



**HABC** Guidance for Nominated Tutors and  
Candidates Sitting Written Examinations

## HABC GUIDANCE FOR NOMINATED TUTORS AND CANDIDATES SITTING WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

1. Poor written examination technique is a key reason in every examination marked, examiners identify that a number of candidates (including some who are obviously very capable) do not perform as well as they could.
2. Tutors should ensure that during the course (or for homework), they give candidates an opportunity to practice answering example written questions.
3. It is important that:
  - 3.1 **Candidates write as clearly as possible**, marks are often lost because examiners cannot read the words. There is **no** need for candidates to write the questions out before attempting the answer.
  - 3.2 **Questions can be answered in any order** but ensure that they are numbered exactly as in the question. If points are added at the end of the paper clearly indicate this.
  - 3.3 **Read the candidate instructions properly.** Section B of the Level 4 Award in Managing Food Safety examinations requires that candidates select a clearly indicated number of questions. Candidates should be aware that examiners are instructed to mark the first answers presented, and disregard any remaining answers. You will be disadvantaged if you answer more than the required amount of questions.
  - 3.4 **Read all parts of a question carefully before they answer.** Many candidates provide an answer to part b) or c) of a question in part a) etc and either waste time repeating themselves or lose marks thinking that the examiner will realise their mistake and award the marks anyway. In some cases delegates provide good answers to a different question completely, for example answering a question relating to microbial contamination controls with examples that control microbial multiplication etc. Additionally candidates should always refer back to the question to ensure that they have addressed all points. Candidates often digress and although the points are correct marks cannot be awarded if it does not answer the question posed.
  - 3.5 **Manage their time effectively.** Candidates should look at the marks awarded for a question, if only 2 marks are awarded then no matter how good and detailed an answer is only two marks can be given. Often delegates will write pages answering a question worth only a few marks and then just provide a brief list for an answer worth many more marks. A small number of delegates do not manage

to complete all the examination and so obviously limit the marks they can be awarded.

- 3.6 Provide enough breadth of information in their answers.** Some delegates lose marks because they focus on just one or two points instead of looking at the whole subject area. Many tutors and candidates mistakenly think that if 5 points are allocated for a question then only five examples are required, this is not always the case, especially where the subject matter is relatively easy; for example in relation to selecting a pest control contractor there are over 20 relevant points that could be included here but often only 6 marks allocated to obtain good marks delegates should provide a wide variety of answers.
- 3.7 Provide enough depth of information in their answers,** where the subject matter is complex, for example HACCP or some microbiology questions, candidates need to demonstrate an in depth knowledge for Level 4 and it may be that marks are awarded for providing detail and specific examples. At level 4 it is important that candidates provide sufficient detail in their answers, it is not enough to just cite terminology without providing explanations. For example, answering with 'implement a HACCP system' to a question on to how to control hazards during a cook-chill process does not demonstrate that a candidate really understands the specific controls required in this process. Another common answer provided, in particular by manufacturing candidates, is to 'check the line' again this does not provide any detail as specifically what is to be checked on the production line. Other common examples of where candidates fail to provide enough detail is by using the terms 'proper' or 'correct' without actually telling the examiner what 'proper' or 'correct' is for example 'correct temperature', 'proper systems in place'.
- 3.8** Candidates also often confuse the difference between a legal requirement and good practice, at level 4 it is expected that they can differentiate between this clearly.
- 3.9** Sometimes candidates may not pay full attention to the action verb in each question. The most commonly used ones are described in a little more detail below.

<b>action verb</b>	<b>meaning</b>
define	Provide a generally recognised or accepted definition. This should be clear and complete, but it does not need to be word perfect to get marks. Where delegates are struggling to give an exact definition they should consider providing an appropriate specific example to illustrate their answer.
describe	Provide a word picture. This should give some detail and explanations and specific examples should be included if a

	candidate is to describe fully.
explain	Provide a clear account of, or reasons for something. A list will not be enough to get full marks.
give	Provide without explanation, questions of this nature are usually linked to providing an example, for instance 'give 5 examples of.....'
identify	Ascertain the origin or nature of something, select and name. When answering this type of question candidates should ensure they are specific in their answers.
list	Provide a list without explanation, unless specifically required in the question for example 'list and explain 5 reasons why.....'
outline	Provide the most importance features of something. Candidates would not be expected to provide as much detail as they would in a question which asks them to describe or explain something, but specific examples will help to demonstrate a clear understanding
state	This is mainly used where there is no generally recognised definition. It is often accompanied by the word 'why', for example state why spore forming bacteria may cause food poisoning, it is essentially very similar to explain or describe when used in this context.
<b>Other terms often misinterpreted in examination questions</b>	
properties	This asks the candidate to provide the general characteristics of something, for example a property required of personal clothing may be that it can be cleaned effectively.
characteristics	A feature that helps to identify, tell apart, or describe recognisably. For example, one of the desired characteristics of a food preparation surface is that it is non toxic.
assess & improve	When the word 'assess' is used in a question it is related to how something can be measured. Many candidates confuse this with 'improved' which is asking for how something can be made better.

- 3.10 Candidates will not be able to score well if the question asks for a 'description or outline' and only a list is given. It is also worth remembering that candidates who provide an explanation where only a list is required will be wasting time and that could cost marks in the long run.
- 3.11 Remember it is up to the candidate to demonstrate to the examiner his/her understanding of a topic. At Level 4 bullet points are not sufficient unless the question asks for a list. Explanations are needed.
- 3.12 Nominated Tutors are advised not to be lenient when marking and feeding back on practice examination questions as this can give a false sense of security and ability. Result enquiries from candidates who have failed the examination often include statements that they had performed well during the class and in mock examinations.

4. **Special Consideration:**

- 4.1 This includes, amongst other things, physical & medical considerations, dyslexia, English as a second language. For complete guidance with regard to special consideration Centres should refer to the HABC Core Manual pages 48-70. The guidance outlines where extra time or facilities may be provided and whether this is at the discretion of the Centre or if HABC need to authorise it.
- 4.2 It is important that Nominated Tutors identify any special consideration early in the course and refer to the Core Manual to identify and discuss suitable special consideration. Nominated Tutors must ensure they follow the procedures outlined by HABC in order to ensure that malpractice does not inadvertently take place.