NEBOSH Certificate Unit IGC1
Revision and Examination Guide
The Last Hurdle

Now that you have worked your way through the course, this section will help you prepare for your NEBOSH IGC1 examination (the exam). This guide contains useful advice and guidance on how to approach your revision and the exam itself.

Your IGC1 Exam

Your examination will consist of one exam paper which contains one 20-mark question and ten 8-mark questions. You are allowed two hours in which to complete the exam and you should answer all the questions.

To pass the IGC1 exam, you must obtain a minimum of 45% of the total marks available. You will then be issued with a Unit Certificate for IGC1, showing a pass grade.

Once you have been awarded a Unit Certificate for all three Units (IGC1, IGC2 and IGC3), you will receive an overall grade as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Marks</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>150 to 179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>180 to 209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>210 marks or more</td>
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</tbody>
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The overall mark is calculated by adding together your three Unit percentage scores.

Be Prepared

It may be some time since you last took an exam. Remember, success in an exam depends mainly on:

- **Revision** – you have to be able to remember and recall the information contained in the course materials, and
- **Exam technique** – you have to be able to understand the questions and write good answers in the time available.

Revision and exam technique are skills that can be learned. We will now look at both of these skills so that you can prepare yourself for the exam. There is a saying that “proper planning and preparation prevents a poor performance”. This was never truer than in an exam.
Revision Tips

Using the Course Material

You should read through all of your course materials once before beginning your revision in earnest. This first read through should be done slowly and carefully.

Having completed this first revision reading of the course materials consider briefly reviewing all of it again to check that you understand all of the elements and the important principles that they contain. At this stage you are not trying to memorise information, but simply checking your understanding of the concepts. Make sure that you resolve any outstanding queries with your personal tutor.

Remember that understanding the information and being able to remember and recall it are two different things. As you read the course material you should understand it; in the exam you have to be able to remember and recall it. To do this successfully most people have to go back over the material repeatedly.

Re-read the course materials and make notes that summarise important information from each element. You could use index cards and create a portable, quick and easy revision aid.

If you are unable to do this, then you could annotate or highlight sections of the text which you think are important.

Pay attention to the Key Information and Topic Focus boxes in the course text, but do be aware that these only summarise important points from the course and focus on particular topics. They do not represent the only information that you need to remember.

Check your basic knowledge content of each element by reading the Summary. The Summary should help you recall the ideas contained in the element. If it does not, then you may need to revisit the appropriate sections of the element.
Using the Syllabus Guide

We recommend that you purchase a copy of the NEBOSH Guide to the International General Certificate, which contains the syllabus for your course. If a topic is in the syllabus then it is possible that there will be an examination question on that topic.

Map your level of knowledge and recall against the syllabus guide. Look at the Content listed for each IGC1 Element in the syllabus guide. Ask yourself the following question:

If there is a question in the exam about that topic, could I answer it?

You can even score your current level of knowledge for each topic in each Element of the syllabus guide and then use your scores as an indication of your personal strengths and weaknesses. For example, if you scored yourself as 5 out of 5 for the topic The Scope and Nature of Occupational Health and Safety in Element 1, then obviously you don’t have much work to do on that subject as you approach the exam. But if you scored yourself at 2 out of 5 for the topic Consultation With Employees in Element 3 then you have identified an area of weakness. Having identified your strengths and weaknesses in this way you can use this information to decide on the topic areas that you need to concentrate on as you revise for the exam.

Another way of using the syllabus guide is as an active revision aid:

- Pick a topic at random from any of the IGC1 elements.
- Write down as many facts and ideas that you can recall that are relevant to that particular topic.

Go back to your course materials and see what you missed, and fill in the missing areas.

