



International Safety Awards 2026

Chief Adjudicator's Report

British Safety Council

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Results

A total of 893 applications from organisations across the world were received for the British Safety Council's International Safety Awards (ISA) in 2026.

A Distinction, Merit or Pass was achieved by 95% of applicants.

The distribution of grades among the applications submitted in 2026 was as follows:

Distinction 230
Merit 428
Pass 193
Fail 34

Year	Total number of applications	Overall pass %	Distinction	Merit	Pass	Fail
2026	893	95	230 26%	428 48%	193 22%	34 4%

Overall, the proportion of applicants receiving an International Safety Award in 2026 was 95% compared to 90% for the ISA in 2025. The distribution of 'Distinction, Merit, Pass and Fail' grades is substantially in line with the distribution in previous years.

The International Safety Awards have an extensive international reach. This year applicant organisations came from a wide range of countries across the globe including:

Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, KSA, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Ireland, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, Sudan, Thailand, Turkey, UAE, UK, USA, Uzbekistan.

The global popularity of the ISA's reflects the esteem in which winning an ISA is held. The eligibility rules for entry to ISA's remain as tightened in 2026 and 'due diligence' is carried out to ensure continuing integrity and excellence.

The ISA's play a vital role in helping to drive continuous improvement in the management of workplace health, safety and wellbeing. My report is intended to assist organisations in identifying what high performing organisations are doing to prevent the risk of injury and ill-health and the arrangements they have in place to ensure wellbeing and manage psychosocial risks in the workplace.

A further aim of my report is to assist organisations contemplating applying for the International Safety Awards in 2027 by providing them with advice on how to present their evidence to best effect and achieve ISA success.

General comments

Organisations were provided with online 'easy-to-access' aides to assist them in the preparation and submission of their award applications. These included:

- the 2026 International Safety Awards question set and marking scheme - <https://www.britsafe.org/media/wswnnvvd/isa-2026-question-set-and-criteria.pdf>
- the Chief Adjudicator's Report for the 2025 International Safety Awards
- frequently asked questions and a guidance note concerning the eligibility requirements – see <https://www.britsafe.org/awards-and-events/awards/international-safety-awards/questions-and-marking-scheme/frequently-asked-questions>
- the list of 2025 ISA winners; and,
- details of webinars for potential applicants hosted by the British Safety Council in October 2025 and January 2026.

The webinars hosted by the British Safety Council, the Chief Adjudicator and the award scheme's Independent Adjudicator were well attended. The purpose of the webinars was to assist applicants by addressing their queries and helping their understanding of how best to provide the evidence necessary to achieve high marks. We recommend that any organisation considering applying for ISA 2027, whether a previous applicant or first-time applicant, attends one of our webinars.

The importance of applicants accessing and understanding the ISA eligibility requirements as set out in the regulations, guidance and advice listed above cannot be overstated. Applicants must confirm the accuracy and veracity of the answers they provide.

We asked applicants to provide details of any accidents, incidents or occurrences that had taken place at their site in 2024 and 2025 and details of any regulatory sanctions that were imposed. This information is vital to the adjudication process and has a bearing on how adjudicators judged the effectiveness of the applicant organisation in ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of its workforce in 2024 and 2025. Had enforcement action been taken in the relevant eligibility period it was for the adjudicators to decide whether any resulting remedial action was sufficient before allowing the application to proceed to adjudication.

A key factor in ISA success, therefore, is for applicant organisations to follow the regulations, guidance and advice.

This report sets out examples of the information provided by applicants which achieved high scores in the ten marked questions.

It is essential to success for applicants to read and absorb the questions. Low scores in many cases resulted from an incomplete reading or misunderstanding of what was being sought. Where a question asks, for example, for ONE or THREE actions, practices or procedures, applicants should only provide ONE or THREE. By providing more than asked for in the question applicants were negatively impacting on their potential score.

We advise applicants to make full use of the 600 word limit but not to exceed it. Answers to scored questions must be textual. We do not require applicants to provide supplementary evidence in the form of documents, photographs, data or other information. Adjudicators based their score on the quality of the evidence outlined in the content of the textual answers. Applicants who gave too short answers inevitably failed to include the evidence necessary to score more than one mark.

