
Examiners' Report

UNIT NG1: MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

MARCH 2020



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

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Introduction

NEBOSH (The National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health) was formed in 1979 as an independent examining board and awarding body with charitable status. We offer a comprehensive range of globally-recognised, vocationally-related qualifications designed to meet the health, safety, environmental and risk management needs of all places of work in both the private and public sectors.

Courses leading to NEBOSH qualifications attract around 50,000 learners annually and are offered by over 600 Learning Partners, with examinations taken in over 120 countries around the world. Our qualifications are recognised by the relevant professional membership bodies including the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) and the International Institute of Risk and Safety Management (IIRSM).

NEBOSH is an awarding body that applies best practice setting, assessment and marking and applies to Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Accreditation regulatory requirements.

This report provides guidance for learners and Learning Partners for use in preparation for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content and the application of assessment criteria.

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General comments

Many learners are well prepared for this unit assessment and provide comprehensive and relevant answers in response to the demands of the question paper. This includes the ability to demonstrate understanding of knowledge by applying it to workplace situations.

There are other learners, however, who appear to be unprepared for the unit assessment and who show both a lack of knowledge of the syllabus content and a lack of understanding of how key concepts should be applied to workplace situations.

This report has been prepared to provide feedback on the standard date NG1 examination sat in March 2020.

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

Learners and Learning Partners will also benefit from use of the 'Guide to the NEBOSH National 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 NG1 and tutor reference documents for each Element.

Unit NG1

Management of health and safety

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

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

The majority of learners gained at least one mark in part (a), demonstrating some understanding of this commonly used term by referring to a way to do a job safely. However, few learners gained the second mark available, but those who did went further by including reference to a safe system of work being an integration of people, equipment, materials and the working environment (PEME).

In part (b), relating to worker involvement, learners gave legitimate reasons, with many gaining three marks or more. Answers that included reference to worker experience, or improvements in culture gained the marks available.

In part (c) learners who stated that a written safe system enhances communication and provides a record for future reference for example, evidence in legal cases gained those marks available. However, many learners did not go beyond these responses limiting the marks that could be awarded.

Some learners appeared to answer a different question for part (d) and gave the content of a permit-to-work or sources of information, which was not required, instead of information that should be included in a permit-to-work and while common content such as hazards and risks gained marks, specific permit-to-work content such as dates, times and signatures could not. Also, in part, (a) learners who made reference to people, equipment, materials and environment (PEME) provided an opportunity to give a broad range of information including competence requirements.

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

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

There is a wide range of possible costs resulting from a work-related fatality and many learners gained full marks for answers provided. Some learners unnecessarily separated costs into insured and uninsured which was not required and no further marks were gained. Also, a few learners expanded their answers further and explained the differences between insured and uninsured costs, which was not required and for which no marks were available. A simple list of costs relating to material damage, production delays, and compensation, gained marks.

However, learners need to understand that it is not necessary to embellish answers with additional information that is not required in the question. This will not affect the marks awarded but the time available could be compromised which could affect overall performance.

Question 3 What should be considered when deciding on first-aid needs in a workplace? **(8)**

*You do **not** need to consider first-aid materials, equipment or facilities.*

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.

Many learners provided the basic considerations of first-aid needs, such as size of the workplace, number of workers and history of accidents. However, only a minority of learners expanded their answers further, which was reflected in the marks awarded.

Although the question included some italicised guidance of what was not required in answers, a considerable number of learners ignored this instruction and outlined first-aid kits, first-aid rooms and first-aid training requirements for which marks were not available. Learners must answer the question that has been set and not a question that they would have perhaps preferred.

Question 4 What are the powers of an enforcement inspector when carrying out an inspection of a workplace? **(8)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criterion 1.2: Explain how the law works and the consequences of non-compliance.

This question was answered well with many learners gaining over half marks by referring to enforcement powers that relate to entry of premises, being accompanied by a police officer and inspection of documentation.

The enforcement powers referred to in the question related to an inspector when carrying out an inspection, *not* to the powers of inspectors when issuing enforcement action. However, some learners wasted valuable time by providing the conditions that must be met that would warrant either an improvement or prohibition notice to be served, none of which were required by the question and for which marks were not available. Some learners also went on to describe the appeals process against served notices in some detail, which again was not required in the question. Learners who included such peripheral information in their answer, tended to provide fewer inspection powers and limited the marks that could be awarded.

Learners should be reminded that marks are not available for detail that, while correct, is not within the scope of the question and such an approach can affect the time available to answer other questions.

