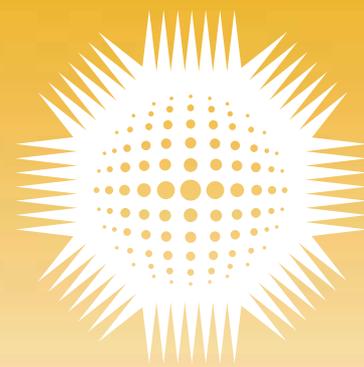


September 2016

Examiners Report

NEBOSH National
General Certificate in
Occupational Health
and Safety (NGC1)



nebosh



Examiners' Report

UNIT NGC1: MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

SEPTEMBER 2016



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

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Introduction

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

Courses leading to NEBOSH qualifications attract around 50,000 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.

This report has been prepared to provide feedback on standard date NGC1 examination sat in September 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 National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety' which is available via the NEBOSH website. In particular, the guide sets out in detail the syllabus content for NGC1 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 NGC1 'Example question paper and Examiners' feedback on expected answers' which provides example questions and details Examiners' expectations and typical areas of underperformance.

Unit NGC1

Management of health and safety

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- Question 1**
- (a) **Explain** the purpose of reviewing an organisation's health and safety performance. (8)
- (b) **Outline** information that could be considered when reviewing an organisation's health and safety performance. (8)
- (c) **Identify** persons who should take part in a review of an organisation's health and safety performance. (4)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 5.2 which requires candidates to explain the purpose of, and procedures for, regular reviews of health and safety performance.

For part (a), Examiners reported that a number of candidates either did not know the purpose of such a review or misread the question.

Some candidates appeared to have seen the phrase 'reviewing an organisation's health and safety performance' and answered by giving the purpose of reviewing a health and safety policy. While others responded by explaining the methods that might be used to conduct a health and safety review or what should be the content of a review, rather than explaining the purpose of reviewing performance. Where these approaches were taken Examiners were rarely able to award marks.

Candidates should guard against 'question-spotting' by carefully reading and re-reading each question before committing pen to paper.

According to the HSE reviewing is 'the process of making judgements about the adequacy of performance and taking decisions about the nature and timing of the actions necessary to remedy deficiencies.' Course providers should learn from all relevant experience and apply the lessons accordingly.

Examiners expected candidates to cover such issues as checking that the organisation is achieving legal compliance; comparing progress against targets or identifying trends.

Part (b) seems to have been interpreted correctly by the majority of candidates and many were able to gain some marks. However, many answers were narrow and did not progress beyond accident or ill-health statistics. Further information that might be considered includes evaluations of compliance with legal requirements, corrective actions or the results of consultation.

Candidates generally responded well to part (c) and were able to identify persons who should take part in a review of performance. Senior management and board members were frequently mentioned with few candidates identifying that an independent person might be involved.

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- Question 2** **Outline** requirements for first-aid provision in the workplace. (8)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.11 which requires candidates to be able to outline the requirements for, and effective provision of, first aid in the workplace.

This question was interpreted and answered well by the majority of candidates who had a good knowledge of the application of the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981. These Regulations apply to all workplaces and require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work.

A number of candidates answered incorrectly by either outlining the purpose of first aid or what should be considered when conducting an assessment of first aid provision. Examiners also reported that a small number of candidates clearly did not read the question well and gave an answer based solely on emergency arrangements rather than what was asked.

Those candidates who raised such issues as the number of first aiders based on the number of workers, first aid information that may need to be in other languages, a first aid box that is identified by signage and adequate coverage for annual leave/shifts, tended to gain good marks.

Question 3 *Identify information that may need to be made available to support, or defend, a civil claim for negligence in a case involving work-related ill-health.*

(8)

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 4.2, 4.3 and 1.3. Learning outcome 4.2 requires candidates to be able to explain the purpose of, and procedures for, investigating incidents (accidents, cases of work-related ill-health and other occurrences). Learning outcome 4.3 covers description of the legal and organisational requirements for recording and reporting incidents. Learning outcome 1.3 deals with the legal framework for regulation of health and safety including sources and types of law.

