
Examiners' Report

UNIT IG1: MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

MARCH 2020



For: **NEBOSH International General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety**
NEBOSH International Certificate in Fire Safety and Risk Management
NEBOSH International Certificate in Construction Health and Safety

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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 learners annually and are offered by over 600 Learning Partners, 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 learners and Learning Partners 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 learners 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 learners, 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.

This report has been prepared to provide feedback on the standard date IG1 examination sat in March 2020.

Feedback is presented in these key areas: responses to questions, examination technique and guidance on instructional task words, and is designed to assist learners and Learning Partners prepare for future assessments in this unit.

Learners and Learning Partners will also benefit from use of the 'Guide to the NEBOSH International General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety' which is available via the NEBOSH website. In particular, the guide sets out in detail the syllabus content for IG1 and tutor reference documents for each Element.

Unit IG1

Management of health and safety

Question 1	(a)	What does 'safe system of work' mean?	(2)
	(b)	Why should workers be involved when developing a safe system of work?	(4)
	(c)	Why should a safe system of work be written down?	(6)
	(d)	What types of information should be included in a written safe system of work?	(8)

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criterion 3.6: Describe what to consider when developing and implementing a safe system of work for general activities.

In part (a) answers that included points such as, a safe system of work considers hazards and controls, would have gained marks. Most learners were awarded one of the two marks available, but few gave sufficient content in their answers to gain both marks. Some learners wrote in very general terms about a procedure or a way to carry out work, but did not answer the question asked.

In part (b), reasons why workers should be involved when developing a safe system of work could have included that workers have experience in the task, and their involvement will make them feel valued.

Some learners appeared to misread or misunderstand the question and provided answers that covered manager-involvement, rather than worker-involvement, or alternatively, gave a general description as to how a safe system of work might be prepared and used. While others gave answers with insufficient breadth to gain good marks.

In part (c), learners could have given reasons, such as, that it is a permanent record, will assist in following the correct sequence of actions, and for audit purposes, all of which would have gained marks.

Most learners gained some marks for part (c), but as with part (b), many provided too few valid points to gain most or all of the marks available. This may have been due to a lack of knowledge, or lack of examination technique.

Some learners appeared to misread or misunderstand this part of the question and did not give an answer related to a safe system of work. Other learners did not appear to know what a safe system of work is and had difficulty with this part of the question.

In part (d) learners identified a limited number of types of information within a very narrow range, for example PPE requirements, the level of competence required, risks, and supervision requirements, therefore full marks could not be gained.

Some learners appeared to misread or misunderstand this part of the question and provided answers that included what might be included in documents such as a safety policy or a risk assessment. Other learners provided a description of a permit-to-work system.

It is important that learners have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the topics in the syllabus so that they can answer questions with confidence.

Learners also need to read and re-read questions carefully to help ensure that they understand what is required before starting to write their answer. Attention to the required breadth of answer is also needed to help ensure learners provide enough valid points in their answer to be able to gain the marks available.

Question 2 What are possible costs to an organisation of a work-related fatality? **(8)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criterion 1.1: Discuss the moral, financial and legal reasons for managing health and safety in the workplace.

Possible costs could have included the cost of carrying out an investigation, raised insurance premiums, fines, and production delays. This question was well answered by many learners and good marks were obtained, with some learners gaining all eight marks.

Some learners spent time writing about direct and indirect costs and explaining what these are and the differences between them. The question did not require this and those learners who provided these details lost valuable time on content that could gain no marks.

Question 3 What individual human factors *negatively* influence behaviour at work? **(8)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criterion 3.3: Summarise the human factors which positively or negatively influence behaviour at work in a way that can affect health and safety.

Answers to this question were variable. Some learners gave answers that, incorrectly, included job factors and/or organisational factors, which was not what the question asked and would not gain marks. It may be that some learners misread or misunderstood the question, or it may be that their knowledge and understanding of human factors was limited. Answers were often too brief to gain full marks.