It is important that applicants think very carefully before drafting their answer to each and every question about: 'what we have done, why we have done this, how we have done this and what has been the effect of what we have done to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the workforce at our site'. High scoring answers consistently addressed the impact of the measures put in place to prevent injury and ill health and ensure wellbeing.

Presentation is all important. Applicants who provided long lists of arrangements in place or actions taken without explanation of 'how, why and to what effect' were marked down. The use of informative headings, sub-headings and paragraphs were also important in helping adjudicators gauge how well the applicant had done in addressing the core elements of the question.

Supplementary marks continued to be awarded to applicants who have successfully been certified by British Safety Council under the Five Star Audit scheme or to ISO 45001 in the relevant qualifying period.

In our ISA webinars we advised applicants to draft answers in a separate word document before transferring to the online application. It is essential that all answers are proof-read and ideally peer reviewed by a colleague before the application is submitted. The time taken to do so is time well spent as it can result in the extra marks that make the difference, for example, between a Pass and a Merit or a Merit and a Distinction.

BSC, the Chief Adjudicator and the Independent Adjudicator were aware that in a small number of applications AI had been used to generate answers. In other low scoring applications, it was apparent that applicants had cut and pasted text from health and safety management and wellbeing textbooks. This resulted in formulaic, theoretical answers that provided the adjudicators with little sense of how health, safety and wellbeing was being managed effectively at the applicant's site. AI generated or textbook answers will continue to be marked down as ISA goes forward.

We received multiple applications for different sites and business units within one organisation. That is acceptable and welcomed. There will be instances where identical text will be used when answering specific questions, for example, regarding management systems, audit arrangements and training and development activities for those sites and business units. This is permissible for such questions but as often as possible all the evidence and examples provided should be site specific.

The application of practical real-life examples from the workplace are important and a key requirement in all ten of the ISA 2026 questions. We cannot over-stress the importance of providing comprehensive answers to questions 1 and 2 – these are contextual non-scoring questions. The adjudicators want to understand how things operate in practice in specific sites or workplaces. This approach brings applications to life and helps improve the adjudicator's understanding of the effectiveness of the measures in place.

Wellbeing has moved up corporate and business agendas. Successful applications provided comprehensive and persuasive evidence of the actions taken by the organisation to ensure the health and wellbeing of their workforce and the wider community impacted by their activities. For ISA 2026 we introduced a new question concerning how psychosocial risks are being identified, addressed and monitored in the workplace.

Some applicants when addressing the wellbeing questions outlined details of the measures taken at their site to prevent injury and ill health, neglecting to provide evidence of the initiatives and measures they had in place to improve and protect the quality of workers' lives more generally.

The adjudicators hope that the information provided in this report helps you in preparing for the International Safety Awards 2027 but equally importantly in providing information that helps you to continue to meet the challenges you and your colleagues face in preventing injuries and ill health occurrences and ensuring wellbeing in your workplace.

The question set for ISA 2026 will be comprehensively reviewed in preparation for ISA 2027. The questions will be relevant, topical and most importantly address the significant challenges you are having to manage every day in your workplaces.

We wish you every success in 2027.

The Independent Adjudicator and myself wish to thank the panel of adjudicators and colleagues at the British Safety Council for their hard work and dedication in handling the applications speedily and with rigour.

Questions – Introduction

Questions 1 and 2 are contextual scene-setting non-scoring questions that have been key features of the International Safety Awards for many years. The information about the activities carried out by your organisation at the applicant site or business unit and the hazards and challenges concerning health, safety and wellbeing faced by your workforce is key to helping the adjudicator in judging the following point-scoring questions 3-12.

These questions will appear again in the 2027 International Safety Awards question set.

Application Question 1 – no marks attach to this question

Describe the main operational activities at your site. Include the number of staff working at the site and the main functions these staff perform.

600 word limit.

This question is not marked but is mandatory as the response is essential for the adjudicators to understand the context and background of scored questions 3 – 12.

A comprehensive answer detailing the full extent of the activities undertaken at the applicant's site is crucial to assist the adjudicators' understanding of the business operation. The focus must be on the activities at the applicant's site or business unit rather than providing extensive text on the organisation's wider operations.

The question required a description of the activities undertaken at the site or business unit including the location, the timeframe, the occupations and numbers of those working at the applicant site (including contractors) and the work activities being undertaken. The answers provided to Question 1 for ISA 2026 were, in almost all applications, of a very high standard.

