

July 2016

Examiners' Report

NEBOSH International Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety (Unit A)



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NEBOSH INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

UNIT IA: INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

JULY 2016



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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 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) 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

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, which is an essential requirement at Diploma level.

This report has been prepared to provide feedback on the standard date examination sitting in July 2016.

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 International Diploma 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 IA 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 Unit IA 'Example question paper and Examiners' feedback on expected answers' which provides example questions and details Examiners' expectations and typical areas of underperformance.

Unit IA

International management of health and safety

Question 1 *The consequences of human failure can be immediate or delayed.*

- (a) **Explain** the differences between active failures and latent failures. (6)
- (b) (i) **Give** examples of an active failure. (2)
- (ii) **Give** examples of a latent failure. (2)

This question covered learning outcome 2.1 of the syllabus and sought to assess candidates' knowledge of accident causation.

As referenced in the stem of the question, immediate and delayed consequences would have been a good starting point for candidates. Examiners were expecting answers that *explained* the differences rather than repeated the question. The fact that active failures tend to involve front line staff and are therefore often operational in nature and that latent failures are usually system failures and often involve designers was not well known by many candidates.

The terms are well used and described in several accident causation models so Examiners were expecting reasonable responses to this question.

As there was a lack of clear understanding by many candidates of the terms in part (a), part (b) proved to be a little problematic with many candidates not providing clear examples. The number of marks available should have directed candidates to the number of examples that were expected.

In order to improve performance candidates and course providers are encouraged to follow and understand the terminology used in the syllabus, in this case '*latent and active failures – Reasons model of accident causation*'. In compiling questions for the examination the syllabus is used as a source of questions and terminology to assess the learning outcomes of each part of the syllabus.

Question 2 *For a range of societal factors, **outline** how they might influence health and safety standards and priorities.* (10)

Assessing learning outcome 1.2, this question was aimed at candidates' understanding of the wider issues that may influence health and safety standards.

Study at Diploma level demands that successful candidates have a deep understanding of the subject matter and are able to reason related areas of knowledge, as well as recall and apply knowledge.

Examiners were looking for candidates to offer influences, classed as societal and provide evidence of knowledge that they were aware of how they influence standards of health and safety.

The syllabus specifically makes reference to societal factors as being economic climate, government policy and initiatives, industry or business risk profile, globalisation of business, migrant workers and levels of sickness and incapacity. Candidates who recognised this connection and offered how such factors could influence health and safety standards gained good marks.

In contrast there were candidates who were seemingly put off by the term '*societal factors*' and did not provide mark-worthy responses to the question. Additionally, there was evidence of candidates who took a superficial approach to the concept of societal factors by limiting their responses to company cultural issues.

Question 3 *A large organisation that operates in different countries around the world uses a self-regulatory model for its health and safety management system.*

(a) **Outline** the benefits of a self-regulatory model. (6)

(b) **Outline** the limitations of a self-regulatory model. (4)

This question addressed learning outcome 8.3 of the syllabus and candidates needed to outline a range of benefits and limitations in relation to self-regulation.

Most candidates who gained marks for this question provided answers that gained mid-range marks; high marks were very rare. There did not appear to be any particular misunderstanding that led to limited answers other than a lack of knowledge. Some candidates did not appear to understand the idea of self-regulation and addressed legislation in large parts of their answers.

Similarly, there were candidates who had a good grasp of the concept of self-regulation, perhaps due to first-hand experience and these candidates mentioned benefits such as it ensures consistency across different sites, often in different countries, can adopt best practices above the legal minimum standard, industry harmonised standards, among others. Conversely in part (b), limitations including: lack of fit for local circumstances, may cause or allow lower levels of compliance, may not be valued by some stakeholders, were all worthy of good marks.

Element 8 of the syllabus relating to the regulation of health and safety specifically makes reference to self-regulation and consequently it is a concept that should be well taught by course providers and understood by candidates. While many candidates tackled the question well, equally there were those who did not.