Better answers would have included individual human factors such as: lack of competence, lack of motivation, stress, and poor literacy.

Question 4 What are workers' main health and safety responsibilities in the workplace? **(8)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criterion 1.2: Explain how health and safety is regulated and the consequences of non-compliance.

Many learners gave good answers to this question and gained most of the marks available. Common mark-worthy answers included co-operating with their employer, taking reasonable care of other persons and reporting any accidents or injury to health.

There was a mark available for the responsibility of workers to comply with procedures. Some learners gave that point in their answer (and gained the mark) but then went on to give several examples of procedures and how those procedures might be complied with. This content gained no extra mark and valuable time could have been spent on other questions.

Some learners appeared to misread or misunderstand the question and gave details of an employers' responsibilities or the responsibilities of managers, rather than of workers.

Question 5 What methods can be used to communicate health and safety information to workers? **(8)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criterion 3.2: Summarise how health and safety culture at work can be improved.

Answers provided for this question ranged from reasonable to good. Better answers included verbal briefings, worker handbooks, payslips, and safety induction, all gaining marks.

Some answers incorrectly included broad *types* of communication, such as 'graphic', rather than *methods* of communication; 'signage' is the method and would have gained a mark.

It appeared to learners did not read the question thoroughly, or misunderstood what was required. Some learners went into a lot of detail about the advantages and disadvantages of different methods of communication. This is not what was asked for and time was wasted on content that would not gain marks.

It is important that learners read and re-read a question carefully to understand what the question requires before starting their answer.

Question 6 What should you consider when deciding how often active monitoring should take place? **(8)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criterion 4.1: Discuss common methods and indicators used to monitor the effectiveness of management systems.

Generally, this question was not well answered. Common errors made included learners detailing different types of monitoring that might be carried out, giving the advantages and disadvantages of different types of monitoring, and explaining what active monitoring is; none of which would have gained marks.

Better answers would have included statutory requirements, best practice guidance, enforcement action, and insurer's requirements.

Some learners did not attempt this question. Whether this was because they did not have the knowledge and understanding, or because they ran out of time, is unknown.

Question 7

(a) What types of workplace emergencies may require people to be evacuated? **(4)**

(b) Why do evacuation procedures need to be developed for workplace emergencies? **(4)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criterion 3.8: Discuss typical emergency procedures (including training and testing) and how to decide what level of first aid is needed in the workplace.

For part (a) most learners were awarded marks for giving emergencies such as escape of hazardous substances and natural disaster.

Some learners answered by giving details of more than one type of escape of a hazardous substance, such as the escape of flammable gas, or escape of toxic liquid, to gain a mark. However, only one mark was available for this type of emergency so a learner would only gain one mark.

Part (b) was less well answered by many learners. Some learners did not address 'why' evacuation procedures need to be developed, but instead detailed what might be included in an emergency procedure, or described how an evacuation might be carried out.

Marks were available for answers that included reasons why such as to protect the environment, and to satisfy insurance requirements.

Learners need to read and re-read questions carefully to make sure they understand what is being asked in the question and what then is required in their answer to gain marks.

Question 8	When a serious incident occurs in the workplace, it is important to investigate.	
(a)	Why is it important to identify root causes?	(5)
(b)	Who might carry out the internal incident investigation?	(3)

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criterion 4.2: Explain why and how incidents should be investigated, recorded and reported.

Part (a) was not consistently well answered, with many learners not giving sufficient valid points to gain most or all of the marks available.

Learners need to take note of the number of marks available for a section of a question as it indicates the breadth of answer required. Therefore, giving only one or two reasons why, when five marks were available, would mean that most of the marks would not be gained.

Some learners misread or misunderstood this part of the question and detailed what the root causes of an incident might be.

Better answers to part (a) would have included points such as, that it may be an organisational requirement, that management system failures could cause other incidents, and to help target resources.

Part (b) was, generally, better answered with most learners gaining marks and some gaining all three marks. Answers that included safety representatives and supervisors would have gained marks.