Application Question 2 – no marks attach to this question

What are the most significant issues at the sites in relation to:

- **Occupational health hazards**
- **Occupational safety hazards**
- **Wellbeing concerns**

(Please provide three examples for each category.)

600 word limit.

This question is not marked but is mandatory as the response is essential for the adjudicators to understand the context and background of scored questions 3 – 12.

Award winning applicants addressed all three elements of the question separately, specifically focusing on health, safety and wellbeing concerns, and in each category described and outlined the three most hazardous activities at that site. Their responses outlined the risks these posed to the safety and health of their employees, their contractors' employees and, where appropriate, the wider community.

High scoring applications provided a comprehensive list of the three main hazards in each of the three categories with an explanation of why the cited hazards and concerns were of significance to the specific site covered by their application.

Applicants who only briefly listed health and safety hazards without an explanation of their significance did not assist adjudicators in judging the following ten point-scoring questions. Applicants who failed to detail significant wellbeing challenges put themselves at a disadvantage when answering subsequent linked questions.

Application Question 3

Which of the three safety hazards you detailed in your answer to Question 2 has the highest risk factor?

Explain how you determined that risk factor and provide detail of the control measures you have to control the risk.

600 word limit.

To achieve a high mark applicants needed to provide substantial details of how the risk rating was determined and the controls put in place with reference to the risk management hierarchy. Risk ratings had to be calculated based on severity, likelihood and exposure supplemented, for example, by incident data, near-miss reports, safety observations, audit findings and risk reviews. Comprehensive detail needed to be provided of control measures starting with elimination, substitution, engineering and system controls, administrative controls, competency controls and finally PPE.

Low scoring answers to this question failed to explain precisely how the risk factor for the most highly rated safety hazard had been calculated and provide sufficient detail of the control measures that had been put in place.

A number of applicants provided textbook answers concerning the hierarchy of safety management controls but failed to make the link to the specific hazard at their site. Other applicants provided details of the risk ratings and control measures for all three significant safety hazards set out in their answer to Question 2. The question specifically asked the applicant to identify the **One** safety hazard with the highest risk factor and explain how this had been determined plus the control measures, **not all three of them**. By referencing all three safety hazards applicants did not allow themselves enough words within the 600 word limit to provide a sufficiently comprehensive answer to achieve a high mark.

Application Question 4

Which of the three wellbeing concerns in your answer to Question 2 is your main concern?

Explain the measures you have in place to address this concern?

How do you measure and monitor improvements related to your measures?

600 word limit.

To achieve a high mark the applicant needed to identify which of **One** of the three wellbeing issues detailed in answer to Question 2 was of most concern and provide at least two examples of the measures that have been put in place to address it.

Measures included organisational and operational controls and behavioural programmes. Further, to achieve a high mark an applicant was required to provide details of how the effectiveness of the actions put in place was being measured and monitored. Examples of specific metrics to measure

the impact of action taken were also included in these cases, as was feedback from staff surveys and staff conversations, by many high scoring applicants.

Low scoring answers referenced the most significant wellbeing concerns set out in Question 2 but failed to provide details of how controls to address these concerns were monitored and measured. As with Question 3 some applicants provided the details of the controls in place for not **One** but **all Three** wellbeing concerns. This resulted in applicants not being able to provide a sufficiently comprehensive answer within the 600 word limit to achieve a high score.

Application Question 5

Identify the role/s of all persons/s at your site with specific responsibility for promoting workforce wellbeing and detail the training and development they have had to carry out their roles.

600 word limit.

To achieve a high mark applicants had to identify all people at the site with specific responsibility for promoting workforce wellbeing including directors, managers and supervisors. The highest scoring answers outlined the specific responsibilities of each postholder, included a wide range of functions/levels throughout a site, and described the training and development they received (and continued to receive) to enable them to carry out their wellbeing roles and responsibilities effectively. Evidence of their impact was assessed, for example, through performance reviews and workforce feedback.

Low scoring answers failed to identify person/s responsible for promoting workforce wellbeing. Other low scoring answers provided little or no detail of the training and development that person had received to carry out their role.

As with many questions in ISA 2026 adjudicators were looking for applicants to explain what measures had been put in place, why those measures had been put in place and the impact the measures had in addressing the safety, health or wellbeing concern. For this question it was important to provide not only details of the training and development provided but how this translated into competence to enable the effective delivery of wellbeing policies and programmes.

