

Example question paper and Examiners' feedback on expected answers (IGC1)



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UNIT IGC1: MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



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

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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 candidates annually and are offered by over 600 course providers, with exams 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) regulatory requirements.

This report provides guidance for candidates which it is hoped will be useful to candidates and tutors 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 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 always some 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.

Course providers and candidates will 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 Unit IGC1 and tutor reference documents for each Element.

Some candidates may over rely on knowledge of health and safety gained through their own work experience. While practical experiences can sometimes be helpful they are not a substitute for tuition and study of the syllabus content, to the breadth and depth indicated in the Guide referred to above.

In order to meet the pass standard for this assessment, acquisition of knowledge and understanding across the syllabus are prerequisites. However, candidates need to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in answering the questions set. Referral of candidates in this unit is invariably because they are unable to write a full, well-informed answer to one or more of the questions asked.

Some candidates find it difficult to relate their learning to the questions and as a result offer responses reliant on recalled knowledge and conjecture and fail to demonstrate a sufficient degree of understanding. Candidates should prepare themselves for this vocational examination by ensuring their understanding, not rote-learning pre-prepared answers.

Candidates should therefore note this Report has not been written to provide ‘sample answers’ but to give examples of what Examiners are expecting and more specifically to highlight areas of underperformance.

Common weaknesses and suggestions to assist providers and candidates

It is recognised that many candidates are well prepared for their assessments. However, recurrent issues, as outlined below, continue to prevent some candidates reaching their full potential in the assessment.

Weakness in examination technique

- Many candidates fail to apply the basic principles of examination technique and for some candidates this means the difference between a pass and a referral.
- Candidates need to plan their time effectively. Some candidates fail to make good use of their time and give excessive detail in some answers leaving insufficient time to address all of the questions.
- In some instances, candidates do not attempt all the required questions or are failing to provide complete answers. Candidates are advised to always attempt an answer to a question even when the question is on an unfamiliar topic. At the risk of stating the obvious, an unattempted question will gain no marks. Questions or parts of questions missed can also indicate a weakness in time management.
- Some candidates fail to answer the question set and instead provide information that may be relevant to the topic but is irrelevant to the question and cannot therefore be awarded marks.

- Some candidates fail to separate their answers into the different sub-sections of the questions. These candidates could gain marks for the different sections if they clearly indicated which part of the question they were answering (by using the numbering from the question in their answer, for example). Structuring their answers to address the different parts of the question can also help in logically drawing out the points to be made in response.

Candidates benefit from the chance to practice answering questions in examination like conditions. This should assist them to become familiar with the need to read questions carefully, consider, plan their answer and then begin to write. By examination like conditions, practicing their answers within appropriate time limits should help candidates with time management within the examination.

Feedback to candidates on their answers to questions is a key part of these practice activities.

Lack of attention to command word

- Many candidates fail to apply the command words (eg describe, outline, etc). Command words are the instructions that guide the candidate on the depth of answer required. If, for instance, a question asks the candidate to 'describe' something, then few marks will be awarded to an answer that is an outline. Similarly, the command word 'identify' requires more information than a list.
- The most common weakness is the provision of too little content in an answer to meet the requirement of the command word. This is an unfortunate error as it can mean that a candidate, who knows the topic, and correct points to include in their answer, misses out on marks.

There is good guidance available to candidates and providers "*Guidance on command words and question papers*" which can be accessed on the NEBOSH website. This guidance will assist candidates to see and understand what is required in an answer when the different command words are used in questions. Some candidates miss out on marks by spending too long writing about one or two points when the answer requires more points to be covered. The chance to practice questions with a range of command words and to receive feedback on the quality of their answers will benefit candidates.

Failing to read the question/memorising answers

- Some candidates appear to have answered a question they hoped to see in the question paper rather than the question actually asked. This error can lead to all the available marks for a question being missed which can significantly impact on the likelihood of achieving the pass standard.

Other weaknesses observed

- Candidates should be aware of the need to make their handwriting as legible as possible.
- Candidates should note that it is not necessary to start a new page in their answer booklet for each section of a question.
- Candidates do not need to write the question out before answering it, they just need to indicate in the top right hand corner of the page which question is being answered. In some cases valuable time is lost doing this rather than focusing on the answer needed.

Unit IGC1

Management of international safety and health

- Question 1** *A fire has occurred at a workplace and a worker has been badly injured*
- (a) **Outline** the process for investigating the accident (10)
- (b) **Outline** why the investigation report needs to be submitted to senior management. (5)
- (c) In addition to senior managers, **identify** who may need to know the outcome of the investigation. (5)
-

Part (a) was well answered by those candidates who understood the process for investigation of an accident and who set out an answer in a 'step by step' manner, from ensuring that the scene of the accident is now safe, to the actions likely to follow the consideration of the accident report by senior management.

There are ten marks available for part (a) which should indicate to a candidate that they need to outline a number of parts of a process to give an answer of sufficient breadth to gain good marks.

Most candidates could give some valid points, for example, interview witnesses, identify the immediate and root causes of the accident. Fewer candidates gave an appropriate outline of sufficient parts of the process to gain a good mark for part (a).