Other Techniques

The following revision techniques may also be useful:

- **Draw mind maps or spider diagrams** – key words joined by lines to link common ideas together.
- **Make an audio recording of yourself reading your key notes** - you can then revise when driving or travelling.
- **Get hold of some past exam papers** (available to purchase direct from NEBOSH) - try to answer the questions that were set. You can do this “open book” by using the exam questions as a trigger to do some research; or you can set yourself a “mock exam” and try to answer the questions within an appropriate time limit (25 – 30 minutes for Question 1, 8 – 9 minutes for Questions 2 – 11).
- **Get hold of the examiner’s reports for past exams** (available to purchase direct from NEBOSH) - read the examiner’s feedback carefully for each question.
- **Consider purchasing IGC revision aids from RRC.** These include Revision Notes (designed to remind you of the key points you have covered throughout your course ) and Tackling the NEBOSH Exam (which takes you through past exam questions and provides you with expert advice on how to construct your answer, including sample answer plans). These are available in printed or electronic format. RRC also offer Programmed-to-Pass, a revolutionary online programme designed to guide you through the entire process of revising from start to finish. For more information call an RRC Sales Advisor on +44 (0)20 8944 3100 or visit the RRC website www.rrc.co.uk where you will also find a Programmed-to-Pass demo.
Exam Hints

Success in the exam depends on averaging around half marks or more for each question. Marks are awarded for setting down ideas that are relevant to the question asked and convincing the examiner that you understand what you are talking about. If you have studied the course materials thoroughly then this should not be a problem.

It is essential that you read and analyse each exam question carefully so that you are clear about what is required to answer it. The more you study past exam questions, the more you will become familiar with the way they are phrased and their meaning.

One common mistake in answering questions is to go into too much detail on specific topics and fail to deal with the wider issues. If you only cover half the relevant issues, you can only achieve half of the available marks. Try to give as wide an answer as you can, without stepping outside the subject matter of the question altogether. Make sure that you explain each issue in order to convince the examiner that you have the relevant knowledge. Giving relevant examples is a good way of doing this.

We mentioned earlier the value of using the syllabus to plan your revision. Another useful way of combining syllabus study with examination practice is to create your own exam questions by adding a question word (such as ‘explain’ or ‘describe’) in front of the syllabus topic areas. In this way, you can produce a whole range of questions similar to those used in the exam.

Before the Exam

You should:

• Know where the exam is to take place.
• Arrive in good time.
• Bring your examination entry voucher which includes your candidate number, photographic proof of identity, pens, pencils, ruler, etc.
• Bring water to drink and sweets to suck, if you want to.

During the Exam

• Read through the whole exam paper before starting work if that will help to settle your nerves.
• Manage your time. The exam is two hours long and there is no extra time. You should attempt to answer all 11 questions in the two hours. To do this you might spend:
  – 25-30 minutes answering Question 1 (worth 20 marks), and then
  – 8-9 minutes on each of the ten remaining 8-mark questions.
Check the clock regularly as you write your answers. You should always know exactly where you are with regard to time.
• As you start each question read the question carefully. Pay particular attention to the wording of the question to make sure you understand what the examiner is looking for. Note the verbs (action words), such as ‘describe’, ‘state’, ‘list’, ‘explain’, ‘define’ or ‘outline’ that are used in the question. These indicate the amount of depth and detail required in your answer. As a general guide:
  – ‘List’ means exactly what it says.
  – ‘Explain’ and ‘describe’ mean give detail.
  – ‘Outline’ means give the key features of something – a brief explanation or description only.
• You can find detailed explanations of these words in Appendix 3 of the NEBOSH Guide. Pay close attention to the number of marks available for each question or part of a question – this indicates how many key pieces of information the examiner expects to see in your answer.
• Give examples wherever possible, based either on your own personal experience or things you have read about. An example can be used to illustrate an idea and convince the examiner that you understand what you are saying.
• If you start to run out of time, write your answers in bullet point or check list style, rather than failing to answer a question at all.
• Keep your handwriting under control; if the examiner cannot read what you have written then he cannot mark it.
• You will not be penalised for poor grammar or spelling, as long as your answers are clear and can be understood. However, you may lose marks if the examiner cannot make sense of the sentence that you have written.
Special Examination Arrangements

Reasonable Adjustments in Advance of an Examination

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the candidate at a substantial disadvantage in an assessment situation.

Reasonable adjustments can only be made with the written permission of NEBOSH prior to the exam. They cannot be made on the day of the exam or retrospectively.

Special Consideration Due to Disadvantage During an Examination

Special consideration is an action taken after an assessment to consider adjustment for candidates who have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury, indisposition or adverse circumstances at the time of the assessment.

If you believe that you should be given special consideration due to unforeseen circumstances then you must let your examination centre know as soon as possible and no later than the time of the examination.

The NEBOSH ‘Policy and Procedures on Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration’ is available on request.