
Examiners' Report

NEBOSH INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



UNIT IA: INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

JULY 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 July 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.

Unit IA

International management of health and safety

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- Question 1**
- (a) **Distinguish** between prescriptive legislation and goal-setting legislation. (2)
 - (b) **Outline TWO** benefits and **TWO** limitations of prescriptive legislation. (4)
 - (c) **Outline TWO** benefits and **TWO** limitations of goal-setting legislation. (4)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 2.1: Describe comparative governmental socio-legal and regulatory models.

This question gave candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the legal systems and background to legal standards. Responses to the question were mixed with several candidates suggesting that goal-setting legislation was set by the employer themselves and that compliance was optional.

In parts (b) and (c) most candidates were able to provide an outline of some of the benefits and limitations of each. For prescriptive legislation clear requirements that are easy to enforce are examples of benefits, whereas inflexibility is a potential limitation.

In relation to the goal-setting laws, benefits could include it relates to risk and limitations but could require a high level of expertise which would be a limitation.

Overall, the question was reasonably well answered by most candidates although there are some candidates who need to work further to understand types of law.

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- Question 2**
- An organisation has introduced management systems for environmental management and quality management. It is now considering implementing a health and safety management system.
- (a) **Outline** the role of the health and safety policy in relation to health and safety management. (4)
 - (b) **Outline** the benefits of an *integrated* health and safety, environmental and quality management system. (6)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 1.4: Explain the principles and content of an effective health and safety management system including the reasons for integration with other management systems.

This question challenged candidates to consider health and safety management systems along with the benefits of integration.

In part (a) most candidates were able to refer to the typical contents of a health and safety policy. However, fewer candidates were able to relate the contents to the health and safety management system and therefore the question that was asked. Candidates needed to refer to points such as the policy demonstrating commitment by the employer, and creating responsibilities for health and safety in the workplace to gain marks.

In part (b) candidates were able to demonstrate the benefits of an integrated management system with many referencing other management systems that might be aligned such ISO 9001 and 14001 standards. Marks were awarded for benefits such as encouraging career development in the company and encouraging a spread of positive culture in the business, however only a few answers included these points.

A key learning point here is that the knowledge required to be successful is not just theoretical, but candidates need to have a practical understanding of the content as well.

Question 3 An organisation based in New Zealand operates from five separate sites. The organisation employs a total of 50 workers, full and part-time, and uses the services of contractors when necessary.

Recommend how the organisation can consult effectively with workers across the five sites. **(10)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 7.6: Explain the role, influences on and procedures for formal and informal consultation with workers in the workplace.

This is another practically based question where candidates needed to offer solutions to the practical difficulties of effective consultation in a multi-site business. Many candidates appeared to miss this focus of the question and answered by saying what would need to be consulted upon and why rather than how.

Marks were awarded for points such as appointing site representatives and regular committee meetings. Those candidates who focused on the communication rather than the consultation tended to gain some marks by default as the areas crossed over; however good marks in this question were not commonly awarded.

Question 4 In a chemical processing plant complex, risks are being assessed. A preliminary part of the risk assessment process is a hazard and operability (HAZOP) study.

Outline the principles and methodology of a HAZOP study. **(10)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 5.5: Explain the principles and techniques of failure tracing methodologies with the use of calculations.

Candidates with a good understanding of risk assessment and risk assessment techniques would be expected to gain good marks on this question. However, it was clear that there were some candidates who were not familiar with the concept of hazard and operability studies (HAZOPs). Those candidates tended to outline risk assessment in general terms and the application of control measures in a hierarchical manner. Both of which are key concepts in Unit IA, however not the answer to the question asked.

The question sought principles and methodology from candidates and marks were available for principles such as intention to identify deviations from design intent and the application of a team approach. In relation to the methodology candidates needed to outline actions such as applying specific guide words along with their meaning, studying cause and consequence and recording the findings, usually in a tabular format.

While good marks were awarded in many circumstances this area of the syllabus seemed to be under prepared by many candidates. There was in some cases confusion between HAZOP studies, event tree analysis (ETA) and fault tree analysis (FTA). Course providers and candidates are reminded and encouraged to prepare thoroughly for the examinations and ensure that they have a good grasp of all of the required learning outcomes.

Question 5 **Outline** information that should be included in written safe systems of work. **(10)**

*Details of any specific risk controls are **not** required.*

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.

This question was seeking to assess candidates' knowledge of the content of safe systems of work which is a key role of the health and safety practitioner to co-ordinate and evaluate in many circumstances.

Answers to the question varied considerably from those candidates who outlined the operation of a permit-to-work system which was not asked for in the question, to those who provided a good outline of the information that should be included in the safe system of work.