Application Question 6

Explain how senior managers at your site promote a positive health and safety culture.

Give three examples of recent activities by senior managers at your site to contribute to a positive culture.

600 word limit.

To achieve a high score applicants had to provide comprehensive details identifying which senior managers at the site led the important work to promote a positive health and safety culture. Strong scoring applications set out key strategic objectives that were in place to promote a positive culture. The best examples included details of senior managers demonstrating their active ownership of leadership, actively engaging the workforce engagement and being accountable.

In addition, high scoring applicants provided three excellent examples of senior management activities that evidenced this culture in action, for example, attendance at town hall meetings, toolbox talks, safety tours, safety days, online and face-to-face feedback meetings. Their answers explained the role of the senior manager(s) in leading and attending such events.

The inclusion of metrics to assess the impact of activities carried out by senior managers to promote a positive culture contributed to high scores.

Low scoring answers failed to identify responsible senior managers and gave little or no detail of how they exercised their responsibility with insufficient examples of recent activities.

Application Question 7

Explain the measures and programmes your site uses to prevent fatal or major physical injuries.

600 word limit.

Applicants who achieved high scores in answer to this question identified the most significant risks to safety at their site and the reasons why those risks posed a threat of fatal or serious injury. Their answers linked back to their responses to earlier questions including questions 2 and 3. Where high scores were awarded, fatality and major injury programmes were managed separately from routine safety management with heightened controls and stronger leadership oversight. It was essential for the applicant to explain in sufficient detail the reasons for the separation of fatal and major injuries from lesser injuries.

The question required applicants to explain the measures and programmes in place to prevent life threatening injuries. High scoring answers included details of the “life saving rules” at that specific site including how those rules were communicated to the workforce, the training provided to prevent fatal and major injuries, and the application of the hierarchy of management controls. Metrics measuring the effectiveness of Life Saving Programmes and Rules also contributed to high scores.

Low scoring answers provided insufficient detail of the fatal or major injuries that could impact on the workforce at the site and little or no information concerning the controls in place to prevent fatal or major injury.

Application Question 8

Explain how you communicate health, safety and wellbeing:

- **Objectives and targets**
- **Operational changes such as new processes, practices or services**
- **Training and development**
- **Feedback in response to concerns raised by workers.**

600-word limit

High scoring answers provided comprehensive details of how all four issues concerning health, safety and wellbeing were communicated to the workforce at the site. Introductory information in the answer concerning the methods at the site to communicate to the workforce greatly assisted the adjudicators’ understanding. It was particularly important to provide information about upward as well as downward communication channels and how action in response to concerns raised by the workforce was fed back.

High scoring answers provided detail of multiple channels used at the site to communicate on matters concerning objectives and targets, operational changes, training and development and feedback in response to workforce concerns. Applicants needed to explain the various channels used with an assessment of their effectiveness in helping to achieve the specific communication goal.

Low scoring answers lacked sufficient detail of the communication channels used for the four separate issues or commented more generally on communication channels while not addressing them individually.

Application Question 9

Explain how you ensure that staff at your site who undertake:

- **Safety communications**
- **Risk assessments**
- **Internal audits**

are and remain competent to carry out their roles.

600 word limit.

High scoring answers successfully addressed all the separate components of this question. Answers had to identify the relevant staff at the site undertaking safety communications, risk assessments and internal audits.

To achieve a high score, it was essential that applicants explained what duties were undertaken in carrying out safety communications, risk assessments and internal audit responsibilities. It was also essential that information was provided detailing how the competence requirement for each of these roles had been assessed with reference to education, qualifications, skills and experience, behaviour, continuing professional development, periodic review and management oversight. Multiple examples were required for all three areas of work to achieve a high score.

Low scoring answers failed to provide details of how competence for each of the three roles had been assessed and insufficient or no examples provided as to how competence is ensured through the provision of training and development.

Application Question 10

Describe the auditing activities of your site's health, safety and wellbeing arrangements.

Provide three examples of changes you have made following a recent audit to improve workplace health and safety or enhance staff wellbeing.