Question 4 *In relation to health and safety monitoring systems, **explain** the differences between:*

(a) *active and reactive performance measures;* (6)

(b) *qualitative and quantitative performance measures.* (4)

Learning outcome 3.2 of the syllabus relates to monitoring and measuring health and safety performance. Specifically, learning outcome 3.2 requires a knowledge of monitoring and measuring techniques.

Good answers to this question explained the differences between active and reactive measures in part (a) and provided an explanation of the differences between qualitative and quantitative measures in part (b). The key in this question is the command word 'explain' which provides the candidates with a guide as to the depth of content required in order to achieve good marks.

In part (a) an explanation of forward looking measures of system strength prior to accidents and incidents, and measurements of system failures or weaknesses following an unwanted event would have gained good marks.

In part (b) a similar explanation of qualitative and quantitative measures relating to subjective comparisons as opposed to precise data measurements would have gained good marks.

Overall, there was a range of responses, but candidates were seemingly better at explaining active than reactive. In part (b) of the question there were a significant number of answers where candidates gave what would have been good explanations of qualitative and quantitative measures, but candidates confused the titles. These were fair explanations but the wrong category negated any mark-worthy points.

Question 5 ***Outline ways in which workers can be motivated to work safely.*** **(10)**

Assessing learning outcome 7.4 of the syllabus, this short, direct question gave candidates broad scope to offer the key features of ways that workers can be motivated to work safely.

Many candidates seized the opportunity to gain good marks in this question and most seemed to be at ease with the topic and were able to give good answers. Candidates embraced most of the important issues relating to the employers' approach to motivation. Those good responses included outlines of training, worker involvement, incentives including reward, and sanctions.

There were some answers that seemed to miss the term '*motivated*' in the question and subsequently commented on how workers work safely. Such answers tended not to gain good marks but picked up some marks.

Areas of mark-worthy ways that were commonly not mentioned by candidates included positive peer pressure, job satisfaction and management commitment.

A health and safety practitioner's role will inevitably require them to understand how to motivate workers to work safely and comply with rules and procedures and this question gave candidates the opportunity to demonstrate those practical skills.

Question 6 ***Outline ways in which health and safety practitioners could:***

(a) *evaluate;* **(6)**

(b) *develop* **(4)**

their own competence.

This question reflects the content of learning outcome 1.4 of the syllabus. Understanding one's own competence in relation to health and safety, especially in an advisory or consultative role, is essential in maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.

There was some crossover of answers between part (a) and part (b) which suggests a lack of understanding of the terms '*evaluate*' and '*develop*'. In part (a) most candidates used benchmarking and personal objectives, seeking feedback and advice, as well as appraisals. Some candidates also mentioned the organisation's performance. In part (b) qualification was a popular answer, CPD, conferences, seeking advice, etc also gained good marks.

Failure to recognise and subsequently relate to evaluation and development as required in the question poses concerns over the level of English language skills of some of the candidates. Both candidates and course providers are reminded that English language equivalent of IELTS level 7 is recommended for candidates of the International Diploma, which reflects the users' ability in having an operational command of the language and able to handle complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.

Question 7 *In order to reduce the likelihood of human error, **outline** the desirable design features of:*

(a) *controls;* (12)

(b) *displays* (8)

on a control panel for a complex industrial process.

This question is from learning outcome 7.6 of the syllabus and assesses candidates' application of knowledge to ergonomically designed control systems and displays in relation to reducing errors and improving human reliability.

The question was divided into two parts in order to give the candidates the best opportunity to distinguish between controls and displays and not mix them up. In part (a) candidates were expected to offer specific features in relation to the controls and their location such as: sufficient numbers but kept to a minimum to avoid confusion, positive action of controls, visibility, stop function priority, clear identification of controls, etc. In part (b) candidates could have made points such as: displays being visible and labelled, appropriate for the reading (analogue/digital), shielded from glare, separation of safety critical displays, etc.