The command word for part (a) is 'outline' and those candidates who listed even valid points will have missed out on gaining marks because the command word was not followed. This comment about the need to 'outline' is applicable to part (b) below.

Part (b) had marks available for reasons that reflect senior managers' responsibilities, roles and authority. Marks were available for reasons such as senior management having the power to take remedial action and their ability to allocate resources.

There were some candidates who did not outline sufficient, valid points for part (b).

Part (c) was reasonably answered by most candidates, with many identifying that persons such as the health and safety officer, or other appropriate professionals and the victim may need to know the outcome of the investigation. Also, organisations such as the enforcement agency may need to know.

As with parts (a) and (b), there was a common weakness related to the breadth of answers. Candidates would not gain the five marks available by identifying only one or two valid points.

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- Question 2** **Outline** the key elements of a health and safety management system. (8)
-

There were two ways that candidates could answer this question that would lead to gaining reasonable to good marks, depending upon what form of health and safety management system they had studied and were outlining in their answer.

An outline that covered the key elements of policy, organising for health and safety, planning and implementing, measuring performance and/or evaluation, audit and review was appropriate.

An answer would also be valid and gain marks if it outlined occupational health and safety policy, planning, implementation and operation, checking and management review.

As the question has an 'outline' command word, this indicated to candidates that they needed to provide more than just a list of headings. For example, marks were available for a reasonable outline of 'policy' that included that it would need to be clear and set aims and objectives.

Some candidates missed out on gaining marks because they provided too much content on only one or two elements. To gain good marks candidates were required to give a reasonable outline of an appropriate breadth of key elements and not a detailed account of one, for example a very long detailed account of 'audit'.

There were no marks available for an answer that contained only an acronym or aide memoir.

Question 2 is an example of a question where all of the marks available could be missed by not reading the question carefully and not understanding what is required. A few candidates provided an outline of the elements of a health and safety policy, and not of a management system.

Question 3	(a)	(i) Give the meaning of the term 'hazard'.	(2)
		(ii) Give the meaning of the term 'risk'.	(2)
	(b)	Identify means of hazard identification that may be used in the workplace.	(4)

This question was, generally, well answered.

For part (a) (i) and (ii), most candidates were able to gain some marks. A number of candidates were able to give both the meaning of both 'hazard' and 'risk' and gain the full two marks available for each.

For part (b), there was a lack of appropriate breadth of answer. There were four marks available for part (b) which indicates that candidates need to identify more than just one or two means of hazard identification. Means such as inspection and audit were frequently seen in answers. Other appropriate means of hazard identification could have included health surveillance and consultation with the workforce.

Although an answer to a question with 'identify' as the command word does not need to be to the same depth as an 'outline', full marks for valid points cannot usually be gained by just a list of single words.

Question 4	(a)	Outline the main health and safety responsibilities of an employer.	(6)
	(b)	Identify actions that an enforcement agency could take if it finds that an employer is not meeting his / her responsibilities.	(2)

Part (a) was generally well answered with most candidates gaining some of the marks available. Marks were available for an outline of responsibilities such as the provision of a safe workplace, provision of personal protective equipment and provision of adequate welfare facilities.

There was a common weakness among candidates who did not outline sufficient valid points to gain the six marks available for this question. It is not clear whether this was due to poor examination technique or whether the one or two responsibilities outlined were the only ones the candidate knew.

Part (a) required an 'outline', so a list of words such as 'training' would not meet the requirement of the command word and marks would be missed.

Part (b) was also generally well answered, with many candidates being able to identify actions such as the issuing of a notice to cease the work, or to close the site and the prosecution of the organisation or individuals.

Question 5 *Identify precautions that could be taken to help ensure the health and safety of visitors to a workplace.* **(8)**

This question had marks available for precautions such as having suitable perimeter controls so as to manage access to a workplace, ensuring that visitors are identifiable by such means as a 'visitor' badge and ensuring that visitors understand and abide by site rules.

As with other questions on this IGC1 paper, a number of candidates missed out on gaining marks because they identified too few precautions to gain most or all of the eight marks available. As commented earlier in this report, it is not clear whether this was due to a weakness in examination technique or whether the few precautions that were identified were all that a candidate knew.

Although this question began with 'identify' and requires an answer of a depth appropriate to that command word, some candidates missed marks by giving insufficient content to their points in their answer, for example just writing 'PPE'.

Question 6 *A university has a security worker who works alone when all staff and students have left.*

Outline what needs to be considered in order to reduce the health and safety risks to this lone worker. **(8)**

This question requires candidates to consider what health and safety risks might face this lone worker and what needs to be considered in order to reduce and control those risks.

Most candidates were able to gain some marks by providing an outline of points such as the provision of an induction to the site to make the security worker aware of hazards, keeping in regular communication with the lone worker to check that all is well and security precautions to keep intruders out.

There were eight marks available for this question which indicates to candidates that a reasonable breadth of points needs to be outlined in order to gain full marks, not just one or two points.

This was another 'outline' question and again some candidates missed out on marks by providing only a list of points such as 'training', 'communication' or 'PPE'.

