

**TRAINING AND
EVENTS FROM**



**The National Examination
Board in Occupational Safety
and Health (NEBOSH)**

Dominus Way,
Meridian Business Park,
Leicester LE19 1QW

Tel: +44 (0) 116 263 4700
Fax: +44 (0) 116 282 4000
Email: info@nebosh.org.uk
www.nebosh.org.uk

Version: 1.1
Specification date: October 2025
Publication date: March 2026

Registered Charity Number: 1010444

© NEBOSH. All rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted
in any form, or by any means, electronic, electrostatic,
mechanical, photocopied or otherwise, without the express
permission in writing from NEBOSH.

NEBOSH HSE Introduction to Incident Investigation

Qualification guide for Learning Partners



Contents

Qualification overview

Qualification key features	4
----------------------------	---

Qualification summary

Introduction to the qualification	6
Qualification type	6
Syllabus development and review	6
Notional learning hours	6
Teaching of syllabus content	7
Minimum standard of English requirements	7
Achieving the qualification	7
Marking and individual learner feedback	7
Re-sitting unit(s)	7
Issue of qualification parchment	8
Conflict of interest	8
Available resources	8

Syllabus

Syllabus summary	10
Learning outcomes and assessment criteria	10
Syllabus content	11

Qualification overview

Qualification overview

Qualification key features

Unit prefix and title	Unit INV1: Introduction to incident investigation	
Assessment Unit INV1	Type Practical assessment	Time Approximately 60 minutes
Modes of study	Taught (face-to-face and online) eLearning	
Notional learning hours	Teaching and assessment: 7 Pre-course reading: 3 Total hours: 10	
Qualification level and number of credits	SCQF Level 6/ RQF Level 3 1 SCQF credit point	
Entry requirements	None	
Recommended minimum standards of English	Learners: International English Language Testing System 5.0 or higher Tutors: International English Language Testing System 7.0 or higher	
Languages available	English	
Assessment dates	On-demand only	
Qualification grades	Pass Refer	
Pass standard	Learners are required to complete all parts of the assessment to achieve a Pass. If the learner does not achieve a Pass you are expected to work with the learner to enable them to meet the required standard.	
Parchment issue	Issued within 20 working days of the result declaration date for the successfully completed unit.	

Qualification summary

Qualification summary

Introduction to the qualification

NEBOSH has collaborated on the development of this specialist qualification with the British Health and Safety Executive (HSE). HSE inspectors have noted that incident investigations were generally very poor. The collaboration, therefore, combines the advanced technical expertise of the HSE with NEBOSH's ability to deliver strong vocational qualifications.

The qualification is aimed at managers, supervisors, SHE Champions, union representatives and aspiring health and safety practitioners. On completion of the qualification, learners will be able to:

- carry out a solo incident investigation for non-complex incidents including:
 - > gathering evidence
 - > the analysis of that evidence
- produce an action plan; and
- contribute to team incident investigations for large-scale incidents.

Qualification type

NEBOSH qualifications are categorised as 'Other' qualifications by Qualifications Accreditation Scotland. These are categorised as Vocationally-Related Qualifications (VRQs) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

VRQs provide the knowledge and practical skills required for particular job roles through a structured study-based training programme, that combines the testing of knowledge and understanding in written examinations with practical application of learning in the workplace.

VRQs are a popular type of qualification because they are nationally recognised, flexible and offer routes for progression to employment or further study.

Syllabus development and review

The syllabus has been reviewed and revised by NEBOSH and the HSE following input from key employers, learners, Learning Partners, and subject-matter experts.

Notional learning hours

The qualification requires 6 taught hours and 1 hour of assessment time. It is expected that this qualification will be delivered over the equivalent of one day (depending on the mode of study).

Learners will be required to undertake three hours of pre-course reading before your course commences. Some suggestions for this pre-course reading include:

- reading and understanding the requirements of their organisation's incident investigation policy;
- reviewing a sample of their organisation's previous incident investigation reports to find what lessons have been learnt; and
- reviewing some of the incident investigation case studies from the HSE's website that may be relevant to their organisation.

You should provide further guidance on this to learners if required.

Qualification summary

Teaching of syllabus content

Although the syllabus sets out the elements in a specific order, tutors can teach the elements in any order they feel is appropriate. You will need to reflect this in the timetables which are submitted for approval as part of the accreditation/re-accreditation process (if you are not using the course materials produced by NEBOSH).

Minimum standard of English requirements

The standard of English required by learners studying for the NEBOSH HSE Introduction to Incident Investigation must be such that they can both understand and articulate the concepts contained in the syllabus. We recommend that learners have reached a minimum standard of English equivalent to an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 5.0 or higher in IELTS tests. It is important to stress that it is your responsibility to determine your learners' standards of proficiency in English.

