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NEBOSH National and International General Certificates in Occupational Health and Safety assessments: Learner Performance Report May 2023

Advice and an indication of the types of answers that would attract credit, and those that would not, for the NG1, IG1, NGC1 and IGC1 unit assessments.

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Learner Feedback

Management of Health and Safety

Unit NG1:

For: NEBOSH National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety

Unit NGC1:

For: NEBOSH National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety

NEBOSH National Certificate in Construction Health and Safety

NEBOSH National Certificate in Fire Safety and Risk Management

Management of Health and Safety

Unit IG1:

For: NEBOSH International General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety

Management of International Health and Safety

Unit IGC1:

For: NEBOSH International General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety

NEBOSH International Certificate in Construction Health and Safety

NEBOSH International Certificate in Fire Safety and Risk Management

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About NEBOSH

NEBOSH is a leading global organisation, which provides health, safety, and environmental qualifications. Our internationally recognised qualifications help to raise the competence of safety and environmental professionals as well as individuals at all levels in the workplace.

As a registered charity, NEBOSH has a clear vision and mission:

- Our Vision is to preserve and improve health, safety, well-being, and the environment in workplaces worldwide.
- Our Mission is to be recognised as the global leading provider of high-quality qualifications, training opportunities and learner engagement in occupational health, safety, environmental, well-being, risk, and related subjects.

Tens of thousands of people from more than 170 countries study for a NEBOSH qualification every year, learning with our network of over 450 Learning Partners.

Our qualifications are highly respected by governments, employers, and our learners. They build the knowledge and skills which underpin competent performance as a health, safety, and environmental professional.

As an awarding body, NEBOSH applies best practice in setting assessments and marking, and applies to Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Accreditation regulatory requirements and Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition.

General Certificate assessments

The NEBOSH National and International Certificate in General Occupational Health and Safety Certificate assessments have been designed to provide accessibility to all learners from all over the world, enabling them to complete assessments and achieve NEBOSH qualifications from a safe and suitable location.

This guide will support learners and Learning Partners in preparation for the assessment alongside the syllabuses, course notes and other reference materials for units NG1, IG1, NGC1 and IGC1. These units are part of the National and International General Certificate, the National and International Certificate in Fire Risk Management, and the National and International Certificate in Construction Health and Safety.

Further information about NEBOSH certificate assessments, including resources, sample questions and guidance videos, can be found at www.nebosh.org.uk/digital-assessments/certificate/

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Examples of responses

The following information gives advice and an indication of the types of answers that would attract credit and those that would not. It also guides learners in their approach to similar tasks and questions that they could expect to see in their assessment.

These questions are from the May 2023 Unit NG1 assessment on a specified scenario. Learners must not take these as the actual questions that they will be required to answer in their own assessment.

Marks available will always be shown at the end of each question, with 1 mark for each correct answer given by a learner. This gives the learner an indication of the minimum number of answers they must give for each question to ensure a good chance of attaining a 'Pass' in this assessment.

Scenario

You are a full-time worker at a popular café in a town centre. A month ago, the café changed to operating from 5 days to 7 days a week. The workforce consists of the owner of the café, a part-time shift manager (SM), three full-time workers, and two part-time workers who work on busier days. The SM is the first new hire in the last two years. The café is managed by the owner 5 days a week and the part-time SM manages the café for the remaining two days.

The café is in an old, renovated narrow building on a busy, pedestrianised shopping street. It has a service counter near to the entrance where orders are taken and drinks are made. Once a customer places an order at the counter, they are given a numbered sign to place on their table. When the order is ready, a worker will take it to the customer's table.

There are two indoor seating areas. At the back of the first area, there is a step that leads up to the second area. In the past, customers and new workers have often tripped over this step. You have previously raised this with the owner, as you noticed an increase in the number of times it is mentioned in the accident book. Luckily, there have never been any serious injuries. Following your conversation, the owner has hung

a 'mind the step' sign on the wall next to the step. In these seating areas, the furniture is placed very close together. A corridor at the back of the café leads to a unisex restroom and an emergency exit. There is a patio outside the front of the café where further seating is available.