In order to achieve the 20 marks available for the question it is important that candidates give Examiners a broad range of opportunity to award marks. Narrow answers that only concentrate on a few of the design features will not gain good marks. In many instances there were examples of candidates providing only a few options and while correct gained only the few marks available for those points. Additionally, there were candidates who did not distinguish or recognise a difference between controls and displays, which made their answers somewhat limited.

Overall the question was popular with more than half of candidates choosing to answer it. The mix of answers meant that there was a broad range from good to limited answers overall.

Section B of the examination gives candidates the opportunity to focus on a subject that they know well and gain high marks. It is recommended that candidates and course providers take some time to practice the approach to questions and ensure that a good understanding of what is required in the question is recognised. In this case, the 'outline' command word for such a broad subject area should suggest that a broad range of points is needed to gain good marks, rather than a narrow focus on two or three pieces of detail.

Question 8	<p>(a) <i>An organisation has decided to introduce a permit-to-work system for maintenance and engineering work at a manufacturing plant that operates continuously over three shifts.</i></p> <p>Outline factors that should be considered when introducing and maintaining an effective permit-to-work system in these circumstances. (10)</p> <p>(b) <i>An audit of the permit-to-work system shows that many permits-to-work have not been completed correctly or have not been signed back.</i></p> <p>Explain possible reasons why there has been a failure to adhere properly to the permit-to-work system. (10)</p>
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Drawn from learning outcome 5.3 this question on permits-to-work sought to assess candidates' knowledge not only of the operational aspects of permit-to-work systems but also the introduction and maintenance of a permit-to-work system.

The focus in part (a) of the question on introduction and maintenance seemed to limit several candidates who clearly understood a permit-to-work process but misread the question and answered a question about operating a permit-to-work system. Although parts of the answers did address some of the criteria in the mark scheme, these candidates did not realise the full potential that their knowledge could have delivered if the question had been read properly and understood. It is unclear whether this is a language issue or the pressure of examinations which causes such a misunderstanding. Conversely, there were those candidates who did read and understand the question and delivered some good answers.

In part (a) Examiners were looking for candidates to outline the definition of jobs and areas to which the system would apply, development of the documentation, arrangements for issue and return, spot checks and auditing of the system, etc. Part (b) tended to be better answered with reference to competence and training of issuers and receivers, poor safety culture and production pressures which were some of the areas where candidates gained high marks.

Overall this was well answered and the most popular of the Section B questions.

Question 9	<p>(a) <i>In relation to the improvement of health and safety in organisations, outline the meaning of:</i></p> <p>(i) <i>corporate probation;</i> (2)</p> <p>(ii) <i>adverse publicity orders;</i> (3)</p> <p>(iii) <i>punitive damages.</i> (3)</p> <p>(b) Outline how the International Labour Organisation can influence health and safety standards in different countries. (7)</p> <p>(c) Outline how legislation is able to improve health and safety in the workplace. (5)</p>
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This question comes from learning outcomes 8.1 and 8.2 of the syllabus, Regulating health and safety.

This question assesses an area of knowledge that candidates should be well prepared to answer.

This confidence was borne out by many answers that delivered a good understanding of the terms and influences mentioned in the question. It was the second most popular question in Section B with the highest overall marks.

In part (a) candidates tended to gain better marks than in parts (b) or (c). There was little depth required to gain the marks in part (a) and many candidates managed to convey that corporate probation was a supervision order imposed by the courts; and that adverse publicity orders required publication by offenders of details relating to offence and punishment and the name and shame purpose of the order. Similarly, as the title suggests, punitive damages are financial awards to the victim over and above that of compensation aiming to punish and deter offenders.

In part (b) there was some confusion over the ILO's role in influencing health and safety standards, with only a few candidates being able to outline ratification of conventions and ILO's monitoring and technical assistance roles in developing standards in member countries.

Part (c) was seeking candidates to provide an outline of prescriptive and goal setting legislation, enforcement and sanctions for non-compliance and the concept of equal standards for all. However, many candidates did not get beyond punishment for non-compliance.

