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National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety

Unit GNC2: Risk assessment

Guidance and information for learners and Learning Partners

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Part 1:
Guidance for learners

Part 1

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Learning outcomes

- Understand how to justify health and safety improvements using moral, financial and legal arguments
- Assess general workplace risks
- Understand a range of common workplace hazards and their associated risks and recommend suitable control measures

Assessment criteria

- Discuss the moral, financial and legal reasons for managing health and safety in the workplace
- Apply the principles of the risk assessment process
- Produce a suitable and sufficient risk assessment
- Describe hazards present in the workplace and associated risks
- Outline existing control measures
- Evaluate existing control measures
- Explain suitable additional control measures

Introduction

In this assessment, you will need to apply your knowledge and understanding of managing workplace hazards and control measures in a practical context. To do this, you will need to complete a risk assessment of your workplace. Before you start the assessment, you must have completed your GNC/GIC studies and covered the whole of the syllabus (elements 1 to 11).

Stages of assessment

The stages of the assessment are as follows:



This guidance tells you what you need to do to complete the assessment. The guidance also contains some helpful hints and tips (including information on how to complete the assessment template).

An assessment pack has been produced to provide you with everything that you will need to complete the assessment. This can be downloaded from the NEBOSH website (www.nebosh.org.uk).

When completing your risk assessment, it can be difficult to know how much detail is enough. Your risk assessment should not be about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but should instead be about identifying sensible and proportionate measures to control the risks in your workplace. We want your risk assessment to be realistic and the level of detail to be proportionate to the level of risk in your organisation. To help you with this exercise we have based this risk assessment format on the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) approach to risk assessment. You can refer to the risk assessment guidance and examples on the HSE website.

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We have also included in the assessment template approximate word counts for each section. These word counts should be used as a guide only and should not be seen as an absolute minimum or maximum.

The assessment template and this guidance also detail how many marks each section is worth. Each assessment is marked out of 100, with the pass mark at 60% (60 marks out of 100). The assessment is marked as 'Pass' (60% or higher) or 'Refer' (59% or less). We have provided examples throughout this guidance of the content required in order for marks to be awarded in each section.

Location

The assessment should be carried out in your own workplace. This means that your risk assessment will be realistic and enable you to apply your skills in a real-world context. Your workplace should be large enough to provide a sufficient range of hazard categories/hazards. If the workplace is very large in order that the risk assessment is manageable, you should limit the area considered.

If you do not have access to a workplace please speak to your Learning Partner. Your Learning Partner will help you to make arrangements for the assessment to be carried out at other suitable premises.

Before carrying out the assessment, you must speak to the management at the premises to ensure that you can carry out the risk assessment without endangering your own health and safety (so that advice can be given on any restricted areas, whether PPE must be worn, etc).

Assessment time and tutor guidance

The time needed to complete the assessment is not restricted. We do, however, recommend that you take around **4 hours** to complete all four sections of the assessment. We feel that the 4 hours will allow you to show your understanding of the assessment requirements and complete a good quality risk assessment. Please note that the 4 hours is for guidance; you may choose to take more or less time to complete your assessment.

We suggest that you discuss your approach and proposed workplace with your tutor after reading this guidance. They can advise you on whether you are 'heading in the right direction' – for example, they may comment on whether you have chosen a suitable workplace or situation that will give enough scope to be able to tackle this assessment properly. **Do not** submit drafts of your work to your tutor as they are not allowed to pre-mark or comment on specific details.

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Assessment template

We recommend that your assessment is completed electronically. The assessment pack contains an editable template which has been designed to take you through all of the assessment sections. Completing all sections of the forms and referring to this document for additional guidance should help to ensure that you receive a 'Pass' for your assessment.

When you start your assessment you must double-click the page footer and insert your learner number and name on the first sheet. The page numbering will change automatically as you increase the number of pages that you use. Please ensure that you use a font and font size that is easy to read eg, Arial size 10 to 12.

