Examiners' Report

UNIT IGC1: MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



MARCH 2019

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

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
General comments	3
Comments on individual questions	4
Examination technique	10
Command words	13

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 IGC1 examination sat in March 2019.

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

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.

Part (a) (i) was generally well answered, although some learners did not mention that the statement of intent is used to set objectives.

Part (a) (ii) was also generally well answered. Some learners could not be awarded marks here as they spoke about arrangements rather than the 'organisation' section of a policy.

Part (b) had eight marks available for correct possible content of the arrangements section of a health and safety policy. The marks available indicate the breadth of answer needed and some learners identified too few points to gain the full eight marks. The arrangements section of a policy might include control of contractors, or worker consultation arrangements.

Part (c) of this question required an outline of circumstances that may require a policy to be reviewed, such as following the results of active monitoring, or due to a change of premises.

Again, there were eight marks available but some learners provided too few points to gain good marks. Two or three points, even where they are correct, can only gain two or three marks.

Some answers repeated the same possible circumstance and could only be awarded one mark for that point. For example, there was a mark for 'the results of active monitoring', but repeated answers of several types of active monitoring (inspections, audits, safety tours, etc) would not gain multiple marks.

The command word for part (c) was 'outline' and some learners did not provide sufficient depth in their response to be awarded marks for all of the content of their answer.

Question 2 Identify internal documents that could be examined when investigating a workplace accident.

(8)

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 3.7: Identify the key sources of health and safety information; and 4.2: Explain the purpose of, and procedures for, investigating incidents (accidents, cases of work-related ill-health and other occurrences).

Most learners were able to correctly identify some internal documents such as training records and previous accident reports. Better answers identified a sufficient number of correct internal documents to gain higher marks.

Some learners did not answer the question, but instead wrote about how a workplace accident investigation would be carried out. These incorrect responses could not be awarded marks. It is essential that learners directly answer the question asked; related information on the general topic of the question will not be awarded marks.

The question also specified 'internal documents' and so there were no marks available for identifying external documents such as enforcement agency guidance.

Question 3 Outline responsibilities of a permit-to-work issuer.

(8)

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.9: Explain the role and function of a permit-to-work system.

This question was not well answered overall. Some learners appeared to have very little knowledge and understanding of a permit-to-work system.

Others, who could write generally about a permit-to work system, did not outline the responsibilities of a permit-to-work issuer as asked in the question. For example, some learners outlined the purpose of a permit-to-work, or gave a description of a permit-to-work form.

Whether this was because these learners did not know what the issuer should do, or because they had not read the question carefully before beginning their answer is not known.

Responsibilities of a permit-to-work issuer that were awarded marks included identifying isolation requirements; they are also responsible for identifying any conflict of work activities.

The command word for this question is 'outline' and a sufficient depth of answer was required. For example, 'isolation' would not be sufficient to gain the mark for the responsibility of the issuer to identify isolation requirements.

Question 4 Explain why an organisation should review its health and safety performance.

(8)

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.

Better answers to this question included reasons such as to compare progress against targets and to be able to promote successes.

There were eight marks for this question which indicates that a number of reasons need to be explained in the answer to gain good to full marks.

Some learners detailed how a review of health and safety might be carried out or what information might be considered during the review. Others gave reasons why a health and safety policy would need to be reviewed, rather than performance, as asked. These learners did not answer the question asked and therefore could not be awarded marks for what they had written.

It is essential that the question is clearly understood before beginning to write the answer. Learners are advised to read and then re-read the question to be sure that they fully understand what is asked and what is required in their answer.

The command word for this question is 'explain' and answers that only gave brief lists of reasons would not gain the marks available.

Question 5

(a) **Give** the meaning of the following terms:

> (i) health: (2)

> (ii) safety. (2)

(b) **Explain** moral reasons for promoting good standards of health and safety in the workplace.

(4)

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 1.1: Outline the scope and nature of occupational health and safety: and 1.2: Explain the moral, social and economic reasons for maintaining and promoting good standards of health and safety in the workplace.

Parts (a) (i) and (a) (ii) of the question required learners to give the meaning of the terms 'health' and 'safety', respectively. The meaning given needed to be in sufficient depth to gain both of the two marks available. Most learners obtained one mark for each of these parts of the question, but many of the responses given were not sufficient to be awarded maximum marks.

Part (b) had four marks available for explaining the moral reasons for promoting good standards of health and safety. Some learners provided answers that covered economic, legal or financial reasons for promoting good standards of health and safety, rather than moral reasons as required.

Some learners appeared to misread or misunderstand the question as they wrote about 'morale' (the morale of the workers). Others listed employer health and safety responsibilities, again not answering the question that was asked.

Moral reasons that could have been explained include the protection of workers from incidents; good standards of health and safety are also part of corporate social responsibility.