The development of regulatory frameworks in different countries is an important aspect of improving and influencing health and safety standards and Diploma candidates are expected to be able to discuss such influences in a range of circumstances and scenarios. The level of knowledge and understanding needs to be worked on by both course providers and candidates alike.

Question 10 *The management of an organisation intends to introduce new, safer working procedures.*

- (a) **Outline** practical measures that the management could take to communicate effectively when managing this change. (10)
- (b) Other than effective communication, **outline** additional ways in which the management could gain the support and commitment of workers when managing this change. (10)
-

Taken from learning outcome 6.7 of the syllabus this question assesses candidates' knowledge of the practical application of communication measures and how other tools can be used to gain support and commitment to organisational change.

In part (a) of the question candidates needed to offer practical measures to communicate change and measures such as frequent newsletters, regular meetings, use of noticeboards and suggestion schemes, were relevant. This was well answered by a good number of candidates who understood the requirement for practical measures in the question. However, there was a correspondingly large number who did not follow the practical measures direction in the question and referred to actions such as developing the safety culture and investigating accidents among others.

In part (b) candidates should have developed the change management theme and outlined other change management tools such as staff surveys, consultation, involvement of workers, incentives, disciplinary measures, resource allocation, etc.

Overall, part (a) was better answered than part (b) and it seems that there were candidates who did not make the link in change management tools to keep workers on board with new procedures.

This is a practical question that assesses the application of knowledge as well as the recall of theoretical information. At Diploma level candidates are required to offer the skills of application of knowledge as well as memory recall. Therefore course providers should be preparing candidates to apply their knowledge to a range of scenarios and circumstances which are both familiar and unfamiliar to the candidates.

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- Question 11** *An organisation wants to build a new gas compression installation to provide energy for its manufacturing processes. An explosion in the installation could affect the public and a nearby railway line. In view of this, the organisation has been told that a qualitative risk assessment for the new installation may not be adequate and that some aspects of the risk require a quantitative risk assessment.*
- (a) **Explain the terms:**
- (i) *qualitative risk assessment;* (3)
- (ii) *quantitative risk assessment.* (2)
- (b) **Identify** *external sources of information and advice that the organisation could refer to when deciding whether the risk from the new installation is acceptable.* (5)
- (c) *A preliminary part of the risk assessment process is to be a hazard and operability (HAZOP) study.*
- Describe the principles and methodology of a HAZOP study.** (10)
-

Taken from learning outcomes 4.1, 4.3 and 4.4, this question focused on aspects of risk assessment that are well known, tried and tested in health and safety.

In part (a) to gain good marks candidates needed to provide and explain the terms 'qualitative' and 'quantitative'. While many candidates who attempted the question gained reasonable marks in part (a) few candidates could get their explanations beyond subjective descriptions and numerical data. Further marks were available for explaining broad categories to classify likelihood and consequences for qualitative and actual numerical data representing probability and consequences in relation to quantitative. This seems to suggest a disconnect between what is expected as an answer and candidate perception of what constitutes a good high mark answer.

In part (b) the concept of acceptability and what documentation can support judgements of acceptability seemed to be challenging. However, marks were awarded for reference to document sources such as enforcing agencies, competent consultants, similar organisations, insurance codes of practice and guidance, etc.

Part (c) of the question focused candidates specifically on hazard and operability studies (HAZOPS), a tool widely used in high risk sectors and process design and safety assessments. Marks were available for intention of HAZOPS, team approach nature of the activity, use of guide words and how they are applied to parameters of design and intent, etc.

Those candidates familiar with HAZOPS gained good marks and used terms such as deviations, design intent, guide words, etc that helps to demonstrate the understanding of the process required by the question.