Submission

Your assessment (Sections 1 - 4) must be your own work. By submitting your assessment for marking, you are declaring that it is your own work. Falsely claiming that your assessment is your own work is malpractice and NEBOSH may impose severe penalties, as set out in the NEBOSH Malpractice Policy.

Marking

Your assessment will be marked by an NEBOSH appointed examiner.

Results

Both units' results will be issued on the same day, 60 working days from the 24-hour scenario-based assessment (GNC1/GIC1). This means that learners will receive the outcome of their whole qualification at the same time.

Resubmission if you have been referred in the assessment

You can only achieve a 'Pass' or 'Refer' for the assessment. If you need to resubmit you will need to register for the assessment again and pay the appropriate fee. You will be given a marks per item summary as part of your results.

You are not limited on the number of times that you can resubmit the practical for marking. However, you must remember that both of the unit assessments must be passed within a five-year period.

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Stages of the assessment

Section 1: Background



You must use the headed tables in section 1 of the assessment template to complete the description of the organisation and the risk assessment methodology used.

Start by giving a clear and concise description of your chosen organisation (normally the organisation you work for, but it doesn't have to be). For confidentiality reasons, you can anonymise the name and location of your organisation if you want to, but everything else must be factual.

You also need to think about the scope of the risk assessment. For example, are you going to look at the whole organisation or just a specific department or work area? If you work for a large organisation, we recommend that you concentrate on a part of the organisation or a specific activity or process. If you are unsure, ask your tutor for advice.

Your assessment is going to be marked by an examiner appointed by NEBOSH. The examiner will need a general summary required of work activities carried out, products manufactured and general shift patterns at your organisation to allow them to judge whether your risk assessment is suitable and sufficient.

You must include the following information (recommended word count: 150 - 250 words)

Section 1	Total marks
1.1 The name of the organisation For confidentiality reasons, you can anonymise the name of the organisation.	Not awarded marks (but should be included for completeness of the assessment)
1.2 Site location You do not need to give the full address, just the general location (eg, Leicestershire)	Not awarded marks (but should be included for completeness of the assessment)
1.3 A brief description of the organisation This should be a general summary of work activities carried out, products manufactured, and general shift patterns. Example: <i>The company provides ground inspection reports for construction sites before work commences. The management team, administrators and cleaner are based in the main office building located in Leicestershire. Office opening hours are Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm. The 25 site inspectors are home-based and travel around the UK to provide site inspections.</i>	1 mark

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Section 1: Background

Section 1 (continued)	Total marks
<p>1.4 How many workers are employed by the organisation, and their typical roles</p> <p>Only a general overview is required here rather than listing every role within an organisation (ie. number of people in main job roles).</p> <p>Example: <i>45 workers, comprising of a management team of 8 (including Facilities Manager), 25 site inspectors, 11 administrators, and 1 cleaner.</i></p>	1 mark
<p>1.5 A description of the area or process to be included in the risk assessment</p> <p>Marks awarded depends on the level of detail given in this section. A brief description would be a high level overview and would be awarded 1 mark. A more detailed description would include the building/major parts of it, the tasks carried out and equipment used and would be awarded the full 2 marks.</p> <p>Example of a 'detailed description': <i>A main office building located on an industrial estate, as well as home-based workers. Mainly administration tasks take place within the building, as well as the use of a heavy-duty shredder. The two-storey building includes office areas, a kitchen and a large meeting room. The site also includes a small car park and outside area comprising, a smoking shelter and seating areas.</i></p> <p>Example of a 'brief description': <i>The assessment will cover the main office building, which has two floors. The organisation carries out administrative tasks within the building.</i></p>	2 marks

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Section 1: Background

You will then need to outline how you carried out the risk assessment (methodology used). Please note that this section can be completed after you have completed your risk assessment.

You should include the following information (total word count: 100-200 words).