Question 9	What are the reasons for reviewing a health and safety management system?	(8)
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This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criterion 2.2: Discuss the main ingredients of health and safety management systems that make it effective – policy, responsibilities, arrangements.

Learners' performance on this question was variable. Some learners showed a good understanding of the topic, gaining reasonable to good marks.

However, some learners appeared to misread or misunderstand the question and provided answers that described what might be included in a safety management system, not the reasons for reviewing. Other learners wrote about a review of safety performance or a review of a health and safety policy, rather than what was asked.

Reasons for reviewing a health and safety management system that would have gained marks included a change in standards, results of active monitoring, worker complaints, and the introduction of new materials.

Question 10 What should be considered when assessing the competence of a contractor at the pre-selection stage? **(8)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criterion 1.3: Summarise the main health and safety duties of different groups of people at work; and: Explain how contractors should be selected, monitored and managed.

This question was, generally, well answered by learners, with many gaining good marks and some earning the full eight marks that were available.

Better answers would have included points such as a contractor's experience of similar work, sub-contractor management, and contractor's arrangements for safety monitoring.

Question 11 (a) What are the *advantages* of an internal auditor carrying out a health and safety audit? **(4)**

(b) What are the *disadvantages* of an internal auditor carrying out a health and safety audit? **(4)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criterion 4.3: Explain what an audit is and why and how it is used to evaluate a management system.

Most learners gained marks for both part (a) and part (b) of the question.

Part (a) had marks available for the advantages of an internal auditor, such as that workers are likely to co-operate, and an internal auditor is familiar with the workplace.

Part (b) had marks available for disadvantages of an internal auditor, such as that they may miss things as they are familiar with the workplace, and an internal auditor may be subject to time constraints.

There was a common limitation of breadth of answers to both parts. Many learners only gave one or two answers to each part. This could be a lack of awareness of examination technique, or it could be an indication of a lack of knowledge and understanding.

Examination technique

The following issues are consistently identified as the main areas in need of improvement for learners taking Certificate level qualifications:

Learners misread/misinterpreted the question

Learners misreading or misinterpreting the question is by far the most common cause of learners not gaining the maximum marks available.

NEBOSH questions are systematically and carefully prepared and are subject to a number of checks and balances prior to being authorised for use in question papers. These checks include ensuring that questions set for the Certificate level qualifications relate directly to the learning outcomes contained within the associated syllabus guides. The learning outcomes require learners to be sufficiently prepared to provide the relevant depth of answer across a broad range of subject areas. For example, a learner could be asked about the causes of stress, or could be asked about the effects of stress. A question could require a response relating to the principles of fire initiation, or a question could require a response relating to the spread of fire. Therefore, a learner should focus not only on the general topic area (eg stress, fire) but also the specific aspect of that subject to which the question relates.

Learners must also pay attention to the instructional task word. For example, a question could ask learners 'what are the hazards associated with demolition work?', or a question from the same element could ask learners to 'discuss the control measures required during demolition work?'. Learners appear to focus solely on the object of the question (demolition) and do not pay sufficient attention to the subject (hazards or control measures in the examples given) or the instructional task word. There is often some confusion between hazard and risk. If a question requires an outline of hazards for a given situation, learners must be careful not to provide risks, or even in some circumstances precautions, as they will not be able to attract marks.

Examiners suggest that while many learners do begin their answer satisfactorily and perhaps gain one or two marks, they then lose sight of the question and include irrelevant information. Although further points included in an answer can relate to the general subject area, these points are not focused on the specific learning outcome and marks cannot be awarded. However, some learners appear to misread or misinterpret several questions. This situation is more likely due to learners preparing for the examination with a number of memorised answers obtained through rote-learning, that again can provide answers that are loosely associated with the subject matter but do not provide answers specific to the question. Such an approach is clearly evident to an Examiner and demonstrates little understanding of the subject matter and marks are not awarded.