In order to achieve good marks candidates needed to outline information such as a clear description of the job or activity, the significant hazard and risks and arrangements for control.

Many answers were narrow in their approach and did not provide information beyond general risk assessment and the hierarchy of control, which while gaining some credit, did not achieve high marks.

Despite candidates being given the instruction '*Details of any specific risk controls are **not** required*' several candidates provided answers that did just that, referring to for example machinery and controls such as lock-out tag-out systems. Additionally, some candidates included unusual information in the safe systems of work such as holiday entitlement and the need to avoid stress, rather than more conventional content such as arrangements for communication between personnel involved in the work and emergency arrangements.

Candidates are reminded to take note of any instructions given in a question to avoid wasting time on points that will not gain them any marks.

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- Question 6** High levels of violation of workplace rules by workers may be influenced by poor organisational safety culture.
- (a) **Give** the meaning of the term '*violation*'. (2)
 - (b) **Outline** the classification of violation as '*routine*', '*situational*' or '*exceptional*', as described in HSG48: Reducing error and influencing behaviour. (4)
 - (c) **Outline** why poor organisational safety culture might lead to higher levels of violation by workers. (4)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 8.3 Explain the classification of human failure; and 7.7: Explain health and safety culture and climate.

Overall, the question was well answered and achieved the highest marks of all the questions in Section A. Most candidates were able to give the components of violation in part (a). In part (b) the classification of violations was well known generally with clear outlines of each being delivered by candidates. There was a split where some candidates found it difficult to outline a situational violation, other than to say it was linked to the situation. This narrow approach without context does not gain marks at this level.

In part (c) the question was specific in that it required candidates to make the link between poor safety culture and the occurrence of violations. Many candidates successfully referred to issues such as lack of commitment to safety by management and peer pressure through expectation, however, there were those who provided a stock answer to a culture question by outlining how the culture could be improved and there were no marks available for this since it was not asked for in the question.

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- Question 7** The management of an organisation intends to introduce new, safer working procedures.
- (a) **Outline** practical measures that the management could take to communicate effectively when managing this change. (10)
 - (b) *Other than* effective communication, **outline** additional ways in which the management could gain the support and commitment of workers when managing this change. (10)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 7.7: Explain health and safety culture and climate; and 7.8: Outline the factors which can both positively and negatively affect health and safety culture and climate.

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding both in practical and theoretical terms about the management of change in organisations. The question specifically sought to differentiate between communication and other methods of gaining support for the intended changes. This question was attempted by around 50% of candidates and as such there were a range of responses from those that were good and achieved high marks, to those that were less so and achieved low marks.

Part (a) of the question could have been well answered if candidates confined their responses to the communication elements as asked for in the question. Marks were available for provision of regular and frequent newsletters, regular meetings between management and workers, use of email and telecommunications, etc.

Part (b), assessed other ways, beyond communication, that can be used to gain support. Good responses to this part would have included, completing staff surveys, use of trials and pilots, and reviewing and amending the processes.

Several candidates confused what they should include in part (a) with what they should include in part (b). Mark-worthy points from part (b) found in answers to part (a) and vice versa could not be awarded as Examiners cannot *cross mark*.

Candidates who did well in this question separated out their responses accordingly by planning their answers to each part before writing them out.

Question 8 **Outline** the desirable design features of:

(a) controls; **(12)**

(b) displays; **(8)**

for a control panel which reduces the likelihood of human error.

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 8.6: Explain how job factors can contribute to improving human reliability.

This was a less popular choice of question on the examination which saw candidates' responses range from good detailed outlines clearly distinguishing between controls and displays, to those that mixed up the controls and displays of a control panel and therefore did not achieve high marks.

In part (a) referring to desirable controls points such as sufficient number of controls but kept to a minimum, visible, labelled, protected against inadvertent operation, controls next to respective displays, etc would have gained good marks. Those candidates who focused on elements of the environment, training of workers, did not gain high marks.

In part (b) the focus was specifically on displays of the control panel and answers should have considered displays such as analogue and digital, audible and light indicators as examples. Marks were awarded for clear visibility and labelling for example.

There was evidence of answers where the breadth of the answer was limited and only a few points were identified. There were several examples of candidates providing a list of features rather than an outline and therefore restricted marks that could be awarded for not following the command word.

Candidates and course providers are reminded to refer to the NEBOSH guidance on command words which gives a full list of all command words and their meanings; available on the NEBOSH website (see the Command word section at the end of this report for further information).

