
Examiners' Report

UNIT IGC1: MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL 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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Any enquiries about this report publication should be addressed to:

NEBOSH
Dominus Way
Meridian Business Park
Leicester
LE19 1QW

tel: 0116 263 4700
fax: 0116 282 4000
email: info@nebosh.org.uk

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 IGC1 examination sat in March 2020.

Feedback is presented in these key areas: responses to questions, examination technique and command 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 IGC1 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.

Unit IGC1

Management of international health and safety

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- Question 1**
- (a) **Outline** the purpose of the following sections of a health and safety policy:
 - (i) statement of intent; (2)
 - (ii) organisation. (2)
 - (b) **Identify** possible content of the '*arrangements*' section of a health and safety policy. (8)
 - (c) **Outline** circumstances that may require a health and safety policy to be reviewed. (8)
-

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 2.3: Describe the key features and appropriate content of an effective health and safety policy.

In part (a) (i) there was a mark available for an outline that included the point, among others, 'sets objectives'. This part was, generally, well answered by learners, with most gaining a one of the two marks available.

For part (a) (ii) a mark was available for an outline that included, 'enables effective delegation', but few learners included this point in their answer. Although this part was also well answered, fewer learners gained both marks that were available.

Possible answers that could have been identified in part (b) included control of contractors, health surveillance, and worker communication arrangements.

Some learners did not identify enough points to earn most or all of the marks available for this part of the question. There were eight marks available for part (b) which, along with the command word 'identify, indicated the breadth of answers (number of valid points) that is required to gain good to full marks. As such, a learner who only identifies one or two points will not obtain a good mark.

Conversely, some learners provided unnecessary detail about the points in their answers, ie having gained the mark, for example, control of contractors, extra detail was written about how that control might be exercised, which was not required and was not an effective use of examination time.

For part (c) some learners gained most of the marks available for points such as, results of active monitoring, change of key personnel, and requested by a third party.

Common answers included some reference to 'change' but gave no clarification as to what the change would be, for a mark to be awarded.

There were some common limitations in answers to part (c); some learners outlined too few points to obtain a good mark, while others only listed points in their answer limiting their marks. It is important that learners understand the depth and breadth required by the command words. There is further information on this point in the Command word section of this Report

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- Question 2** (a) **Give** the meaning of the term *'health and safety culture'*. **(2)**
- (b) **Outline** indicators of a good health and safety culture. **(6)**
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This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.2: Explain the concept of health and safety culture and its significance in the management of health and safety in an organisation.

In part (a) a number of learners appeared not to know the meaning of this term and had difficulty gaining any of the two marks available; one of which could be gained for an answer containing a reference to the accepted behaviour in the workplace.

Some learners did not answer the question asked, giving a very general description of health and safety, rather than health and safety culture. It is not clear if that was an error of examination technique, ie they did not read and understand the question, or whether, not knowing the correct answer, they wrote something else for part (a).

In part (b) some learners provided answers that described possible key performance indicators and missed most or all of the marks available. Better answers that included points such as co-operation between workers and managers, and fewer incidents, would have gained marks.

Overall, learners found this question challenging and those learners who did not know what health and safety culture is in part (a), had difficulty writing about indicators of a good culture in part (b).

The command word for part (b) is 'outline' and not all learners provided sufficient depth of answer to gain good marks.

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- Question 3** **Explain** why an organisation should review its health and safety performance. **(8)**
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This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 5.2: Explain the purpose of, and procedures for, regular reviews of health and safety performance.

Marks for this question were awarded for those answers that included an explanation of points such as: to identify good and bad health and safety practices; to benchmark against other organisations; and it is a requirement of ISO 45001.

Some learners appeared to misread or misunderstand the question and instead provided answers that discussed the reason for reviewing other things related to health and safety, such as reviewing a health and safety policy. While some answers included too few valid reasons to gain many marks.

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- Question 4**
- (a) **Outline** why it is important to determine the root causes (management system failures) of a serious accident. (4)
- (b) **Identify** who may need to see an accident investigation report. (4)
-

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 4.2: Explain the purpose of, and procedures for, investigating incidents (accidents, cases of work-related ill-health and other occurrences); and 4.3: Describe the legal and organisational requirements for recording and reporting incidents.

Most learners who gained marks for part (a) did so by correctly outlining that it is important to determine the root causes of an accident to prevent recurrence. A few learners also mentioned other reasons why, such as it is a requirement of an organisation's health and safety management system (SMS).

Some learners appeared to misread or misunderstand part (a) and provided answers that dealt with accidents generally or accident investigation.