Section 1 (continued)	Total marks
1.6 The sources of information that you consulted This includes documentation or people that you consulted <i>before and during</i> the risk assessment process, eg policies and/or procedures relevant to the assessment.	3 marks
1.7 How you identified the hazards This should explain the methods used to identify hazards for the risk assessment, eg a workplace inspection.	3 marks

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Section 2: Risk assessment



You must use the table in Section 2 of the assessment template to complete the risk assessment.

You will now need to complete a risk assessment of your organisation.

Please ensure that ALL columns are completed with realistic information. If you have nothing to include, for example under additional control measures/actions, do not leave the column blank. You should include a reference to maintaining existing control measures. You must not include photographs, drawings etc. in your risk assessment.

You must include the following information in this section (no word count recommendation). This section 2 is worth 65 marks total.

Section 2	Total marks
<p>2.1 Hazard categories</p> <p>When identifying hazards to review for your risk assessment, you must ensure that you identify hazards from five different hazard categories. The examiner will check that you have covered at least five different hazard categories. You can identify multiple hazards from the same hazard category, provided that there are at least five different hazard categories selected across the entire risk assessment.</p> <p>When conducting your risk assessment within the workplace, you should select a range of hazards from across the hazard categories in order to demonstrate your breadth of knowledge of the syllabus.</p> <p>The hazard categories are based on Elements 5-11 of the syllabus, and are as follows:</p>	<p>1 mark per hazard category (max 5 marks)</p> <p>If your hazards have not been taken from at least five different hazard categories, you will not be awarded full marks for this section.</p>

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Section 2: Risk assessment

	Hazard categories
1	Noise
2	Vibration
3	Radiation
4	Mental ill-health
5	Violence at work
6	Substance abuse at work
7	Work related upper-limb disorders (ergonomics, workstation design etc.)
8	Manual handling
9	Load handling equipment
10	Hazardous substances (including asbestos, blood-borne viruses, carbon monoxide, cement, Legionella, Leptospira, silica, wood dust)
11	Welfare and working environment
12	Working at height
13	Confined spaces
14	Lone working
15	Slips and trips
16	Movement of people and vehicles in the workplace
17	Work-related driving
18	Hand-held tools
19	Machinery
20	Fire
21	Electricity

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Section 2: Risk assessment

Section 2 (continued)	Total marks
<p>2.2 Hazard description</p> <p>This should just be a brief description of the hazard. The following hazard description would be awarded 1 mark:</p> <p><i>Facilities Manager seen climbing a ladder in order to clean windows</i></p> <p>No marks will be awarded where it is not specified what makes an item or process hazardous, ie: window cleaning.</p>	<p>1 mark per accurate hazard description (max 10 marks)</p> <p>If your hazards have not been taken from at least five different hazard categories, you will not be awarded full marks for this section.</p>
<p>2.3 Who might be harmed?</p> <p>Your risk assessment should clearly state how an individual, or group could be affected by or come into contact with the hazard.</p> <p>Using the hazard description from 2.2, the following would be awarded 1 mark (relevant sections scoring marks are in bold):</p> <p>Facilities Manager falling from height causing bruising and fractures. Workers and visitors being struck by falling objects when walking near or under the ladder.</p>	<p>1 mark per how an Individual/group affected could come into contact with a hazard (max 10)</p>
<p>2.4 How could they be harmed?</p> <p>Your risk assessment should also state the physical injury or ill-health effect that the individuals or group would be at risk of experiencing. Using the hazard description in 2.2, the following would be awarded 1 mark (mark-worthy sections are shown in bold):</p> <p><i>Facilities Manager falling from height</i> causing bruising and fractures. <i>Workers and visitors</i> being struck by falling objects when walking near or under the ladder.</p> <p>No marks would be awarded where an individual/group are named without also stating how they could be harmed by the hazard (eg. Facilities Manager; workers; visitors).</p>	<p>1 mark per how the harm (eg. physical injury or ill health) which could result from the hazard (max 10 marks)</p>