Since the new SM started working at the café, you and the other workers have noticed some changes. It is obvious that the new SM has been keen to impress the owner. The SM insists that tasks must be completed quickly, so that more customers can be served. One of the full-time workers raised concerns with the SM about the increase in workload. The SM angrily told them that it was *"good for the business; that is what matters most."* None of the workers look forward to working on the days that the SM is in charge.

On a day off work, the owner is catching up with some administrative tasks. While going through some paperwork, they notice that the number of worker sick days has substantially increased in the last month.

Faulty machine

Early in the week, the owner is on duty. The part-time worker on-shift notifies them that one of the two commercial-sized coffee machines is not working. The owner inspects the coffee machine and concludes that the pressure system (used to create steam) has a fault. They instruct the part-time worker to stop using the faulty machine and the owner puts an 'out of order' sign on it. The owner then contacts the coffee machine company and arranges for the repairs to be carried out. The owner calls and leaves a voice message for the SM, informing them of the broken coffee machine. In their message, the owner explains that a contractor will carry out repairs in two days' time, and that the SM must supervise the contractor while they are on site. The SM did not return the call.

On the day that the contractor is due to arrive, the SM, a full-time and a part-time worker, and you, are on shift at the café. By midday it has started to rain heavily, so all the indoor seating is being used. More customers continue to enter the café to shelter from the bad weather. As they enter, some customers shake rainwater off their umbrellas and coats.

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The SM is determined to keep a high turnover of customers. They find you in the second seating area and tell you to bring in some outdoor tables and chairs for customers to use. You tell the SM you do not think there is enough space to set up additional furniture. The SM points to various areas in the current walkways and says “look, there’s plenty of space.” They even point out the large empty space in front of the corridor at the back of the second seating area. They tell you to “get on with the job before we lose any customers.” The SM then leaves, allowing you to complete the task. The other workers are too busy serving customers to help.

You bring in three lightweight metal tables and set up two chairs at each table. You place them where the SM has told you to and dry them, ready to be used. These tables are soon occupied by customers.

Contractor arrival

The contractor arrived while the SM was talking to you about moving the outdoor furniture inside. The contractor informed a worker at the service counter that they were at the café to carry out repairs. The worker was not expecting the contractor and did not know what they were there to work on. They asked the contractor to wait while they spoke to the SM. When the worker found the SM, the SM told the worker that they were too busy and that the worker was more than capable of supervising the contractor. The worker returned to the counter and told the contractor that the SM was busy, but they could start the work. The contractor said that they were happy to do this as they had repaired coffee machines at this café before and know the layout of the café.

The accident

A worker is carrying a tray of hot drinks to a customer sitting in the second seating area. At the last moment, they notice that they are about to bump into a customer sitting at one of the extra tables. As they quickly turn to avoid the customer, they trip over the step leading to the second seating area and fall to the floor. The hot drinks from the tray spill over the worker’s hand and arm.

As you are nearby, you are the first to respond to the scene. The injured worker appears to be in a lot of pain, so you make sure that the SM is informed of the accident. The SM arrives on the scene and does not know what to do and begins to panic. As the only worker available with first-aid training, you carry out emergency first aid on the injured worker. Later, the injured worker is taken to hospital where they are confirmed to have skin damage covering their hand and arm. They are instructed not to return to work for 5 weeks to allow the scalds to heal.

You tell the SM where the accident book is kept, as the owner would usually complete this. The SM tells you that they will complete it later. They focus on continuing to serve customers and forget to do this. You call the owner and inform them of the accident. They ask how the injured worker is, thank you for informing them, and tell you that they will organise an investigation into the accident.

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Task 1: Managing the contractor on site

What was ineffective about how the SM managed the contractor while on site at the café? (10)

***Note:** You should support your answer, where applicable, using relevant information from the scenario.*

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criteria 1.4: Explain how contractors should be selected, monitored, and managed.

This question required learners to demonstrate their understanding of good practice for contractor management and to assess the way the SM managed the contractor against accepted good practices.

The supporting note directed learners to draw on relevant information from the scenario to support their answers.