Once again there were some clear examples of candidates who misread the question. This question required candidates to identify information to support, or defend, a civil claim for negligence. A high proportion of candidates, on seeing the words 'defend' and 'civil claim' decided that the defences for tort of negligence were required. Many candidates went on to repeat, what appeared to be, a rote-learned answer on this subject.

Some candidates understood the question but answered based upon an accident rather than a case involving work-related ill-health. Fortunately some of the information is common to both types of incident and these candidates were able to gain some marks. Common information includes the health and safety policy, safe systems of work and training records. These candidates missed out on the opportunity to gain marks for ill-health history of the organisation and health surveillance reports.

Question 4 *Outline factors that should be considered in order to determine the frequency of health and safety inspections in the workplace.*

(8)

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 4.1 which requires candidates to be able to outline the principles, purpose and role of active and reactive monitoring. Specific content requires the factors governing the frequency of inspection.

This question was reasonably well answered with the majority of candidates demonstrating an understanding of the question. A few candidates misinterpreted or misread the question and gave what would be looked for during an inspection, rather than the factors that might determine the frequency of an inspection. Common responses were accident history, type of worker and the introduction of new equipment/processes. Least popular factors raised included statutory requirements and recommendations following risk assessments.

This was an outline question which some candidates ignored and produced lists or bullet-point answers thereby restricting the number of marks that could be awarded.

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|-------------------|---|------------|
| Question 5 | (a) Give the meaning of the term 'consultation'. | (2) |
| | (b) Outline health and safety matters on which employers must consult employees as required by the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996. | (3) |
| | (c) Identify benefits of employee participation in the consultation process. | (3) |
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.4 which requires candidates to be able to explain how health and safety behaviour at work can be improved.

For part (a) the majority of candidates had a limited understanding of the term 'consultation'. Very few candidates were able to give any more than consultation being a two-way process and as a consequence many answers lacked depth. Those candidates who went on to explain that consultation involves both parties interacting and contributing gained good marks for this part.

Those candidates with a good knowledge of the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 should have had little difficulty in answering part (b). However, knowledge of the health and safety matters on which employers should consult was sparse and few candidates were able to gain good marks. From the answers that were given by some candidates, it was apparent that many had not covered this topic well in their studies.

The matters on which the employer must consult are very specific and prescribed by the Regulations. They include any measure that may substantially affect the employee's health and safety of the employees and the planning and organising of health and safety training to comply with the statutory requirements.

In contrast, for part (c), Examiners found that candidates were aware of many of the benefits of employee participation in the consultation process. The most common response was that consultation increases the morale of the employees. Few candidates recognised that consultation improves employee commitment and encourages ownership of health and safety issues.

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| Question 6 | (a) Outline the role of the 'statement of intent' section of a health and safety policy. | (2) |
| | (b) Outline information that should be included in the 'statement of intent' section of a health and safety policy. | (6) |
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 2.3 which requires candidates to be able to describe the key features and appropriate content of an effective health and safety policy.

Examiners reported that part (a) produced a limited response from candidates with some either misreading or misunderstanding the question while others seemed to lack the depth of knowledge that was required to gain full marks.

For part (b) some candidates missed that the command word was 'identify' and provided an outline that could have wasted examination time. Most candidates were able to gain a few marks from this part. However, for some candidates the confusion between the active and reactive monitoring persisted. A number of candidates raised benchmarking and trend analysis as measures, which was the wrong approach and did not gain marks. Measures based on accidents, dangerous occurrences or complaints by employees would have gained marks.

Course providers should reinforce teaching in this area to avoid confusion and clearly distinguish between active and reactive monitoring. Also, candidates need to understand the difference between methods and measures.