Examination technique

The following examination techniques are consistently identified as the main areas in need of improvement for candidates:

Candidates misread/misinterpreted the question

Careful and thorough preparation for the examination is vital for candidates. Accredited course providers should assist candidates in setting out and applying sound revision and examination practice and preparation techniques to ensure that they are well prepared for the examination. This includes ensuring that candidates carefully read the question to determine exactly what is being asked and answer accordingly.

Examiners noted that there was evidence of candidates not understanding the question that was asked and therefore providing an answer that was not relevant to the question.

The range of English language skills demonstrated in the examination by candidates varies enormously. Examiners often find themselves faced with scripts where candidates do not appear to have understood the question and struggle to write a coherent answer in English. Candidates for this examination should satisfy the required IELTS Level 7 language requirements. Course providers are reminded that it is incumbent on them to provide appropriate advice and guidance to candidates to help ensure that they stand a reasonable chance of success in the study of the NEBOSH Diploma.

There were numerous examples of quite long, detailed answers that suggest practical experience but do not focus on the question being asked. This may be a result of candidates either not reading the question properly, or because of possible language issues where candidates do not understand what the question is asking.

The examination is assessing candidates on their understanding of 'managing' health and safety and a number of candidates did not seem to grasp this resulting in long, detailed answers on such issues as 'what to look for in an audit' rather than how to prepare for and manage an audit.

Examiners ask questions based on the syllabus. Points, no matter how valid, but unrelated to the question being asked, will not attract any marks. Candidates should note that where there is emphasis in a question (eg by the use of italics) it is to guide candidates towards a particular point. Reading and re-reading the question encompasses taking due note of this emphasis.

Candidates' handwriting was illegible

The examination situation is a stressful time for candidates and while the examination is not a test of the English language or handwriting scripts must be legible for Examiners to mark them fairly. As the examination progresses, candidates can become both mentally and physically tired. In an increasingly electronic age, professional people do not have the same need to write text in longhand. However, to pass this examination it is an essential and necessary part of the preparation to rehearse writing questions in full and in the time allocated.

When practicing examination technique, candidates should hand-write their answers and get feedback from their course providers on legibility (as well as how they performed).

Course providers need to identify those candidates whose handwriting is illegible and provide them with appropriate advice. Examiners cannot award marks for answers that they are unable to read.

Candidates unnecessarily wrote the question down

There are 15 minutes to answer a 10-mark question in Section A and 30 minutes available to answer a 20-mark question in Section B of the question paper. This time will be required for reading, re-reading and understanding the question, developing an answer plan on the answer booklet and finally committing the answer to the answer booklet. The efficient use of time is essential in order to answer the 9 questions within the 3 hours available. The majority of Examiners reported that candidates felt it necessary to write the question out in full, before providing the associated answer, and this limits the time available. Course providers should remind candidates that it is not necessary to include a question with their answer.

Good examination technique is followed where the candidate frames the answer in the context of the question, rather than rewriting the whole of the question. As with the other examination technique points above, good examination technique is developed through practice and good preparation.

Candidates repeated the same point but in different ways

In some cases candidates tended to make the same point more than once, eg training. Once a valid point has been made and the mark awarded Examiners will not be able to award the mark again. Unless otherwise stated, most questions require candidates to respond with a wide range of issues to gain high marks. Consequently candidates should take care when using terms that contain numerous points that should be made separately.

Accredited course providers should brief candidates on examination technique by way of understanding what points are mark worthy in an answer and those that are not.

Candidates did not respond effectively to the command word

A key indicator in an examination 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.

Generally, there has been an improvement in response to command words, but a number of candidates continue to produce answers that are little more than a list even when the command word requires a more detailed level of response, such as 'outline' or 'explain'. This is specifically addressed in the following section dealing with command words, most commonly failure to provide sufficient content to constitute an 'outline' was noted. Failure to respond to the relevant command word in context was also a frequent problem hence information inappropriate to the question was often given.

Course exercises should guide candidates to assessing the relevant points in any given scenario such that they are able to apply the relevant syllabus elements within the command word remit.