Some learners correctly identified the lack of supervision afforded to the contractor by the SM and the delegation of this task to the worker, who was not expecting to supervise the contractor. This point could have been expanded on to consider whether the worker was competent to supervise the contractor.

Few learners were able to give the breadth or depth of points that could have been considered. A greater breadth of answers could have been achieved if learners had interpreted the information provided in the scenario, rather than limiting themselves to points that were explicitly stated in the scenario.

For example, the SM did not advise the workers that there was a contractor on site to fix the machine. They also did not appear to consider any risks associated with having the contractor working on the machine while the café was open for service. Although these points were not explicitly stated in the scenario, they are reasonable arguments that can be deduced.

In other limited answers, learners did not focus on the SM, but discussed other failures, or did not use the scenario. Others missed that the focus was on the management of the contractor and introduced content related to contractor selection and accreditation.

Ten marks were available for this question, and fewer answers given would automatically mean fewer marks could be awarded.

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Task 2: Health and safety management roles and responsibilities

Comment on the effectiveness of roles and responsibilities in relation to health and safety management at the café. (10)

Notes: *You should focus on roles and responsibilities and not the health and safety management system OR legal duties.*

You should support your answer, where applicable, using relevant information from the scenario.

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 – general policy, organisation, arrangements.

This question required learners to consider the roles in the scenario, such as the café owner (the employer), the SM (line manager) and the worker, together with the health and safety management responsibilities associated with those roles, and to reflect on how effectively they carried out those responsibilities.

The notes given after the question signpost to the learner that:

- (i) they should not focus on the health and safety management systems requirements, nor legal duties; and
- (ii) that the majority of the answers should be examples from the scenario, so information within the scenario should trigger the answers required.

Identifying that the café owner delegated responsibility to the SM and communicated this to them but did not ensure that the SM understood their responsibilities was a consideration of the effectiveness of the owner's role and responsibilities.

However, many answers were limited. Most learners seemed to misunderstand the question and either provided accurate lists of what responsibilities should be assigned to certain roles, or identified what certain individuals should have done in an ideal world. In so doing, they overlooked any consideration of 'effectiveness.'

Despite the note to not focus on the health and safety management system or legal duties, some learners did just that, setting out aspects such as policy and investigation.

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Task 3: Improving verbal communication at the café

Based on the scenario only, give examples of how verbal communication between all workers at the café could be improved. (11)

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

This question signposts the learner to focus on verbal communication. Additionally, the answers should be based on the scenario only, so information within the scenario should trigger the answers required. Within the scenario there are a range of potential communication issues that could be improved.

Several learners recognised instances of a lack of communication in the scenario and made practical recommendations for improvement, for example active listening, regular meetings, induction, and feedback.

Although some learners identified where improvements were needed, or what was needed, they did not always state how to achieve them.

Some learners misread the question and related to different communication methods, while others did not focus on who needs to communicate what, eg SM to worker; Owner to SM.

Limited answers gave generic responses about how to improve communication or even explained why communication is important, but not referring to the scenario.

Additionally, some learners provided answers that covered broader issues that can impact the success of verbal communication, such as using clear language and showing empathy.

In some cases, learners extracted points verbatim from the scenario without any interpretation; for example, learners commented on the missing "Danger" sign on the machine but did not go on to make it clear that, as a result, the contractor had not been given the necessary information about the machine fault. Other answers were expressed as incomplete sentences.

Eleven marks are available, so a broad range of issues should be considered when answering this question.

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Task 4: Near miss

The accident book indicates that there have been several occurrences of people tripping over the step. How could an investigation of these near misses have helped prevent the accident? (9)

Note: You should support your answer, where applicable, using relevant information from the scenario.

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

The note signposts learners to the scenario; the majority of the answers should be examples from there, so information within the scenario should trigger the answers required.

To respond to this question, learners should understand how investigation of near misses can support accident prevention.

Some learners explained that near miss investigation can help to identify the causes before a more serious accident occurs; that suitable controls could have been implemented, such as providing information to workers, and that trends could have been identified. However, some learners missed the opportunity to reference the scenario to support their answer and missed marks.