Question 9

A worker was on an elevated working platform when it was struck by a contractor's vehicle. The platform overturned, the worker fell and was seriously injured. An initial report recommends further investigation.

- (a) **Outline** why the accident should be investigated. (4)
- (b) **Outline** steps that should be followed when investigating the accident. (10)
- (c) **Outline** the benefits of conducting an accident investigation. (6)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 3.4: Explain the reasons for loss and near miss investigations and the procedures to be followed; and 3.3: Explain the significance and use of statutory and internal reporting of loss events.

The most popular of the Section B questions in this sitting, this question was answered by almost all candidates and yielded the highest level for marks for a Section B question in this sitting.

While there was a range of quality of answers those gaining high marks tended to include in their answer to part (a) reasons such as identifying the range of causes and preventing a recurrence and gathering data for trends analysis.

In part (b) candidates needed to follow a logical progression through the steps that should be taken when investigating the accident. Such steps could have been structured along the framework of *gather information, analyse the information, identify risk control measures and produce an action plan for implementation*. Those candidates who followed this structure, or similar, and provided an outline of each element gained high marks in this section. However, there were some who found it difficult to get beyond interviewing witnesses and provided a lengthy discussion on how to conduct effective interviews. While there were marks available for using interviews as a tool to gather information this was only a small part of the marks available.

In some cases candidates answering part (c) found themselves repeating what they had already stated as an answer to part (a). While it is recognised that there is likely to be some overlap, the distinction between the reasons why to investigate and the benefits of an investigation should be clear for candidates to distinguish separate answers. Those who recognised the distinction gained good marks by referring to benefits such as prevention of future similar events, improvement in employee morale and safety culture.

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- Question 10**
- (a) **Give** the meaning of:
 - (i) qualitative risk assessment; (3)
 - (ii) quantitative risk assessment; (2)
 - (iii) dynamic risk assessment. (2)
 - (b) **Identify** sources of information that may be used to identify hazards during the risk assessment process. (4)
 - (c) **Outline** potential limitations of *qualitative* risk assessments. (7)
 - (d) *Other than* significant risks, hazards and record of persons, **outline** what should be included in the significant findings section of a risk assessment. (2)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 5.3: Explain how to assess and evaluate risk and to implement a risk assessment programme.

This was the least popular question in Section B of the examination and was selected by less than half of the candidates sitting the examination.

Part (a) required candidates to distinguish between the terms qualitative, quantitative and dynamic in relation to risk assessments.

Several candidates appeared confused by the terms and offered a broad range of meanings not necessarily linked to risk assessment. Many candidates incorrectly referred to dynamic risk assessment as being a combination of both qualitative and quantitative.

Part (b) sought to determine an understanding of the information sources used to support a risk assessment. This was a well answered part of the question overall where good candidates referred to previous assessments, technical data, etc.

Part (c) seemed to cause some difficulty for many candidates, especially those who were unsure of the meaning of '*qualitative risk assessment*'. Those who did recognise the term referred to limitations such as failing to identify all hazards, variation of subjective perceptions between individuals, lack of competence of assessor, and picked up the corresponding marks.

Part (d) required candidates to refer to points such as recording the protective measures required to control the risks in order to gain marks. However, many candidates seemed to have missed this requirement from their risk assessments.

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- Question 11**
- (a) **Outline** the purpose of health and safety management auditing. (4)
 - (b) **Describe** factors that should be considered when planning an audit programme. (12)
*You do **not** need to consider specific factors to be audited.*
 - (c) **Outline** how senior managers can assist in the auditing process. (4)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 4.3: Describe the variety of health and safety monitoring and measurement techniques; and 7.2: Explain the organisational benefits of effective health and safety leadership.

With almost two thirds of candidates attempting this question it was one of the more popular choices and answers ranged from excellent to the not so good.

In part (a) the purpose of health and safety auditing was required in order to produce a good answer. In some examples candidates seemed to confuse auditing and inspections and therefore were not awarded good marks. Those candidates who made reference to objective and independent evidence to evaluate performance gained good marks in this part.

In part (b) despite the note in the question '*You do **not** need to consider specific factors to be audited*' several candidates did just that and therefore spent considerable time and effort on an area that was not worth any marks. Mark-worthy points would have been consideration of logistics, resources, scale, competencies, etc.

Part (c) of the question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of the leadership elements of the course in relation to the role of managers and other senior personnel in organisations. Apart from providing adequate resources few candidates could come up with other relevant points. Points such as communicating the importance of the programme and ensuring action plans were implemented would have gained marks.

Overall the question was answered in a reasonable way. However, once again examination technique, especially following instructions, seemed to let a few candidates down.

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.

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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 be 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.

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