workshops', for example, is not enough to provide an answer to an 'explain' question.

Commonly, candidates do not provide adequate detail in relation to this command word, eg '**explain** limitations of relying on accident numbers only as a measure of health and safety performance'. An appropriate response would provide the reader with reasons why relying solely on accident numbers would not provide a comprehensive view of the organisational performance in health and safety, eg accident numbers do not indicate incidence of ill-health and accident data may go up following initiatives following underreporting, etc.

Candidates are generally unable to provide clear answers where this command word is used but that may be due to lack of knowledge rather than not understanding what is required, since an explanation requires the candidate to provide reasoning for their answer. For example, when a question specifies 'explain' the candidate is required to provide an understanding or make clear an idea or relationship. For example '**explain** how malaria is transmitted to humans'. If a candidate responded with *mosquito bites humans* this would be insufficient to merit full marks as this does not provide a deep enough understanding or relationship from the specified command word or the context in which the question is asked. However, a candidate would get full marks if they elaborated on this stating that the disease originates with the plasmodium parasite that is then transmitted to humans via a bite from a feeding female mosquito that carries it; the parasite then transferring to the human blood stream, travelling to the liver.

Describe

'Describe. To give a detailed written account of the distinctive features of a subject. The account should be factual without any attempt to explain.'

Candidates are required to provide a word picture in response to this command word and therefore the candidate needs to have a good understanding of the subject of the question in the examination in order to gain good marks. Typically, a limited response to this command word will be an inadequate amount of detail in the answer.

For example, when asked to describe the contents of a safety policy candidates should provide the Examiner with relevant information about the contents of the policy, eg 'the policy should contain details of the organisational commitment to health and safety'. This would be supported with specific targets and commitment resource to ensuring compliance as a minimum but developing the health and wellbeing of the employees, etc'. An answer that goes no further than listing the subjects of to be covered in the policy would not attract good marks in the examination.

In the examination, lists and single word answers will rarely satisfy the requirement of the Examiners in terms of answering the question at this level. It is noticeable that the well prepared candidate has less trouble deciphering command words and tends to gain good marks whereas those candidates who use single word answers will tend not to have the knowledge to write anything further in the context that is required.

Give

Give: Only a short answer is required, not an explanation or a description.

'Give' is normally used in conjunction with a further requirement, such as '**give** the meaning of' or '**give** an example in **EACH** case'.

In some circumstances candidates may spend too much time giving unrequired detail in response to this command word. It is often used in conjunction with the meaning of a phrase or statement and candidates can over-elaborate the required answer. Time management is important in the examination and candidates should ensure that they respond with appropriate brevity where the command word and available marks suggest that is all that is required.

When asked to '**give** the meaning of motivation', it would appropriate to say that 'motivation is the driving force that leads an individual to behave in a certain way'. It would not be appropriate to discuss in detail different motivational theories.

On the whole most candidates respond well to this command word, often by offering a definition. There is evidence where candidates go into too much detail that left those candidates writing large amounts of text for very few marks.

Identify

Identify: To give a reference to an item, which could be its name or title.

As with 'give' above it is not uncommon for candidates to over-elaborate their answers in response to this command word. It is adequate for a candidate to provide the key point to the Examiner without further developing the point with supporting theory or examples unless they are specifically asked for.

When providing a response to 'identify' the mental selection and naming of an answer that relates to the question should be sufficient. In most cases, one or two words would be sufficient to be awarded corresponding marks. Any further detail would not be required and impacts negatively on the time limit for completing the examination. For example, if the question was '**identify** possible effects on the body when someone is exposed to lead' suitable responses would include developmental effects in unborn babies, anaemia, nausea/vomiting in order to be awarded a mark.

For additional guidance, please see NEBOSH's *'Guidance on command words used in learning outcomes and question papers'* document, which is available on our website: www.nebosh.org.uk/students/default.asp?cref=1345&ct=2.