Tutors who are based overseas and wish to deliver this qualification must have a good standard of English. They must be able to articulate the concepts contained in the syllabus. The Learning Partner must provide evidence of the tutor's standard of English when submitting the tutor's CV for approval.

NEBOSH's requirement is for tutors delivering this qualification to have reached a minimum standard of English equivalent to an International English Language Testing System score of 7.0 or higher in IELTS tests.

More information on IELTS can be found on the IELTS website.

Achieving the qualification

The qualification has one unit assessment: a 60 minute practical assessment. The assessment should normally take place after the taught content for element 1.4. The assessment for this qualification requires learners to apply their knowledge of the course by analysing a theoretical incident investigation.

Learners must achieve a 'pass' in order to be awarded the qualification.

Marking and individual learner feedback

The assessment will be marked by the appointed course tutor. NEBOSH needs to be satisfied that the course tutor has the adequate qualifications and experience in the areas covered by the syllabus.

Prior to marking any assessments, course tutors and internal assessors must complete the online assessor's course for this qualification. Further details will be supplied by the NEBOSH Learning Partner Quality department.

For more information on the assessment feedback provided for this qualification, please visit the NEBOSH website.

Re-sitting unit(s)

A learner can resit if a 'Refer' result is received. There is no limit on the number of times a student can resit a unit. Learners must register and pay the current fee(s) by the registration closing date for the relevant examination sitting.

Qualification summary

Issue of qualification parchment

When learners have achieved a 'Pass', they are considered to have completed their qualification. We will then dispatch their qualification parchment within 20 working days.

Conflict of interest

Learning Partner staff including head of Learning Partners, tutors, administrators, examinations officers and invigilators must declare in writing to NEBOSH any employee and/or familial, spousal or other close personal relationship with any examination or assessment learner. Further information can be found in the 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' document on the NEBOSH website.

Available resources

In addition to this Guide, the following resources are downloadable from the NEBOSH website:

- INV1 Guidance for Learning Partners and learners;
- Assessment packs for Unit INV1;
- Leaflet;
- Case studies.



"I completed the NEBOSH HSE Introduction to Incident Investigation qualification to strengthen my ability to identify the true underlying causes of workplace incidents and near misses. The training provided valuable insights and techniques that have enabled me to turn investigations into opportunities for engagement, learning, and cultural improvement."

Magimairaj Bose

Manager - HSE Compliance and Governance
Drydocks World

Syllabus

Syllabus summary

Element		Recommended tuition hours	Pre-course reading hours
1	Introduction to incident investigation	6 taught hours 1 assessment hour	3
1.1	Incident terminology, the moral, legal and business arguments for investigations and management system requirements		
1.2	Human factors		
1.3	Investigating incidents		
1.4	Positive interview strategies and barriers to successful interviews		

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

Learning outcome The learner will be able to:	Related content	Assessment criteria	Assessment
Understand why and how incident investigations are carried out and how human factors contribute to incidents	1.1–1.2	Understand incident terminology, the moral, legal and business arguments for investigations and management system requirements Recognise how human factors can contribute to an incident	Application of knowledge by analysis of a theoretical incident investigation
Understand how to investigate incidents and confidently carry out an investigation	1.3–1.4	Understand the process for investigating incidents Outline positive strategies that can be adopted for interviews following incidents and the barriers to successful interview outcomes	

Syllabus content

Use of the term 'incident'

There are various terms that can be used interchangeably when referring to incidents. This includes accident (generally used when there has been actual harm/ill-health/damage caused) or near miss/close call (generally used when there has been the potential for harm/ill-health/damage to be caused but it did not actually occur in that instance).

NEBOSH has, therefore, adopted the approach taken in the 'Occupational health and safety management systems' (ISO 45001) standard in that an incident is: 'An event that happens in the workplace that causes (or has the potential to cause) harm, injury, ill-health or damage'.

When the term 'incident' is used in an assessment, the context of the question and other supporting information will provide context for the term. For example, if a question in a scenario-based assessment is asking about the outcome of an incident, information will be provided in the scenario to give context. This could be something like 'the worker fell from a ladder and broke their leg'.

The term 'accident' may still occur in the syllabus if this is a recognised term or part of a title, eg, Reason's model of accident causation, accident incidence rates, etc.