The command word for part (b) of this question was 'explain' and learners' answers needed to be of sufficient depth to meet the requirements of that command word. It is important that learners and Learning Partners refer to the NEBOSH guidance on command words and learners understand what each command word requires in terms of depth of answer.

Question 6

Outline what an organisation should consider when deciding the frequency of health and safety inspections.

(8)

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

There were marks available for an outline of things to consider such as the activities carried out in the workplace and advice from an enforcement agency.

There were eight marks available for this question indicating the breadth of answer required. Learners who outlined only two or three things to consider, could only be awarded two or three marks.

Some learners appeared to misread or misunderstand the question and wrote about how an inspection should be carried out, who would carry out health and safety inspections or what an inspection might look at, rather than what should be considered when deciding the frequency of the inspections.

Question 7

Outline topics that could be covered on a health and safety induction training course for new workers.

(8)

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

There were eight marks available for topics that could be covered in an induction, such as the organisation's health and safety policy and site rules. Most responses gained some of the marks available, but many included too few topics and could not be awarded high marks.

Some learners gained a mark for an outline of site rules but then went on to detail a number of examples of site rules that might apply. Additional examples do not gain further marks.

Some learners did not answer the question and simply wrote about various aspects of safety training and/or training provision. NEBOSH asks a variety of questions on core topics, such as health and safety training, and it is essential that learners are directly answering the question asked during the examination.

The command word for this question was 'outline' and answers needed to be of sufficient depth to meet the requirements of an outline. Some learners only listed topics and could not be awarded all of the marks available.

Question 8

(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.

Part (a) of the question required an outline of the purpose of employers' liability insurance. Many learners only mentioned one aspect of the purpose, for example that employers' liability insurance enables the employer to cover the cost of claims, despite the two marks available.

Some learners incorrectly wrote about other types of insurance cover, eg insurance against damage to the employer's own equipment or premises, rather than what was asked – employers' liability insurance.

Part (b) of this question had six marks available for possible uninsured costs of a workplace accident. Possible uninsured costs that could have been identified included loss of an organisation's corporate image and production delays caused by an accident.

Some learners gained a mark for an uninsured cost, such as production delays, but then went on to give a number of examples of production delays which did not result in any additional mark.

Most learners were able to identify some possible uninsured costs, but few were able to gain most or all of the six marks available for part (b) of the question.

A common error in answers to part (b) was to include legal costs as an uninsured cost. Employers' liability insurance does provide cover for the legal costs of defending claims against an employer by injured workers or workers suffering work-related ill-health.

Question 9 Outline why a worker may fail to clearly understand a verbal instruction.

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

There were eight marks available for an outline of reasons such as a noisy environment and the complexity of the information being communicated verbally. Most learners gained marks for this question, with better answers being awarded good marks for including a wide variety of reasons.

There were some incorrect responses where learners did not answer the question, but instead described the advantages and disadvantages of different methods of communication.

Question 10 Outline a procedure for the investigation of an accident at work.

(8)

(8)

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 4.2: Explain the purpose of, and procedures for, investigating incidents (accidents, cases of work-related ill-health and other occurrences).

This question had eight marks available for an outline of a procedure that included steps such as setting up an investigation team and submitting a report to senior management.

Responses to this question were mixed. Better answers outlined an investigation procedure in a logical order, ie from setting up the investigation team, detailing what the investigation would look at and what would happen with the investigation report. These answers gained good marks. It is likely that learners who approached answering the question in this way were able to recall and then outline a good number of appropriate parts of an investigation procedure.

Some learners misread or misunderstood the question and did not write about a procedure for investigation, but instead described other aspects of accident investigation, such as why an investigation is needed, possible immediate post-accident responses (eg first aid and calling for the emergency services), or what actions might be needed to avoid a similar accident happening. Marks could not be awarded for content that did not answer the question.

Question 11 Outline ways in which senior management can demonstrate commitment to health and safety in the workplace.

(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.

This question required learners to outline ways in which senior management can demonstrate commitment. Some learners stated general duties of management, like the direct supervision of workers, rather than ways senior managers might act to demonstrate their commitment to health and safety.

Most learners outlined that senior managers can lead by example, with better answers outlining a good number of other ways, such as engaging with the selection and management of contractors.

Some learners did not answer the question asked, instead giving answers that detailed reasons why senior managers need to have a commitment to health and safety, or what an organisation needs to have in place to help ensure good safety standards.

This question had eight marks available indicating to learners the breadth of answer that was needed.

As with other questions on this question paper, some answers did not meet the requirement of the command word. There were a number of learners who missed out on marks because they only listed brief points in their answer, without sufficient information.

The NEBOSH guidance on command words is helpful for learners to ensure they are appropriately responding to the question asked.

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 accredited 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.