Learners are advised to allow sufficient time to read and re-read the question in order to determine the key requirements prior to committing their answer to paper. Preparing a time plan before the examination will indicate how many minutes are available for each question and then part of this time allocation can be given to reading the question. Underlining or highlighting key words can assist in keeping focused on the salient points and simple mind maps or answer plans can also be useful. Maps and plans should be kept simple so as not to use up too much examination time.

Learners did not provide the necessary breadth to their answers

An important part of examination technique is for learners to recognise that the number of marks available equates to the number of answers expected, for example, if there are eight marks available, learners must try to provide eight or more answers to achieve full marks. If they only provide five answers and all are deemed mark-worthy, then the maximum marks they can possibly attain is five and three marks will not be gained.

Learners unnecessarily wrote the question down

Developing a time plan is a key element in preparing for an examination. Advice included on Certificate question papers suggests that 30 minutes should be allocated for the answer to the long 20-mark question, and 90 minutes should be allocated to the answers for the remaining ten, 8-mark short questions. Therefore there are around 9 minutes available to answer an 8-mark question. This time will be required for reading the question properly at least twice, developing an answer plan, and then committing the answer to paper while regularly referring back to the question in order to maintain focus. Therefore any inefficient use of this time should be avoided.

The efficient use of this time is essential in order to ensure that all questions can be answered within the 2 hours available. Many learners feel it necessary to write out the question, in full, prior to providing their answer and although this practice will not lose marks it will lose valuable time. A significant number of learners do not answer all of the questions in the time permitted and do not complete the question paper, some of whom obviously run out of time.

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

It is clear that there are a significant number of learners who seem to recite answers in the examination that have been rote-learned in advance and do not answer the question.

While knowledge of material forms a part of the study for a Certificate-level qualification, a key aspect being assessed is a learner's **understanding** of the subject and reciting a pre-prepared and memorised answer will not show a learner's understanding. In fact, if a learner gives a memorised answer to a question that may look similar, but actually is asking for a different aspect of a topic in the syllabus, it shows a lack of understanding of the subject and will inevitably result in low marks being awarded for that answer.

Learners repeated the same points but in different ways / Learners provided the same answer to different questions

There are instances where learners repeat very similar points in their answers, sometimes a number of times. This is easily done in the stressful environment of the examination. However, once a point has been successfully made and a mark awarded for it, that mark cannot be awarded again for similar points made later in the answer.

Learners are advised to practise examination technique in their preparations to avoid this kind of pitfall. Writing an answer plan where points can be ticked off when made, or structuring an answer so that each point made is clearly shown, for example by underlining key points, can be of great use. This technique aids learners and makes it much clearer in the stress of the examination for learners to see which points have been made and reduce the chances of the same point being made several times.

Learners did not answer all of the questions

It has been noted that a number of learners do not attempt all of the questions and of course where a learner does not provide an answer to a question, no marks can be awarded. This seriously affects the potential marks available and the possibility of achieving a pass. Learning Partners must emphasise the importance of attempting all questions in order to maximise the opportunity to attract marks.

There can be several reasons for this issue: running out of the allocated time for the examination, not knowing the answer to the question, or forgetting to answer a question.

Questions can be answered in any order and answers can be written in any order in the answer book provided. Learners are advised to clearly keep track of questions they have attempted, such as marking them on the question paper that would minimise the risk of inadvertently missing a question to answer.

If the subject of the question is unfamiliar or the answer is not known, then it will be challenging to provide an answer. This can result from rote-learning and preparing for an examination with a number of memorised answers, or simply not being adequately prepared for the examination across the breadth of the syllabus. There is always the risk of a learner 'going blank' in an examination situation, in which case learners should be prepared with some techniques to help. Rather than trying to remember what was taught or what has been read, ask yourself 'what would I do, in this situation?'. Reference to personal application or experience is sometimes enough to stimulate an answer that otherwise may have been missed. Alternatively, learners can go back to first principles and break a question down into elements such as 'people', 'equipment', 'materials' and the 'working environment'. Approaching a question in small sections can minimise the risk of being overwhelmed by it as a whole.

