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# Examiners' Report

## UNIT GC2: CONTROLLING WORKPLACE HAZARDS

SEPTEMBER 2018

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For: **NEBOSH National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety**  
**NEBOSH International General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety**

### CONTENTS

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

# Introduction

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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 candidates annually and are offered by over 600 course providers, 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 candidates and course providers 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

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Many candidates 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 candidates, 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 GC2 examination sat in September 2018.

Feedback is presented in these key areas: responses to questions, examination technique and command words and is designed to assist candidates and course providers prepare for future assessments in this unit.

Candidates and course providers will also benefit from use of the 'Guide to the NEBOSH National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety' and 'Guide to the NEBOSH International General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety' which are available via the NEBOSH website. In particular, the guides set out in detail the syllabus content for GC2 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.

Candidates and course providers should also make reference to the GC2 'Example question paper and Examiners' feedback on expected answers' which provides example questions and details Examiners' expectations and typical areas of underperformance.

## Unit GC2

### Controlling workplace hazards

- Question 1** A few workers are given a day to get the furniture ready for a large new office. They use hand tools (screwdrivers, spanners and hammers) to put together the self-assembly furniture. The next day, the workers reported ill-health effects associated with work-related upper limb disorders (WRULDs).
- (a) **Identify** possible ill-health effects experienced by the workers. (5)
- (b) **Explain** why the workers may have been experiencing ill-health effects associated with WRULDs. (10)
- (c) **Outline** control measures that could have reduced the risks of WRULDs among these workers. (5)

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.1: Explain work processes and practices that may give rise to work-related upper limb disorders and appropriate control measures.

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are one of the most common causes of ill-health in the workplace. The condition MSD, includes a specific region of the body affected, which is referred to as work-related upper limb disorders (WRULDs). However, a number of candidates approached this question with regard to MSDs rather than focusing on the area of the body affected, which is from the tips of the fingers to the neck.

In part (a) of this question, those candidates who appreciated the area of the body affected by WRULDs and could apply the type of work being carried out could gain the marks available, with short references to ill-health effects such as aches in wrists and hands, loss of dexterity, cramps and swelling of joints, among others.

Candidates who identified the wider ill-health effects of MSD, could have gained some marks, but reference to back problems and pains in the legs or similar would be outside of the parts of the body affected by WRULDs and would not have been awarded marks.

Part (b) required an explanation of the reasons why the workers have been experiencing ill-health effects associated with WRULDs. The question indicated that in a short period of time (one day) a small number of workers (few) were using hand tools to assemble furniture. The tools referred to (screwdrivers, spanners and hammers) would subject the workers to repetitive twisting of the wrist, would require continuous gripping and would result in impact forces. Such issues, together with reference to vulnerable workers, poor posture and incorrect tools, with an appropriate explanation would have been awarded marks.

This question required candidates to explain why workers experienced WRULDs. The 'explain' command word would require candidates to provide reasons for the ill-health effects occurring. Answers focusing on manual handling or where candidates who knew the cause of WRULDs but gave insufficient detail for the causes would not have gained all of the marks available.

Those candidates who provided better answers in part (b) usually gained good marks in part (c) which required an outline of control measures that could have reduced the risks of WRULDs among these workers. Candidates who followed a hierarchy of control approach gained marks for their answer where reasonable outlines were provided. To eliminate the hazard, ready assembled furniture could be provided, to reduce the extent of the hazards, additional time could be provided or more workers could be involved with the task and to control the hazard, rest breaks could be provided together with training of the workers. Those candidates who did not concentrate on WRULDs throughout this question and applied the manual handling 'TILE' approach would have restricted the marks that could be awarded for their answer.

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**Question 2** An electrically-powered chemical pump, operating at 90°C, has developed a leak.

**Outline** control measures to help reduce risk during the repair of this item of machinery. (8)

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 4.1: Outline general requirements for work equipment.