Question 9 *Identify methods that can be used to communicate health and safety information to employees.* (8)

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.4 which requires candidates to be able to explain how health and safety behaviour at work can be improved.

Most candidates were able to identify a wide range of methods that can be used to communicate health and safety information and included verbal, written and visual methods. However, a few missed the opportunity to gain good marks and drifted into the sources of information, while others wasted time and discussed the pros and cons of the various methods.

Occasionally candidates structured their answer under the headings of verbal, written and visual methods which provided prompts to answer the question. Verbal methods include toolbox talks and health and safety meetings. Written methods might be employee handbooks or via digital media. Visual methods could be posters or signage displaying graphical information.

Question 10 *Employees in a workshop carry out repairs and maintenance to motor vehicles.*

Outline duties placed on these employees by the:

(a) *Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA);* (4)

(b) *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR)* (4)

AND give a practical example for **EACH** duty.

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 1.4 and 1.5. Learning outcome 1.4 requires candidates to be able to explain the scope, duties and offences of employers, managers, employees and others under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HASAWA). Learning outcome 1.5 requires candidates to be able to explain the scope, duties and offences of employers, managers, employees and others under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR).

Both parts of this question focused on the duties placed on employees in the context of a workshop that carries out repairs and maintenance to motor vehicles. However, some candidates misread the question and gave the duties placed on employers rather than employees. Marks could not be awarded where this approach was taken. Some candidates ignored the stem and did not give practical examples based on the given scenario, thus restricting the marks that could be awarded. Other candidates gave examples that were not relevant.

Part (a) generally produced good responses from candidates, with most knowing the responsibilities under sections 7 and 8 of HASAWA. Section 36, deals with offences due to the fault of another person was less well known and should be addressed by course providers.

Part (b) required the employee duties under MHSWR and were not well understood or simply not known by the majority of candidates. In the absence of knowledge a large number of candidates repeated the duties under HASAWA and did not gain marks for this part of the question. Employee duties are laid out in Regulation 14 and, among others, require that every employee use machinery, equipment and substances in accordance with the instructions and training that they have received.

Candidates were not required to give section or Regulation numbers and were not awarded marks for them.

Question 11	(a)	Give the definition of a confined space.	(3)
	(b)	Give examples of a confined space.	(5)

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 3.8 and 3.9. Learning outcome 3.8 requires candidates to be able to explain what factors should be considered when developing and implementing a safe system of work for general activities. The content requires definition of specific examples of safe systems, including confined spaces. Learning outcome 3.9 requires candidates to be able to explain the role and function of a permit-to-work system. Content for this learning outcome involves the circumstances in which a permit-to-work system may be appropriate and refers to confined spaces.

For part (a) many candidates had difficulty in giving a satisfactory definition of a confined space. Some candidates cited that a confined space consisted of a restricted space, while others suggested that it was a space that had limited access or egress. Some confined spaces do have restricted space and/or limited access or egress, but this does not define the term.

A confined space is any place, by virtue of its enclosed nature, there is a reasonably foreseeable specified risk.

Part (b) required examples of confined spaces that caused few problems and allowed most candidates to gain good marks.

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: http://www.ielts.org/institutions/test_format_and_results.aspx

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

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

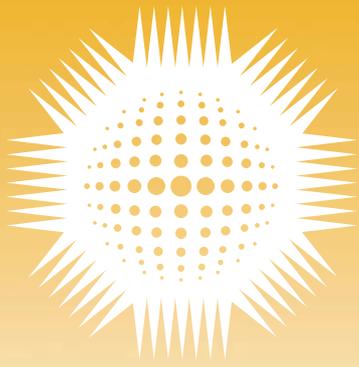
The command word 'describe' clearly requires a description of something. The NEBOSH guidance on command words says that 'describe' requires a detailed written account of the distinctive features of a topic such that another person would be able to visualise what was being described.

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



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