

Which Health and Safety course is right for me?

A comparison of IOSH Managing Safely, and Level 3 Health and Safety

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We offer two “supervisory” level health and safety courses, and our clients often ask, “What’s the difference” Which course is right for me?” Hopefully this comparison of the two will help clear things up for you!

	IOSH Managing Safely	Level 3 Award in Health and Safety
Aimed at (individual)	“line managers and team leaders”	“supervisor, manager or team leader”
Aimed at (sector)	None specifically. For a considerable fee, a training company can modify the course for a specific sector and ask IOSH to accredit it.	None specifically; applicable to all sectors
Awarding organisation (AO)	Institute of Occupational Health and Safety (IOSH)	Several, although we use Highfield Qualifications
Accreditation	None	RQF (Regulated qualification framework); the AO’s processes are controlled and audited by Ofqual, the government agency, the same as GCSE and all other “formal” qualifications. This particularly focusses on the assessment process, so there is no risk of cheating, exam security and invigilation, etc.
Content Approval	None (IOSH dictate the course content)	“National Occupational Standards” (Learning Objectives) are set by the Sector Skills council (employer-led, independent organisations briefed with reducing skills gap). NSAFD in this case.
Cognitive Level	Approximately Level 3 but has some more skills-based elements	Level 3, mostly knowledge-based.
Duration	3 days	3 days
Assessment	Multi-choice test plus risk assessment project	Multi-choice test
Certificate life	Both equally recommended refresher every three years	
Territory	International	

Some of our comments on the two qualifications, having considerable experience of delivering both;

	IOSH Managing Safely	Level 3 Award in Health and Safety
Accreditation	IOSH trade on their name and is this one organisation's view of what's important in a course (there are other H&S organisations besides IOSH, so IOSH do not have a monopoly). There is no external regulation of IOSH.	RQF gives the assurance of external regulation , audit and continuous improvement.
Content	A massive Powerpoint deck is provided, along with a script, which trainers are expected to follow; IOSH want every course to be exactly the same. There is little time to contextualise to learner's needs There is a high degree of "Death by Powerpoint" which we find tedious to deliver and is likely tedious to listen to in places. There is a risk assessment board game that is a particular highlight.	With the learning objectives set, trainers are free to choose their own training activities. We use more activity-based learning with a small Powerpoint deck for recap, which we can use as necessary. Delivery has the flexibility to meet learners' specific needs or work context.
	One strength of this course is the risk assessment project; this takes knowledge-based learning to skills-based	To counter the knowledge-based weakness of this course, we include a risk assessment project similar to Managing Safely.
	The overall process of Health and safety management (which in our view is the most important element) takes a very back seat.	We structure our course around the health and safety management system , within which risk assessment forms an important component. In our view, a better focus.
Delivery	The full course content must be followed, with no flexibility	The training centre has complete freedom to choose the mechanism of delivery, provided the learning outcomes are met. This allows us to use Zoom-type delivery, blended learning, etc.
Assessment	There are 4 exam papers in circulation (the current ones have been around for a few years now)	A different multi-choice test is set every time
	The multi-choice questions are in a variety of formats and include, in our opinion, some very strange and difficult-to-understand questions, which we have to coach our delegates through	All questions are in a consistent format
	Marking by the tutor	Marking by the AO, not the tutor, to avoid any "favouritism" so strictly controlled