Running out of time can be avoided by having an examination time plan and working to it. The question paper advises that you should spend 30 minutes on the long answer (question 1) and 90 minutes on the remaining ten short answer questions. This will provide around 9 minutes per short answer, follow the clock and when the time per question has expired, move on. Answering a question partly is better than not answering at all.

Learners did not allocate enough time to the question / Time management

In a number of cases question 1 is left until last or later in the question paper and does not appear to be answered completely. Other learners appear to rush the last one or two questions by providing very brief or bullet point answers. This indicates a lack of time management. It is advised that Learning Partners and learners spend time developing the skill of writing answers to questions bearing in mind the number of marks and time available. A 20-mark question requires significantly more detail than an 8-mark question.

Learners might benefit from writing abbreviations to save time and to recognise that there is no need to write out the question at the beginning of their answer. Standard abbreviations such as HSE, RIDDOR, COSHH, PPE and DSE are acceptable.

Learners' handwriting was illegible

Sometimes Examiners have difficulty in reading the handwriting of some learners. Although allowances are made for learners under the pressure of an examination, Learning Partners must remind learners that their writing needs to be legible or valuable marks may not be picked up during marking.

There is a minimum literacy requirement for learners on NEBOSH qualifications. As stated in the syllabus guides the standard of English required by learners studying for Certificate level must be such that they can both understand and articulate the concepts contained in the syllabus.

NEBOSH recommends to Learning Partners that learners taking this qualification should reach a minimum standard of English equivalent to an International English Language Testing System score of 6.0 or higher in IELTS tests in order to be accepted onto a Certificate level programme.

For further information please see the latest version of the IELTS Handbook or consult the IELTS website: <https://www.ielts.org/about-the-test/test-format>

Learners wishing to assess their own language expertise may consult the IELTS website for information on taking the test: <https://www.ielts.org>

Learning Partners are reminded that they must ensure that these standards are satisfied or additional tuition provided to ensure accessible and inclusive lifelong learning.

Guidance on instructional task words

As part of the redevelopment of the IGC and NGC, NEBOSH worked with the Plain English Campaign to help ensure the language NEBOSH use is easier to understand, is straightforward, more direct and informal.

The Plain English check has also been applied to the NG1/IG1 question papers and learners can now expect to see the following instructional task words:

- When
- Which
- Who
- What
- Why
- How
- Give

By using common 'everyday' language it is hoped that both learners and tutors will more easily understand and relate to the questions and expected answers. However, learners are still be expected to give depth and breadth to their answers where applicable.

Example questions

Some example questions are listed below with advice on the depth and breadth of the answers required:

- *What are the three sections of a health and safety policy?*

In this instance a list could be used.

For other 'what' questions more depth and breadth may be needed depending on the question, for example: *What are the reasons for reviewing a health and safety policy?* would require a more detailed answer.

- *When would you need to carry out a workplace health and safety inspection?*

While specific times (weekly/monthly) are not required, marks would be awarded for the circumstances – and detail around these – when an inspection would take place.

Who would be included in a health and safety committee meeting?

A list would be sufficient here, for example, job roles, etc.

- *Which documents would be examined during a health and safety audit?*

Again, a list of documents required would be sufficient.

- *Why should a safe system of work be written down?*

The answer would require more detail, depth and breadth. Use sentences to explain the reasons behind an activity.

- *How should 'specified injuries' OR 'major injuries' be reported to the relevant enforcing agency?*

Use sentences to provide detail, depth and breadth in the answer.

- *Give the meaning of the term 'health'?*

Use sentences to provide detail, depth and breadth in the answer.

Learners must also remember that, as a minimum, they should give the same number of answer points as there are marks available, with a few extra points if time allows. So if learners only give four answer points for an 8-mark question, they have immediately limited the marks that can be awarded, and potentially more so, if some of those answers are incorrect.