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Section 2: Risk assessment

Section 2 (continued)	Total marks
<p>2.5 What are you already doing to control the risks? What further action(s) do you need to take to control the risks?</p> <p>Your risk assessment should outline any existing control measures in place to manage the risk associated with the hazard described in column 2.2. You should also describe what further control measures are required to further reduce or eliminate the risk associated with the hazard.</p> <p>When suggesting further control measures, you should take account of the hierarchy of control and the principles of prevention.</p> <p>When you complete your risk assessment you will see that these two columns work together. If your organisation is already doing enough to control the risk, there will be a lot of control measures detailed in the existing control measures section, but very few actions/ control measures in the further actions section. On the other hand, if you have very few existing control measures in place, this column will contain very little information and the further actions column will contain a lot more control measures/suggested actions. Both of these scenarios are fine because they are realistic.</p> <p>Where you have identified that an activity that is already adequately controlled, in the further actions column you should state how those control measures will be monitored and reviewed in order to check their continuing effectiveness. Your existing control measures must be sufficient enough to demonstrate to the examiner that the risk is being proportionately controlled. You should also provide a time frame in Column 2.7 to review the effectiveness of the existing control measures. A mark for adequately-controlled hazards can only be awarded once across the risk assessment.</p> <p>For the 'Facilities Manager seen climbing a ladder in order to clean windows' example provided in 2.2, the following answers would be awarded 1 mark each:</p> <p>What are you already doing to control the risks?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communication sent to workers when cleaning is taking place.</i> • <i>Warning signage used at base of ladder.</i> <p>What further action(s) do you need to take to control the risks?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Employ specialist contractor to undertake work using extendable cleaning equipment to avoid working at height.</i> • <i>Arrange for work to be completed outside normal office opening hours.</i> 	<p>1 mark per control measure, per hazard (maximum 2 marks per hazard)</p> <p>All relevant control measures must be stated for completeness of the risk assessment (Max 20 marks)</p>

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Section 2: Risk assessment

Section 2 (continued)	Total marks
<p>2.6 Who needs to carry out the action?</p> <p>You should name an individual, or group of individuals, who would be appropriate to be responsible for carrying out each further action. This could be a manager, worker, person employed for a specific function (eg. Facilities manager to implement a facilities-related control measure), external contractor, etc.</p>	Not awarded marks (but should be included for completeness of the assessment)
<p>2.7 When is the action needed by?</p> <p>For each further action recommended, you should provide a time frame for implementation. Where you state that no further action is necessary for a hazard, you should nevertheless provide a time frame in which to review the effectiveness of the existing control measures for that hazard. You must select one of the following time frames as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate: Actions that should be taken within hours to a few days in order to address urgent risks that could cause immediate harm • Medium term: Actions that are typically implemented within a few weeks to a few months. They may require some planning/resources but are not as urgent as immediate actions. • Long term: Actions that are planned and executed over several months to years and may involve significant changes to processes, infrastructure, or culture. <p>Your selected time frame should be suitable and proportionate to the action to be taken. For example, it would be appropriate to have an 'immediate' time frame for the further action 'Remove boxes that are blocking the fire escape.'</p> <p>Marks will not be awarded where a selected time frame is unrealistic (eg. Constructing a new, separate site building to contain hazard processes would not be achievable in an 'immediate' time frame).</p>	1 mark per suitable time frame allocated for each hazard (capped at 1 mark per hazard, max 10 marks)

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Section 2: Risk assessment

So that you can get an idea of the level of detail required and the way that the two columns in 2.5 work together, please see the example below:

2.1 Hazard category (5) 2.2 Hazard description (10)		2.3 Who might be harmed (10) 2.4 How could they be harmed? (10)	2.5		2.6 Who needs to carry out the action (no marks)	2.7 When is the action needed by? (10)
			What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action(s) do you need to take to control the risks?		
			(20 marks)			
1	Hazard category: Working at height	Facilities Manager falling from height causing bruising and fractures.	Communication sent to workers when cleaning is taking place.	To avoid working at height, employ a specialist contractor to undertake work using extendable cleaning equipment.	Facilities Manager	Immediate
	Hazard description: Facilities Manager seen climbing a ladder in order to clean windows	Workers and visitors being struck by falling objects when walking near or under the ladder.	Warning signage used at base of ladder.	Arrange for work to be completed outside normal office opening hours.	Facilities Manager	Immediate

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Section 3: Prioritise 1 hazard to manage from the risk assessment



Once you have completed the risk assessment, which includes allocating actions, you must select one hazard from your risk assessment which is the highest priority to be addressed with further actions. You must use the table in Section 3 of the assessment template to prioritise your actions and justify your selection.

You must include the following information (total word count: 350-450 words). This section is worth 17 marks in total.

Section 3	Total marks
<p>3.1 Prioritised hazard to manage</p> <p>The hazard must have been detailed in section 2.2 of your risk assessment. No marks would be awarded for the entirety of Section 3 if a new hazard is introduced, as this would mean that a key hazard is missing from your risk assessment.</p>	Not awarded marks (but should be included for completeness of the assessment)
<p>3.2 Legal reasons for prioritising this hazard</p> <p>Important note: National General Certificate learners should reference UK legislation only.</p> <p>Each of your legal reasons should be relevant to the hazard being prioritised – it can be specific to the hazard category (eg. Working at Height Regulations for reducing work at height risk), or general workplace risk management (eg. duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act). Please note that you are not expected to include detailed descriptions of legislation. You just need to say what the duties under the regulations are in relation to the hazard.</p>	1 mark per legal reason (max 2)
<p>3.3 Moral reasons for prioritising this hazard</p> <p>Each of your moral reasons should be brief statements which either link back to the hazard, or general moral duties towards workers.</p> <p>For the hazard description 'Facilities Manager seen climbing a ladder in order to clean windows,' a moral reason (worth 1 mark) would be:</p> <p><i>Injury caused by a fall from height would have a major impact on the Facilities Manager, their family and friends.</i></p>	1 mark per moral reason (max 2)

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Section 3: Prioritise 1 hazard to manage from the risk assessment

Section 3 (continued)	Total marks
<p>3.4 Business / financial reasons for prioritising this hazard</p> <p>Each of your business/financial reasons should be a brief statement that either links back to the hazard or the overall workplace. They do not need to be detailed statements.</p> <p>In the scenario given, business/financial reasons could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Direct costs which could occur from an accident incident relating to the hazard; or</i> • <i>The cost of employing a specialist contractor is small compared to the potentially high costs to the organisation if a fall from height were to occur</i> 	1 mark per business/financial reason (max 2)
<p>3.5 General reasons for prioritising this hazard</p> <p>Each of your general reasons should be a brief explanation which either links back to the hazard or to the overall workplace.</p> <p>Examples of general reasons for prioritising the hazard, which apply to the 'Facilities Manager seen climbing a ladder in order to clean windows' hazard description, and would be awarded 1 mark each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It is important this hazard is prioritised as currently the control measures are inadequate to effectively manage the risk.</i> • <i>Existing control measures focus on awareness and not on risk reduction.</i> • <i>The likelihood of harm is high due to the Facilities Manager working at height.</i> • <i>The severity of harm as a result of falling from height could also be high.</i> • <i>Using contractors to clean the windows would be easy to arrange as it is common practice across other organisations.</i> 	1 mark per general reason (max 4)

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Section 3: Prioritise 1 hazard to manage from the risk assessment