Part (b) was, generally, answered with more confidence by learners, with most gaining marks for identifying workers' representative and insurers.

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- Question 5**
- (a) **Identify** types of emergency in the workplace for which people may need to be evacuated. (4)
- (b) **Outline** why it is important to have emergency procedures to evacuate people from the workplace. (4)
-

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.10: Outline the need for emergency procedures and the arrangements for contacting emergency services.

Part (a) of the question was, generally, well answered, with most learners being able to identify types of emergency such as fire, or the escape of hazardous substances.

Some learners provided an answer that identified several different hazardous substances that might escape to create an emergency, but there was only one mark available for this type of emergency.

Part (b) was not answered well. Most learners outlined only one or two points, limiting the marks that could be awarded. Marks were available for such answers as, an emergency procedure will help workers know how to respond in an emergency, and to protect the environment.

Some learners did not answer the question asked and instead provided details of what might be included in an emergency procedure, or precautions needed to ensure an emergency procedure is effective in practice. It may be that these learners did not read the question carefully before starting to write their answer.

Question 6 **Outline** the role of health and safety enforcement agencies. **(8)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 1.3: Explain the role of national governments and international bodies in formulating a framework for the regulation of health and safety.

Many learners gained the marks available for those aspects of the role of an enforcement agency that might follow an incident or a breach of the law, such as fines. Fewer learners were able to outline the broader role, such as the publishing of guidance or the gathering of statistics.

Learners need to expand and give specific details in their answers to questions, for example, 'may take action' is neither clear nor sufficient an outline to gain a mark.

There were some common errors that may have resulted from misunderstanding the question, or reflect a lack of knowledge and understanding of the role of enforcement agencies. Some learners wrote about the role of an organisation's own, internal health and safety officer, or described the powers of an enforcement agency inspector. This suggests they may have learned particular questions and not read the question correctly.

Question 7 **Outline** what an organisation should consider when assessing the competence of a contractor at the pre-selection stage. **(8)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.1: Outline the health and safety roles and responsibilities of employers, directors, managers, supervisors, workers and other relevant parties.

An organisation should consider such things as the contractor's experience of similar work, their sub-contractor management, and the contractor's risk assessments.

Some learners outlined too few points to gain good marks for this question. Several learners appeared to misread or misunderstand the question and did not focus their answer on the pre-selection stage. Answers that described the management of contractors when already appointed and working, missed most or all of the marks available. It is essential that learners are reminded to read and re-read questions carefully and be sure they understand what a question requires.

Question 8 (a) **Outline** why an organisation should carry out reactive monitoring of its health and safety performance. **(4)**

 (b) **Identify** types of information that could be considered when carrying out reactive monitoring. **(4)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 4.1: Outline the principles, purpose and role of active and reactive monitoring.

Some learners provided an answer to part (a) by describing how monitoring might be done and/or gave examples of different types of reactive monitoring, rather than what was asked for, the reasons why reactive monitoring should be carried out.

Because of this, few learners gained the marks that were available for reasons such as, to measure the costs of incidents, and to identify where corrective measures are required.

Part (b) was, generally, better answered than part (a). Marks were available for types of information such as accident records, and records of complaints by workers.

Question 9 **Outline** why a worker may fail to clearly understand a verbal instruction. **(8)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.4: Explain how health and safety behaviour at work can be improved.

Most learners gained marks for this question. Those learners who were able to outline several appropriate reasons, including sensory impairment, the complexity of information, and a noisy environment, were awarded good marks.

However, some learners gave answers that described the giving of instructions quite generally, or mistakenly described different methods of communication.

Learners need to read and re-read questions carefully to help ensure that they understand what is required to gain good marks.

Question 10 (a) **Outline** the purpose of employers' liability insurance. **(2)**

(b) **Identify** possible uninsured costs of a workplace accident. **(6)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 1.2: Explain the moral, social and economic reasons for maintaining and promoting good standards of health and safety in the workplace.

In part (a) most learners gained one of the two marks available, with answers such as employers' liability insurance will compensate an injured worker. However, few learners gave an outline of sufficient breadth to obtain both marks.

In part (b) some learners gave answers that detailed insured costs instead of uninsured costs. This may have been due to a lack of knowledge, but may also reflect a misreading or misunderstanding of this part of the question.

Possible uninsured costs which could have been identified included, fines, and investigation costs, but some learners outlined too few possible points to gain many marks.

Question 11 **Outline** what an organisation could do in order to have effective first-aid provision. **(8)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.11: Outline the requirements for, and effective provision of, first aid in the workplace.

Most learners gained a good mark for this question by outlining an appropriate number of things that an organisation could do to. More marks were available for points such as, to consider the needs of vulnerable persons, ensure cover for shifts, and establish shared provision if a site is shared.