Some candidates went in to far too much detail on one or two particular considerations, such as a very detailed account of how distant supervision might be arranged.

There is a comment above, in the 'General Comments' section of this report, that candidates are likely to benefit from practicing questions in examination-like settings. Some of the variation in performance by candidates on this question may reflect that some had practiced and received feedback about the breadth and depth of answers and others had not.

Question 7 **Outline potential barriers to achieving good standards of health and safety.** **(8)**

This question saw candidates produce a range of answers of very differing quality and with consequent differences in the number of marks that could be awarded.

There were marks available for an outline of barriers that might be observed within an organisation, such as a lack of consultation and/or communication with the workforce, lack of training and/or the right competencies and ineffective internal health and safety policies and procedures.

Marks were also available for an outline of broader potential barriers such as the expectations of particular industries or of the country of operation.

A number of candidates appeared to take a very narrow view of what the potential barriers may be and only included internal barriers such as training issues in their answer.

Question 8 (a) **Give the meaning of the term 'permit-to-work'.** **(2)**
(b) **Identify THREE types of activity that may require a permit-to-work AND give the reasons why in EACH case.** **(6)**

For part (a) an acceptable meaning would have been one that included such points as the permit is a formal documented procedure; that it protects workpeople engaged in high risk activities or who are working in a high risk environment; and the permit is signed to give authority for the work to take place.

Some candidates did not appear to understand that a permit-to-work and a safe system of work are not one and the same.

Part (b) of the question required candidates to identify three types of activity that may require a permit-to-work. These activities might have included 'hot work', entry into a confined space and working at height. Most candidates were able to identify one or more types of activity.

Performance on the other requirement of part (b) of this question was weaker, with few candidates being able to give a reason why a permit may be needed for the types of work identified. The combination of a type of activity 'hot work' and a valid reason being to control ignition sources and/or to prevent the hot work being the cause of a fire at the worksite was the most commonly offered by candidates.

Some candidates (who may have confused permit-to-work and safe system of work) appeared to consider that all work at height (eg from a ladder) and work on any electrical appliance would require a permit-to-work.

Where candidates did not give a reason why a permit was needed, it was not clear whether this was because they did not know or because of poor examination technique.

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- Question 9**
- (a) **Explain** the difference between consulting and informing workers of health and safety issues. (2)
- (b) **Outline** factors that may determine the effectiveness of a health and safety committee. (6)
-

Part (a) requires candidates to understand what is meant by 'consulting' and 'informing' workers and to then be able to provide a reasonable explanation of the difference between the two processes. Most candidates were able to gain at least one of the marks, with more confident candidates providing a good answer that earned them both marks.

Part (b) had six marks available which indicates to candidates that an outline of a number of factors was required. Some candidates gave one or two valid points but not sufficient to gain most or all of the marks available.

Factors that were common across the answers to this question included having balanced representation between management and workforce and a clear agenda. There were marks available for other factors such as the committee dealing with suitable topics and the status of the committee/access to the decision making process, but these were less often included in candidates' answers.

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- Question 10** **Identify** documentation that is likely to be inspected in a health and safety audit. (8)
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This question was not consistently answered well. The comments made earlier in this report, that candidates need to read and understand what is required of them, can be repeated here.

This question required candidates to identify documentation likely to be inspected in an audit. All of the marks available related to 'documentation'.

Candidates who provided answers based on other aspects of audits, for example how an audit might be done, missed out on most or all of the marks.

Documentation could have included communications with the workforce such as newsletters or the content of 'tool box talks', health and safety policy, emergency/first aid procedures, etc.

Many candidates who did read and understand the question gained good marks.

This was an 'identify' question with eight marks available which indicates that an appropriate breadth of answer is needed, not just one or two types of documentation.

Question 11	(a)	Outline why it is important for an organisation to set health and safety targets.	(2)
	(b)	Identify health and safety targets that an organisation could set.	(6)

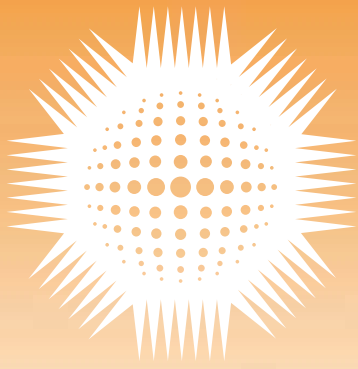
There was a common weakness in answers to this question related to the breadth of answers offered for both parts, ie the number of valid points in answers to both part (a) and part (b).

It is, of course, not clear whether this was the result of a lack of knowledge or poor examination technique.

In part (a) most candidates provided an outline of one reason, with the demonstration of management commitment being the most frequent. Other valid points, such as the motivation of managers and the workforce by having something to aim for, were less frequently included.

Answers to part (b) often included valid targets such as a reduction in accidents or zero accidents and reduced sickness absence. Other valid targets, such as benchmarked improvement, reduced insurance costs, improved inspection or audit scores, were offered less often in candidates' answers.

As commented above for previous questions, many candidates missed out on marks because they provided too few points. The six marks available for part (b) indicate that more than one or two valid points need to be identified.



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