Question 5 (a) Give **FOUR** '*specified injuries*' reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) **(4)**

OR

'major injuries' reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 (RIDDOR Northern Ireland). **(4)**

(b) How should '*specified injuries*' **OR** '*major injuries*' be reported to the relevant enforcing agency? **(4)**

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

In part (a) of this question an option was available for learners in Northern Ireland to answer the question to their own requirements as RIDDOR in Northern Ireland and RIDDOR in UK mainland differ. Although there are some similarities, which include fracture of major bones and permanent loss of sight, which would have gained marks for either English or Irish learners, after that the RIDDOR regulations and RIDDOR (Northern Ireland) Regulations diverge and reference to different definitions of these types of injuries were required to gain the marks available. The regulations in Northern Ireland, while satisfying EU reporting requirements, include a number of legacy definitions of major injury, including certain electric shocks for which a mark was available.

The methodology of reporting certain injuries to an enforcement agency was required in part (b), allowing for minor difference in reporting requirements between that of Northern Ireland and the mainland UK. However, the requirements are broadly the same for both territories and therefore marks were available for reference to the quickest practicable means and within 10-days by other approved means.

Question 6 Why might written instructions be *ineffective* in communicating health and safety information? **(8)**

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

Effective communication is an essential element for improving a health and safety culture in an organisation, but conversely it can have a negative effect on a health and safety culture when communication is ineffective, which is the subject of this question, why communication in the form of written instructions may be *ineffective*.

A generally well answered question with many learners achieving at least half, or more than half marks. A few learners appeared to have not read the question correctly and gave answers relating to why written instructions are effective in communicating health and safety instead of 'ineffective' for which marks could not be awarded.

Those learners who answered the question correctly referred to reasons such as the workers may not read the instructions, workers may be illiterate or instructions may not be in the workers' first language.

Question 7 (a) What methods could be used to *actively* monitor health and safety performance? **(4)**

(b) Give types of *reactive* (lagging) monitoring measures. **(4)**

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

This question was generally answered well with most learners achieving good marks. However, some learners in part (a) appeared to misread or misunderstand the question and instead of giving active monitoring methods as requested by the question, they explained what active monitoring 'was', for which marks could not be awarded. Learners need to avoid focusing on only one or two words in the question and instead the question should be read as a complete sentence and answered accordingly and in context. Learners need to carefully read and re-read questions to ensure they understand what is being asked for, before starting their answer.

Common answers in part (a) that gained marks included safety inspections and safety tours.

For part (b) common answers included incident statistics and investigation findings. Those learners who confused 'active' and 'reactive' monitoring gained limited marks, which was reflected in the overall marks awarded for this question.

Question 8 What are the duties of *employers* under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974? **(8)**

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.

There was a broad range of answers available for this question and many learners gained at least six marks. Answers that referred to the general duty to employees and the five specific duties such as that relating to safe plant gained the marks available.

Learners who went beyond the duties to employees and included reference to safety issues such as prepare a health and safety policy, etc gained the better mark for this question. However, a significant number of learners strayed outside of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and included details on risk assessment, provision of personal protective equipment and fire evacuation. While employers have duties in all of these areas, these are not the requirement of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and marks for such answers could not be awarded.

Question 9 Staff turnover is one indicator that can be used to assess an organisation's health and safety culture.

What other indicators could be used to assess an organisation's health and safety culture? **(8)**

This question assessed learners' knowledge and understanding of assessment criterion 3.1: Describe the concept of health and safety culture and how it influences performance.

Most learners gained at least half of the marks available for this question. The results of reactive monitoring formed the basis of a significant number of answers, including accident statistics, complaints, sickness rates and absenteeism, all of which were awarded marks. Leading indicators such as active monitoring, including audit reports, safe systems of work, risk assessment and the provision of training were included in fewer answers, but learners who took this broader approach would have gained more marks.

Question 10 What health and safety commitments should an organisation include in their statement of general policy (statement of intent)? **(8)**

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 was not particularly well answered and many learners found this question challenging. However, several answers covered all three sections of a safety policy, which was not required in the question and marks were only be available if any commitments, included in the statement of intent, were included in the answer. No marks were available for the other sections of the policy.

When a commitment is made in a policy (or elsewhere) an intention is declared to achieve a positive outcome. As such, a commitment in a safety policy could include injury prevention, accident reduction hazard identification, legal compliance and effective consultation, all of which, where included in answers, would have gained the available marks.

Question 11 What individual human factors *negatively* influence behaviour at work?

(8)

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

There was a mixed response to this question. Some learners understood what was required by the question and as a consequence were awarded good marks, with reference to competence, experience, attitude, skill, motivation, aptitude where these were reflected in the negative.

Other learners did not appreciate that only individual factors were required and included organisational and job factors in their answers for which no marks could be awarded. Some learners did not focus on negative influence and did not approach the question from the correct perspective and again marks could not be awarded.

Examination technique

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

Learners misread/misinterpreted the question

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

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

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

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

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

Learners did not provide the necessary breadth to their answers

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

Learners unnecessarily wrote the question down

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Learners did not answer all of the questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Learners' handwriting was illegible

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

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

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

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

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

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

Guidance on instructional task words

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

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

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

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

Example questions

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

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

In this instance a list could be used.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Again, a list of documents required would be sufficient.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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