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

Examiners report a high incidence of candidates writing down answers they have memorised from previous Examiners' Reports. These answers often relate to a similar, but different question, to which the memorised answer is not wholly applicable. For example, it may require a different aspect of the topic or relate to a different scenario.

Candidates are expected to apply their knowledge and understanding to the actual question given, not the question they think they see. This is why it is extremely important that candidates understand and are able to apply their knowledge, and not just memorise. Course providers should help candidates apply their knowledge to a range of different scenarios to aid understanding of the topic.

Candidates did not allocate enough time to the question

Some candidates were unable to give answers of sufficient depth to warrant good marks and sometimes spent more time on questions carrying fewer marks than was warranted by the command word.

Candidates need to take note of the fact that answers in Section A are worth 10 marks and those in Section B are worth 20 marks. The Examiners' expectation is that more detailed answers are required in Section B. Some candidates spend a disproportionate amount of time in writing long answers to Section A questions at the expense of time spent on the more in-depth answers demanded in Section B. Proper preparation and 'mock' examinations can help to correct this.

Accredited course providers should ensure that candidates are given adequate opportunity to develop examination skills to ensure that answers are provided to the depth and breadth required.

Structured Answers

It is important for candidates to structure their answers as this helps cover all the requirements of the question without losing focus. It is good examination technique to look for the principles or the concepts that underpin the topic and to use those as a basis for delivering a structured answer.

Candidates answered by posing a question

Candidates need to resist the temptation to present their answers as merely a series of questions. 'Outline' requires candidates *'To indicate the principal features or different parts of'* and this is not done through posing questions to the Examiners.

Command words

Please note that the examples used here are for the purpose of explanation only.

The following command words are listed in the order identified as being the most challenging for candidates:

Outline

Outline: To indicate the principal features or different parts of.

Most candidates are familiar with the requirements of 'outline'. However, a number of candidates expect that by listing or giving bullet points that will be sufficient. At this level of qualification candidates are expected to be able to construct sentences around their answers.

An 'outline' question requires candidates to give the main issue and then provide the key features in the context of the question. Where a question that requires candidates to '**outline** the issues to be addressed in the development of an audit system' the response should provide adequate context to the issues in order to gain the marks. An answer that merely includes issues such as 'scope, training, commitment, etc' will not gain good marks since while the issues are relevant there is no context to the issues in relation to the question asked.

Candidates should provide context to the point being made to demonstrate understanding of the subject.

As required by a Diploma level qualification candidates should be able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the subject matter and therefore be able to summarise and contextualise technical points in the field of health and safety. Those candidates who did provide good outlines to questions demonstrated understanding of the topic without going into too much detail.

If asked to '**outline** the purpose of local exhaust ventilation' in a given scenario, an answer such as 'contaminant removal, exposure limits' would be insufficient as this represents a listed answer. However, removal of contaminant at source (as far as possible) and ensuring exposure limits are not exceeded would higher gain marks.

If asked to '**outline** how health risks from exposure to lead should be managed...' in a given scenario, an answer such as medical tests, PPE, RPE would be insufficient as this represents a listed answer. However, surveillance tests for lead in blood/urine, the use of PPE such as overalls, the use of RPE such as respirator with appropriate particulate/fume filters would gain marks.

Explain

Explain: To provide an understanding. To make an idea or relationship clear.

Many candidates are still not properly prepared for this command word. A list of points (no matter how relevant) will not satisfy Examiners when the command word is 'explain'. So for example, where candidates were asked to explain the circumstances where heat and smoke detectors would be inappropriate, Examiners were looking for candidates to explain that heat detectors would be inappropriate in environments where temperatures fluctuate suddenly during normal work activities. Just saying 'workshops', for example, is not enough to provide an answer to an 'explain' question.

Commonly, candidates do not provide adequate detail in relation to this command word, eg '**explain** limitations of relying on accident numbers only as a measure of health and safety performance'. An appropriate response would provide the reader with reasons why relying solely on accident numbers would not provide a comprehensive view of the organisational performance in health and safety, eg accident numbers do not indicate incidence of ill-health and accident data may go up following initiatives following underreporting, etc.