This question included reference to the hazards of electricity, chemicals and high temperatures that provided the basis for a number of control measures. These could have included the isolation of both the electricity supply and the chemical content that may have required lock out, tag out (LOTO) or a permit-to-work, and allowing the equipment to cool down to room temperature. Better answers also included the need to segregate the area, providing safe access and ensuring that workers were competent.

Some candidates focused on issues such as training, instruction and supervision together with PPE, which would have only gained some of the marks available. Very few candidates included reference to emergency provision or monitoring of the workplace for dangerous airborne concentrations of chemicals.

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**Question 3** **Outline** what should be considered so that people with sensory impairments and/or physical disabilities can safely evacuate a workplace in the event of a fire. (8)

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 6.5: Outline the factors which should be considered when implementing a successful evacuation of a workplace in the event of a fire.

When carrying out a fire risk assessment and planning for fire precautions, vulnerable people should be considered. This question included reference to a wide range of special needs that may require additional assistance or facilities when evacuating a building in a fire.

The majority of candidates included the provision of evacuation chairs, buddy systems and accessible corridors in their answer as most probably these would be common to most workplaces and marks were awarded accordingly where attention to the command word was made. Other answers could have included the provision of fire-dedicated lifts, refuges on upper floors and visual, audio or vibrating alarms.

Few candidates referred to tactile surfaces or that vulnerable person should be included in consultation. Some candidates focused on general fire precautions with little reference to the disability aspect of the question and gained fewer marks as a result.

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- Question 4** (a) **Identify** health risks associated with exposure to silica dust. (3)
- (b) **Outline** precautions that will help reduce the risks from exposure to silica dust. (5)
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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 7.5: Outline the hazards, risks and controls associated with specific agents.

For part (a), some candidates could identify silicosis as a health risk in addition to lung cancer, both of which would have gained marks. However, few candidates made reference to chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD) and even fewer included fibrosis of the lungs in their answer. Generic answers, such as breathing problems or cancer, did not contain enough information to be awarded marks.

Part (b) of this question asked candidates to provide an outline of precautions that will help reduce the risks from exposure to silica dust. The majority of candidates included the use of RPE and the provision of training, which gained marks. Fewer candidates included welfare facilities and tool tip extraction. Some candidates did not mention using silica free materials, or dust suppression and damping down enough, limiting the marks available to them. Following the hierarchy of controls approach would have helped candidates give a broader answer.

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- Question 5** **Identify** welfare facilities that should be provided for contractors during temporary construction work. (8)
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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 1.1: Outline common health, welfare and work environment requirements in the workplace.

Although this question concerned welfare facilities on a temporary construction site, there is little difference in the requirements for welfare provision across temporary or permanent workplaces. As such, candidates who made reference to sanitary conveniences, washing facilities, changing rooms and drinking water would have gained marks. More comprehensive answers included the provision of separate facilities for men and women, and facilities for pregnant workers.

Some candidates demonstrated an understanding of the scope of welfare facilities and included other requirements such as first aid, PPE and safety signs. All of these would certainly be required on a construction site, but as these are not included in the scope of welfare facilities, marks would not have been awarded.

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- Question 6**
- (a) **Identify** the types of guard or protective device that could be fitted to a pedestal drill **AND**, in **EACH** case, **identify** the dangerous part that is being protected. (6)
  - (b) *Other than* guards or protective devices, **outline** control measures that may help reduce the risk of contact with exposed moving parts when using a pedestal drill. (2)
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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 4.4: Explain the main control measures for reducing risk from machinery hazards.

In part (a) marks were available for the types of guard or protective device that could be fitted to a pedestal drill, with further marks available for the dangerous part that is being protected by each type of guard identified. The majority of candidates could identify fixed guards and interlocked guards, with only a few answers including reference to adjustable guards or sensitive protective equipment. Very few candidates could accurately identify where such guards would be used on a pedestal drill and few marks were awarded to this element of part (a).