Many answers lacked sufficient breadth and did not sufficiently consider that had consequences been identified, the worker's injuries could have been avoided.

Many learners thought the question was about accident investigation and provided answers describing how investigations should be carried out; why they need to take place (including references to HASAWA and RIDDOR); detail provided around actual root/immediate/underlying causes as well as controls. Some learners completely misunderstood the question and wrote about risk assessments as opposed to near misses, etc.

Although many learners appeared to understand what a near miss was, they were unable to articulate how a near miss can prevent accidents: such as lessons learned, potential consequences have been avoided, potential consequences could have been identified, and suitable control measures have been identified.

Learners frequently repeated points for which they had already received a mark.

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Task 5: Employer breaches of general duties

The café management has duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

Comment on how these duties may have been breached under:

(a) Section 2 (12)

Note: You should support your answer, where applicable, using relevant information from the scenario.

(b) Section 4 (3)

Note: You should support your answer, where applicable, using relevant information from the scenario.

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criterion 1.3: Summarise the main health and safety duties of employers and workers in HSWA 1974 and MHSWR 1999.

To respond to this question learners needed to consider the duties under Sections 2 and 4 of the HSWA 1974 and how they may have been breached by the café management.

Once again, learners were instructed to use the information in the scenario for both parts of the question and there were many points that could be highlighted here.

In part (a) stronger answers were provided by learners who worked systematically through the legal requirements and illustrated their answers with examples from the scenario. For example, they covered duties for safe workplace, safe equipment, and instruction and training.

Limited answers set out the duties that may have been breached but did not support this with evidence from the scenario. Others simply explained the duties but did not discuss what might have been breached.

Some learners did introduce a wider range of Section 2 duties such as consultation with representatives and having a policy; however, the scenario was silent on these issues and these points did not score marks.

The performance of part (b) was similar to part (a). Stronger answers were provided by those who used the framework of duties in Section 4, combined with supporting evidence from the scenario. Limited answers resulted where

the scenario was not used, or duties were explained without consideration of breaches.

For IG1 learners, the following question was asked:

Employers have obligations under Recommendation 10 of International Labour Organisation R164 – Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation, 1981 (No. 164), and also under Article 16 C155 – Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No.155).

Which of these employer obligations are likely to have been contravened at the café? (15)

Note: You should support your answer, where applicable, using relevant information from the scenario.

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.

Stronger answers considered a range of potential contraventions under Recommendation 10 of R164 and Article 16 C155, and supported their answers with evidence from the scenario, such as not providing a safe workplace, information, and training. However, learners missed the opportunity to gain full marks by not considering the breadth of contraventions.

Limited answers did not establish a clear connection between the contraventions and the specific circumstances in the scenario. There was also a lack of linkage of failings in the scenario to the obligations under Recommendation 10 of R164 and Article 16 C155, resulting in incomplete or unrelated information being presented. Some learners explained the obligations without examining potential contraventions.

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Task 6: Human factors and accident causation

(a) What organisational factors could have contributed to the accident? (12)

Note: You should support your answer, where applicable, using relevant information from the scenario.

(b) What individual human factors of workers could have contributed to the accident? (8)

Notes: You do not need to consider the café owner and shift manager's individual human factors.

You should support your answer, where applicable, using relevant information from the scenario.

Note: You should support your answer, where applicable, using relevant information from the scenario. You do not need to include specific first-aid equipment.

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

In part (a) the key word is 'organisational,' therefore learners were required to focus their answer on this category of human factors. Additionally, answers provided should be drawn from the scenario, where there were many points that could be highlighted.

Stronger answers canvassed a variety of points such as high work pressure (volume of customers, etc); inadequate response to previous incidents, poor health, and safety culture (commitment, supervision) and depth, and were linked to the scenario. However, few learners provided the breadth of answers to gain the marks available.

Limited answers did not offer breadth and depth or did not link to the scenario. For example, commenting on poor planning, but not providing specific examples. Others gave only generic answers to the question.

Some learners struggled to focus their answers on organisational factors and drifted into individual human factors.