Candidates are generally unable to provide clear answers where this command word is used but that may be due to lack of knowledge rather than not understanding what is required, since an explanation requires the candidate to provide reasoning for their answer. For example, when a question specifies 'explain' the candidate is required to provide an understanding or make clear an idea or relationship. For example '**explain** how malaria is transmitted to humans'. If a candidate responded with *mosquito bites humans* this would be insufficient to merit full marks as this does not provide a deep enough understanding or relationship from the specified command word or the context in which the question is asked. However, a candidate would get full marks if they elaborated on this stating that the disease originates with the plasmodium parasite that is then transmitted to humans via a bite from a feeding female mosquito that carries it; the parasite then transferring to the human blood stream, travelling to the liver.

Describe

'Describe. To give a detailed written account of the distinctive features of a topic. The account should be factual without any attempt to explain.'

Candidates are required to provide a word picture in response to this command word and therefore the candidate needs to have a good understanding of the topic of the question in the examination in order to gain good marks. Typically, a limited response to this command word will be an inadequate amount of detail in the answer.

For example, when asked to describe the contents of a safety policy candidates should provide the Examiner with relevant information about the contents of the policy, eg 'the policy should contain details of the organisational commitment to health and safety'. This would be supported with specific targets and commitment resource to ensuring compliance as a minimum but developing the health and wellbeing of the employees, etc'. An answer that goes no further than listing the topics of to be covered in the policy would not attract good marks in the examination.

In the examination, lists and single word answers will rarely satisfy the requirement of the Examiners in terms of answering the question at this level. It is noticeable that the well prepared candidate has less trouble deciphering command words and tends to gain good marks whereas those candidates who use single word answers will tend not to have the knowledge to write anything further in the context that is required.

Give

Give: Only a short answer is required, not an explanation or a description.

'Give' is normally used in conjunction with a further requirement, such as '**give** the meaning of' or '**give** an example in **EACH** case'.

In some circumstances candidates may spend too much time giving unrequired detail in response to this command word. It is often used in conjunction with the meaning of a phrase or statement and candidates can overelaborate the required answer. Time management is important in the examination and candidates should ensure that they respond with appropriate brevity where the command word and available marks suggest that is all that is required.

When asked to '**give** the meaning of motivation', it would appropriate to say that 'motivation is the driving force that leads an individual to behave in a certain way'. It would not be appropriate to discuss in detail different motivational theories.

On the whole most candidates respond well to this command word, often by offering a definition. There is evidence where candidates go into too much detail that left those candidates writing large amounts of text for very few marks.

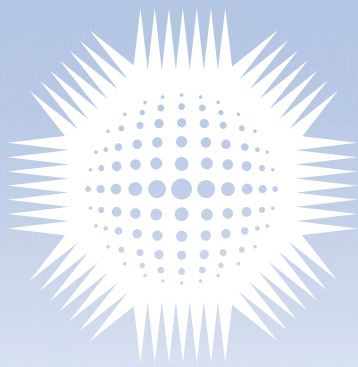
Identify

Identify: To give a reference to an item, which could be its name or title.

As with 'give' above it is not uncommon for candidates to overelaborate their answers in response to this command word. It is adequate for a candidate to provide the key point to the Examiner without further developing the point with supporting theory or examples unless they are specifically asked for.

When providing a response to 'identify' the mental selection and naming of an answer that relates to the question should be sufficient. In most cases, one or two words would be sufficient to be awarded corresponding marks. Any further detail would not be required and impacts negatively on the time limit for completing the examination. For example, if the question was '**identify** possible effects on the body when someone is exposed to lead' suitable responses would include developmental effects in unborn babies, anaemia, nausea/vomiting in order to be awarded a mark.

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: www.nebosh.org.uk/students/default.asp?cref=1345&ct=2.



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