Machinery will typically have three types of moving part. The motor, the transmission parts (gears, pulleys, etc) and the process part (in this case the rotating chuck and drill bit). Therefore, motors are generally covered by fixed guards, transmission parts are enclosed by fixed or interlocked guards, and the process parts protected by adjustable or interlocked guards.

In part (b) of this question candidates appeared to have difficulty, firstly identifying with control measures other than guards that may help to reduce risk of contact with exposed moving parts of the drill, and secondly providing an adequate outline to their answers. A number of candidates made reference to control of long hair and loose fitting clothing and additionally the role of training appeared to be generic rather than specific with regard to training in residual machinery hazards that guards cannot control. Practical application of vices, clamps, jigs and rakes were rarely considered and as such further marks could not be awarded.

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- Question 7**
- (a) **Identify** ways of preventing contact with a live electrical conductor. (4)
  - (b) **Identify** protective systems that would help reduce the risk from electric shock should a fault occur in an item of electrical equipment. (4)
- 

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 5.2: Outline the control measures that should be taken when working with electrical systems or using electrical equipment in all workplace conditions.

In part (a) candidates could identify the first stages of preventing contact with live conductors in terms of switching off and isolation of the supply, with the majority of candidates gaining marks for such answers.

Preventative measures, such as insulation of conductors and integrity of enclosures was less well known by candidates with very few considering distance related controls, such as placing conductors out of reach. In part (b) candidates needed to identify protective systems that would reduce risk of electric shock should a fault occur. As such, candidates were required only to name different ways of minimising electric shock from fault conditions (indirect contact) without an understanding of how such techniques work. Therefore, marks were available for answers that included protective systems such as, earthing, RCDs and double insulation, which were given by the majority of candidates.

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**Question 8**     **Outline** what should be considered when assessing the risk of a road traffic incident while driving at work. **(8)**

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 2.2: Outline the factors associated with driving at work that increases the risk of an incident and the control measures to reduce work-related driving risks.

The transport hazards and risk control element of the GC2 syllabus includes both vehicles in the workplace and work-related road risk. Many candidates answered as if this question related to a warehouse. As such, answers relative to this such as pedestrian crossings, blind spot mirrors, marked walkways and high visibility clothing were not awarded marks. However, candidates who took this approach, could have gained some marks when referring to common elements, such as driver competence and maintenance of vehicles.

Those candidates who did apply the scenario given in the question and considered the driver, the vehicle and the journey would have gained good marks by including issues such as the health of the driver, licence validity, suitable vehicle, and safety equipment, together with length of journey and weather conditions.

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**Question 9**     An independent tied scaffold is to be erected on a building in a busy town centre.

**Outline** precautions that should be taken to help reduce the risk of injury to members of the public during erection and use of the scaffold. **(8)**

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 1.5: Explain the hazards and control measures for safe working at height.

Some candidates focused on the word 'scaffolding', but did not explore the reduction of risks to the public *during* the erection and use of the scaffold in a busy town centre.

Many candidates could outline how risks could be reduced to the public. The majority of marks were awarded for a number of key points which were barriers, signs, nets and erection by a competent person. Inspections were included in many answers, although the need to identify an inspected scaffold with a tag was rarely mentioned. Few candidates referred to the town centre location in terms of closure of the area or carrying out work in quieter periods. Candidates did not demonstrate knowledge of when the scaffold is not in use, such as after hours or overnight, and therefore possible marks were lost. Answers could have included lighting at night, boarding over access ladders, or carrying out work in evenings, but these points were rarely given. Control of falling objects also appeared to be an area of this topic that was not well demonstrated with few answers including the need to tether tools, use tool belts or use of waste chutes.



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**Question 10**    **Identify** different types of information contained in a safety data sheet (SDS) for a hazardous substance. **(8)**

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 7.2: Explain the factors to be considered when undertaking an assessment of the health risks from substances commonly encountered in the workplace.