600 word limit

To achieve a high score applicants needed to provide comprehensive details of the conduct of auditing activities at the site including the identity of internal or external personnel carrying out the audit function, the scope of both formal and informal audit and the frequency of such audits. The planning of the audit process needed to be explained, how the focus or target of an audit is determined, the role of data from incidents and near misses in focusing the audit, and workforce involvement feedback.

As with all multi-component questions to achieve a high score all aspects had to be answered comprehensively. The three examples had to identify when the audit was carried out, by whom, and the specific recommendation for change or improvement that was made. The example of the change had to be comprehensive with detail where possible of the impact the resulting change or improvement had made to the health, safety or wellbeing at the site.

Low scoring answers provided insufficient details of the audit arrangements at the site and no or sketchy examples of the resulting changes made.

A small number of applicants referred in their answer to a recently completed ISO 45001 audit certification but failed to attach a copy of their certificate thereby missing out on two accreditation marks.

Application Question 11

Describe the pre-contract and post-contract assessment arrangements for your site that help assure you that contractors and suppliers comply with your health, safety and wellbeing policies, goals and procedures.

How do you encourage better health and safety?

600 word limit.

This question has featured in many of the past International Safety Award scheme question sets. Almost all the ISA 2026 applicants had contractors and sub-contractors working at their site and highlighted the work they were doing to ensure compliance with their health, safety and wellbeing goals, policies and procedures.

To achieve a high score applicants needed to provide comprehensive details of their pre-contract assessment arrangements including gathering information, for example, from questionnaires, interviews, qualifications, examination of past performance and management records, agency ratings, audit reports, certification including ISO 45001 or equivalent, enforcement action where applicable, training records and references.

High scoring answers detailed the arrangements to ensure sound and effective health, safety and wellbeing management is in place once the contract has been awarded prior to work commencing.

Applicants needed also to provide comprehensive details of the arrangements in place to ensure that the contract, once awarded, is carried out in accordance with the agreed health, safety and wellbeing objectives, policies and procedures. Induction, monitoring, audits, ensuring competence through continuing training and development of the contractor's workforce and performance reporting and review play a key role in post-contract assurance.

The third component of this question concerned how the applicant encouraged the contractor and sub-contractors to achieve better health, safety and wellbeing standards.

Low scoring answers failed to provide sufficient detail concerning the pre-contract assessment arrangements, the post-contract management oversight arrangements and the measures that they have place to encourage better health, safety and wellbeing standards. Some applicants failed to include details of any arrangements they had in place to ensure contractor compliance with the site's wellbeing policies and practices.

Application 12

Describe your policy objectives and initiatives to proactively manage psychosocial risk in your workplace.

600 word limit.

This question was asked for the first time in ISA 2026. It concerned the psychosocial risks that affect a worker's mental wellbeing and potentially cause stress, anxiety or mental health issues. The question sought to ascertain what objectives and initiatives the site has in place to address risks such as high workloads, tight deadlines, work in extreme environments, insufficient resources, bullying or harassment, unclear roles and responsibilities, poor communications and poor management of operational or organisational change.

High scoring answers provided comprehensive details of the objectives and initiatives in place to proactively manage psychosocial risk, together with strong evidence of preventative measures and monitoring arrangements to gauge impact. Ensuring staff participation in helping to formulate objectives and initiatives was considered a key component in achieving a high score. Other factors key to preventing and managing psychosocial risks include leadership commitment, targeted resources and an actively involved workforce.

Low scoring answers showed a lack of understanding of psychosocial risk and consequently no or vague policy objectives. These answers lacked any detail of initiatives in place to address psychosocial risk.

Accreditation evidence

Applicants could also gain a maximum additional three marks by uploading evidence (certification) of the following accreditations:

- **1 Mark** - 3 Star outcome from British Safety Council Five Star Audit (within the ISA 2026 eligibility period)
- **2 Marks** – Current ISO 45001 Certification or 4 Star outcome from British Safety Council Five-Star Audit (within the ISA 2026 eligibility period)
- **3 Marks** - 5 Star outcome from British Safety Council Five Star Audit (within the ISA 2026 eligibility period)

A small but significant number applicants made specific reference to their organisation's ISO 45001 certification in answering the substantive questions but failed to provide evidence of the certification consequently missing out on two additional marks. The failure to get credit for ISO 45001 certification in some cases made the difference to the eventual grade achieved.

Chief Adjudicator
On behalf of the British Safety Council
March 2026