<p>3.6 How would the further actions help reduce the associated risks?</p> <p>Your answer must provide general statements that discuss how the further actions will be effective in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing risk or harm; and/or Suitably controlling or eliminating the risk. <p>The actions discussed must be taken from section 2.5; no new further actions should be introduced in this section.</p> <p>For the 'Facilities Manager seen climbing a ladder in order to clean windows' hazard description, a statement (worth 1 mark) would be:</p> <p><i>Specialist contractors will be more experienced and competent to carry out the work safely, which will reduce the likelihood of a fall from height accident occurring</i></p>	<p>1 mark per statement of how further actions will reduce or eliminate associated risk/harm (max 4)</p>
<p>3.7 How would you check that the action(s) carried out have been effective?</p> <p>You should provide brief statements about how you will check that the action(s) have been effective in reducing or eliminating risk following their implementation.</p> <p>For the 'Facilities Manager seen climbing a ladder in order to clean windows' hazard description, a statement (worth 1 mark) would be:</p> <p><i>Undertake appropriate contractor management to ensure the external contractors are abiding by the agreed method and working safely.</i></p>	<p>1 mark per statement (max 3)</p>

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Section 4: Communicate, check, review



You must use the table in Section 4 of the assessment template to complete the communicate, review and check section.

You must include the following information (total word count: 100-200 words). This section is worth 8 marks total.

Section 4	Total marks
<p>4.1 How would the significant findings of the risk assessment be communicated within your organisation?</p> <p>The information you give in this section must be specific to your organisation. Indicate how the findings of the risk assessment will be communicated and who needs to know the findings. You should provide at least two different communication methods within this section.</p>	<p>1 mark per communication method (max 2) 1 mark for stating who will be communicated with (Max 3 for this section)</p>
<p>4.2 How would you check that the actions on the risk assessment have been carried out?</p> <p>Indicate how you will follow up on the risk assessment to check that the actions have been carried out.</p> <p>For the 'Facilities Manager seen climbing a ladder in order to clean windows' hazard description, a method (worth 1 mark) would be:</p> <p><i>Include the risk assessment in the fortnightly managers' meeting actions log to maintain visibility at management level and to ensure actions are closed out.</i></p>	<p>1 mark per method (max 2)</p>

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Section 4: Communicate, check, review

Section 4 (continued)	Total marks
<p>4.3 When would you review the risk assessment?</p> <p>You should set a realistic review date for when you would review the risk assessment. Your review date can either be a time frame or calendar date, but it must be realistic based on the further actions required. For example, if the majority of your further actions will take 6 months to implement, reviewing the risk assessment in 1 month's time would not be realistic, as there would not have been sufficient time for the further actions to be successfully implemented.</p>	1 mark
<p>4.4 Why that review period/date has been chosen?</p> <p>You should give reasons why that period/date has been chosen.</p>	1 mark per reason (max 2)

Part 2:
Guidance for Learning Partners

Part 2

Guidance for Learning Partners

This section of the guidance either expands on the detail in Part 1 or gives specific information for Learning Partners that is not relevant to learners.

Location

The assessment should normally be carried out in your learner's own workplace. If your learner does not have access to a workplace, you must help the learner make arrangements to carry out the practical assessment at suitable premises. If you are running the practical in this way, you should contact the Operations team at NEBOSH for advice and approval.

You should ensure that, before the learner carries out the assessment, they speak to the management at the premises. This is to ensure that the learner can carry out the inspection without endangering their own health and safety (so that advice can be given on any restricted areas etc).

Guidance on assessment completion

You may give your learners guidance on whether they are 'heading in the right direction' – for example, you may comment on whether they have chosen a suitable workplace or situation that will give sufficient scope to achieve the necessary breadth and depth of content required. You must not carry out a pre-mark prior to submission to NEBOSH.

Conflict of interest

You **must** declare in writing to NEBOSH any staff member, spouse, family or other close personal relationship with any learner taking the GNC2 assessment. You must refer to the instructions given in the document 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' for further information.