In part (b) the key word is 'individual,' therefore learners were required to relate this to their answers. Additionally, answers provided should be drawn from the scenario, where there were many points that could be highlighted.

As with part (a), stronger answers offered breadth and depth with linkage to the scenario, such as worker fatigue from serving a high volume of customers; and poor hazard awareness in the café.

Limited answers provided factors other than individual factors; for example, organisational factors, or individual factors that were not mark worthy. Some learners discussed the café owner and SM, despite the note indicating that this should not be considered.

Several learners missed the opportunity to cover points such as workers becoming disheartened, and their fear of being disciplined.

Incomplete sentences, listing and repetition limited learners' opportunities to be awarded marks.

Again, there are headings, but expansion has been given on each issue showing understanding, breadth and depth of knowledge.

Limited responses would only mention what the requirements are, such as the type of facilities and equipment that should be available.

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Task 7: Reviewing first-aid arrangements

Following the accident, the owner has asked you to review first-aid arrangements at the café.

What would you consider in your review to determine if first-aid provision is realistic and proportionate at the café? (15)

Notes: You do not need to itemise specific first-aid equipment.

You should support your answer, where applicable, using relevant information from the scenario.

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.

The note instructs learners that the review does not need to detail specific items of first-aid equipment. It also signposts that the majority of the answers should be examples from the scenario, so information within the scenario should trigger the answers required.

To respond to this question, learners needed to carry out a first aid needs assessment in the context of the scenario; considering, for example, the workplace, the nature of the work being carried out and the composition of the workforce.

Stronger answers provided breadth and depth by identifying a range of factors such as the nature of the hazards, the type of potential injuries that could be sustained, and the size of the workforce, together with relevant information extracted from the scenario.

Limited answers considered some, but not all the factors; while others discussed factors not related to the scenario. For example, the need for a site ambulance or clinic, and needs related to high hazard tasks using chemicals, which is disproportionate for the type of business in the scenario.

Several learners focused on first aiders and appointed persons, and issues related to emergency response rather than consideration of first aid arrangements.

Despite stating explicitly in the question that 'You do not need to itemise specific first-aid equipment,' some learners devoted large part of their answer to identifying first aid steps and items of first aid.

Incomplete sentences, listing and repetition curtailed marks that could be awarded. For fifteen marks, learners should be looking to offer a wide range of considerations.

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Task 8: Reactive monitoring methods

Comment on the reactive (lagging) monitoring measures that could be put in place by the café. (10)

Note: You should support your answer, where applicable, using relevant information from the scenario.

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

Signposts in this question include 'reactive (lagging).' This should have guided learners to the aspects to be considered in their responses. The supporting note directed learners to draw on relevant information from the scenario to support their answers.

Stronger answers were able to identify a range of reactive measures that could be put in place including accident rates, worker complaints, enforcement action and trends. Answers also drew on the scenario to support these suggestions.

However, there were several instances where learners had not noticed the cues in the question, or did not understand the question, which led to limited answers. Providing a mix of reactive and proactive monitoring methods and not referencing the scenario was a common oversight.

Other examples of limited answers were learners listing generic reactive measures, but not linking them to the scenario; or suggesting reactive measures that were not suitable for the scenario.

In some instances, answers deviated from any form of monitoring measures to cover investigating the accident and corrective and preventative measures that should be put in place going forward.

It appears that the following points need to be revisited by learners:

- the differences between reactive and active measuring needs, and
- the difference between the measuring techniques and what they are measuring.

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Conclusion

Overall, learners should ensure that they have learnt, understood, and revised the whole syllabus thoroughly and prepared themselves for the assessment. They need to practice researching information and using their course notes and other reference sources to attain the best result.

When preparing answers learners should look carefully at any signposts included, such as 'based on the scenario only' or 'using the scenario to support your answer.' Additionally, learners should look to give the same number of separate points as there are marks in the scheme and avoid repetition. Answers written in complete sentences, rather than in notes or lists, and including the relevant point supported by evidence, are likely to lead to mark-worthy answers.

Learners should be prepared to interpret or process the information in the scenario to propose considered answers, and not expect that every mark-worthy point is stated verbatim in the scenario.

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