There is a wide range of information that is required to be conveyed on a safety data sheet (SDS) for a hazardous substance. This question required candidates to 'identify' types of information in a SDS and therefore marks were available for brief references. Manufacturer's details, substance stability, PPE requirements, transport and storage would have gained marks. Some candidates expanded their answers to provide further information, in some cases in some detail. This was not required by the command word 'identify' and time would have been wasted as a result.

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**Question 11**    (a)    **Identify** what may indicate a need to carry out an assessment of exposure to hand-arm vibration (HAV). **(4)**

                  (b)    **Identify** ill-health effects associated with exposure to hand-arm vibration. **(4)**

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 8.2: Outline the health effects associated with exposure to vibration and appropriate control measures.

In part (a) candidates who were awarded marks provided responses mainly on health surveillance. Candidates did not appear to consider exposure values, legal requirements and the fundamental point that use of hand-held vibrating tools is a key indication for the need of assessment of exposure. Many candidates provided ill-health effects for both parts of this question and therefore did not gain marks for part (a) based on this approach. While there appeared to be a good understanding of ill-health effects for part (b) of the question, some candidates confused HAVs with WRULDs and therefore missed the opportunity to gain marks. For part (b) there were common responses stating numbness, vibration white finger (VWF), reduced strength and grip. A few candidates gained marks for mentioning reduced touch and reduced temperature.

## Examination technique

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

### Candidates misread/misinterpreted the question

Candidates misreading or misinterpreting the question is by far the most common cause of candidates 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 candidates to be sufficiently prepared to provide the relevant depth of answer across a broad range of subject areas. For example, a candidate 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 candidate 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.

Candidates must also pay attention to the command word. For example, a question could ask candidates to '**identify** the hazards associated with demolition work', or a question from the same element could ask candidates to '**outline** the control measures required during demolition work'. Candidates 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, candidates 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 candidates 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 candidates appear to misread or misinterpret several questions. This situation is more likely due to candidates 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.

Candidates 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.

### Candidates 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 candidate 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 candidate would be expected to provide in an answer to an examination question.

Examiners report that candidates 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 candidate in their examination answer. A significant number of candidates, 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 candidates do provide too much information, which would not be required where a command word limits the expected answer to 'give' or 'identify'. Candidates would not be penalised for providing excessive detail but this would not be an efficient use of the time allocated.

Course providers 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 candidates on suitable examination technique during a course of study.

### **Candidates 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 candidates 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 candidates 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.

### **Candidates provided rote-learned responses that did not fit the question**

It is clear that there are a significant number of candidates 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 candidate's **understanding** of the subject and reciting a pre-prepared and memorised answer will not show a candidate's understanding. In fact, if a candidate 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.

### **Candidates repeated the same points but in different ways / Candidates provided the same answer to different questions**

There are instances where candidates 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.

Candidates 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 candidates and makes it much clearer in the stress of the examination for candidates to see which points have been made and reduce the chances of the same point being made several times.

### **Candidates did not answer all of the questions**

It has been noted that a number of candidates do not attempt all of the questions and of course where a candidate 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. Course providers 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. Candidates 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 candidate 'going blank' in an examination situation, in which case candidates 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, candidates 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.

### **Candidates 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 candidates 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 course providers and candidates 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.

Candidates 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.

### **Candidates' handwriting was illegible**

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

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

NEBOSH recommends to accredited course providers that candidates 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>

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

Course providers 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 candidates. 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 candidates 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 candidate 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 candidate 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 candidates 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 candidates do answer such questions sufficiently and satisfactorily, other candidates 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 candidates 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 course providers should use the NEBOSH guidance on command words within their examination preparation sessions in order to prepare candidates 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. Candidates 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-student/> - from this page the document can be found by clicking on the relevant Qualification link, then on the 'Resources' tab.