Element 1: Introduction to incident investigation

1.1 Incident terminology, the moral, legal and business arguments for investigations and management system requirements

- Key terminology: hazard, risk, incident, dangerous occurrence, immediate cause, underlying cause, root cause with reference to HSG245 and ISO 45001
- Examples of minor and major injury and ill-health, dangerous occurrences and near misses
- Moral, legal and business arguments for investigating incidents (including near-miss reporting)
- Co-operation with regulators and other enforcement agencies
- The role of insurers
- Management system requirements (ISO 45001):
 - > to investigate incidents and non-conformities
 - > procedures for incident reporting
 - > to measure health and safety performance, including the concept of leading and lagging indicators.

Element 1: Introduction to incident investigation

1.2 Human factors

- Factors that can contribute towards accidents and incidents:
 - > organisational factors (workplace design, time pressures, goal conflicts)
 - > job factors (task, environment, workload)
 - > individual factors (competence, capability, morale)
- Causes of human failure (errors and violations).

1.3 Investigating incidents

- What a good investigation looks like (proportionality, finding the immediate, underlying and root cause(s), identifying additional control measures)
- Levels of investigations: minimal, low, medium and high
- How lessons learned from investigations can be used
- Who should be involved in investigations and the competencies required
- Pre-investigation actions following an incident:
 - > emergency response (first aid, making the scene safe)
 - > initial response to consider: preservation of the scene, the names of witnesses to be interviewed equipment in use, recording environmental conditions
- The incident investigation process:
 - > gathering information:
 - physical – from the scene of the incident, eg, plant and equipment, including photographs, CCTV footage, plan of the area
 - verbal – witness statements
 - written – risk assessments, policies, procedures, training records, etc
 - > analysis:
 - exploring all reasonable lines of enquiry in a timely and structured way, setting out what is known/ unknown
 - objective/unbiased/evidence based

Element 1: Introduction to incident investigation

1.3

- identifying the sequence of events and adverse conditions leading to the event
- identifying immediate, underlying and root causes
 - » use of 5 Whys technique
 - » reference to other available root cause analysis tools
- identifying and recording common themes from interviews
- recording all findings/organisation of findings/use of organisational tools and/or procedures to drive the analysis (all findings may not have an action/recommendation)
- barrier controls
- > risk control:
 - identifying missing/inadequate/unused controls
 - complying with legislation/other standards
 - additional control measures (application of hierarchy of control)
 - realistic recommendations based on the outcomes of the investigation
- > action plan:
 - consideration of human performance
 - deals with immediate, underlying and root causes
 - includes lessons learned and ensures they are communicated (eg, outcomes discussed with relevant stakeholders)
 - gives feedback to all parties involved
 - includes risk assessment review
 - arrangements to implement SMART objectives
 - looks at tracking and closing of actions
- Post investigation – releasing the scene back to the operational unit (if applicable).

Element 1: Introduction to incident investigation

1.4 Positive interview strategies and barriers to successful interviews

- Reasons for carrying out prompt interviews following an incident
- Use of the PEACE model for interviewing:
 - > Planning and preparation:
 - practical issues (location of interview selected to avoid interruptions; time of interview; how the interview is to be conducted – benefits and limitations of on-site interviews; use of checklists)
 - use of timelines to plot the events
 - points to be discussed (set aims and objectives of interview)
 - interview one person at a time
 - use one interviewer with one scribe at a time
 - > Engage and explain:
 - assess any needs of the interviewee; explain the purpose of the interview (aims and objectives)
 - engage the interviewee in conversation (establish and maintain rapport)
 - use of 'active listening' skills (including the use of drawings, plans, etc)
 - language used is appropriate and understood
 - types of questions and when to use them:
 - » 'open'
 - » 'closed'
 - » avoiding use of leading questions
 - > Account, clarification and challenge:
 - consider the topic areas to be explored
 - summarise answers using the interviewee's own words
 - challenge any inconsistencies or contradictions within the interviewee's own account
 - clarify inconsistencies between other evidence and the interviewee's account

Element 1: Introduction to incident investigation

1.4

- > Closure:
 - summarise the interview findings to ensure there has been a mutual understanding
 - ensure that all areas have been covered
 - explain the next steps to the interviewee
 - contact details of interviewee gained so they can be contacted again if required
- > Evaluation:
 - were the aims and objectives achieved?
 - evaluate the information received
 - re-evaluate all evidence obtained
 - evaluate own performance as interviewer (what went wrong and what could have been done better?)
- Barriers to good interviews:
 - > language barrier
 - > leading questions
 - > poor communication skills on the part of the interviewer/interviewee
 - > mindset/cognitive state of interviewee:
 - in shock/not thinking rationally
 - credibility given to hearsay/rumour
- Dealing with interviewees who are unwilling to take part in the interview process
- 'Blame culture' and why it is a barrier to open incident interviews
- Bias, examples of it, and how it can affect interviews and the wider incident investigation process:
 - > self-serving
 - > fundamental attribution error
 - > 'cherry picking'.