Some learners did not answer the question asked. There were answers that explained how to assess the number of first-aiders needed in a workplace, described what personal qualities a first-aiders needs, or which gave details of what should be contained in a first-aid box and so therefore missed most or all of the marks available.

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 command word. For example, a question could ask learners to **'identify** the hazards associated with demolition work', or a question from the same element could ask learners to **'outline** 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 command word ('identify' or 'outline' in the examples given). 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 respond effectively to the command word

A key indicator a 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 learner and relates to the amount of detail that should be included in each point of the answer.

The learning outcomes in each element of all syllabus guides include the relevant command word that dictates the level of detail that should be covered in a course of study and the depth of answer that a learner would be expected to provide in an answer to an examination question.

Examiners report that learners continue to incorrectly observe the command words and therefore compromise their ability to gain the marks available. The majority of cases where command words are not observed relate to insufficient detail being given by a learner in their examination answer. A significant number of learners, irrespective of the command word given in the question, provide all answers in the form of a brief list of one or two words. This would normally not be sufficient to gain marks where the command word given was 'outline', 'explain' or 'describe', all of which require answers of more than one or two words.

Some learners do provide too much information, which would not be required where a command word limits the expected answer to 'give' or 'identify'. Learners would not be penalised for providing excessive detail but this would not be an efficient use of the time allocated.

Learning Partners should ensure that learning materials complement the command words in the syllabus guide and the NEBOSH guidance on command words and that sufficient time is given to advising learners on suitable examination technique during a course of study.

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, even when these questions require an outline. 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.

Command words

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

Outline

The command word 'outline' is by far the most challenging for learners. Referring to the NEBOSH guidance on command words available on the NEBOSH website, 'outline' means *"To indicate the principal features or different parts of"*.

Many learners do not give sufficient detail in order to warrant an 'outline' answer. The NEBOSH guidance on command word states that *"an exhaustive description is not required. What is sought is a brief summary of the major aspects of whatever is stated in the question"*.

If the use of the command word in everyday language or conversation is considered it may help the learner understand what is required. If asked to '**outline** the risks to an operator when manually closing a valve' an answer such as 'cuts, bruises, burns and strains' would be insufficient as this represents a listed answer. However, 'cuts from contact with sharp edges of the hand wheel, bruises from impact with adjacent plant items, burns from contact with adjacent uninsulated pipe work and strains from using excessive force' would be sufficient.

Explain

The command word 'explain' requires the learner to provide an understanding of the subject of the question and will usually be used in conjunction with 'why' or 'how'. Such as '**explain** how an interlocked guard operates' or '**explain** why a forklift truck may overturn'.

Some learners approach an 'explain' question the same as an 'outline' and provide a number of individual points rather than providing an explanation as to how something operates or why something occurs. While some learners do answer such questions sufficiently and satisfactorily, other learners have difficulty in explaining in a logical sequence and many repeat the same point.

Identify

'Identify' questions require the name or title of an item, such as, '**identify** the effects of electricity on the human body', or '**identify** the features of a vehicle route'. In most cases one or two words will be sufficient and further detail will not be required to gain the marks.

For example, if asked to '**identify** types of equipment found in an office' appropriate answers could be personal computer, printer, telephone, photocopier, etc. There would be no need to embellish those points with a description of the equipment or its function.

However, in contrast to 'outline' answers being too brief, many learners feel obliged to expand 'identify' answers into too much detail, with the possible perception that more words equals more marks. This is not the case and Learning Partners should use the NEBOSH guidance on command words within their examination preparation sessions in order to prepare learners for the command words that may arise.

Describe

The command word 'describe' clearly requires a description of something. The NEBOSH guidance on command words says that 'describe' requires a detailed written account of the distinctive features of a topic such that another person would be able to visualise what was being described.

If asked to describe the clock in the examination room, a person would have little difficulty in doing so and would most probably refer to its shape, its size, the colour of the clock and the style of numerals. Answers to such a question would almost certainly not result in general unconnected information about clocks, the history of clocks, or an explanation of why the clock is present in the room. Learners should consider the general use of the command word when providing examination answers.

Give

'Give' questions require a statement that is relevant to the subject asked for in the question but additional explanation is not required. Often, 'give' questions ask for the meaning of a particular term. While detailed explanation of the application of the term would not be required, a correct knowledge of the term itself is needed in order for the Examiner to award marks.

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: <https://www.nebosh.org.uk/i-am/a-learner/> - from this page the document can be found by clicking on the relevant Qualification link, then on the 'Resources' tab.