



Sword of Honour 2025 Question Set and Marking Scheme

Background

This marking scheme relates to the written application component of the 2025 Sword of Honour scheme. The final marks for each submission will be determined by reference to applicants' performance in the written application only. The results of the Five Star Audit process will not be considered other than as a right of entry to the awards.

Please note that the marking descriptors are indicative by nature. For example, two organisations may adopt differing approaches to the written application and score equally well. Nonetheless, high-scoring organisation will typically answer all aspects of the question, clearly following the marking scheme, provide site-specific references (evidenced and referenced through the audit report) and fully utilise, but not exceed the specified word allowance per response.

Scoring criteria

- A maximum of 60 marks are available for the written application. Applicants must score a minimum of 45 marks to remain eligible for the award.
- A minimum of two individual responses must be scored within the top mark band (11-15 marks).
- Submissions will become ineligible for the Sword of Honour award should any individual responses be scored within the lower mark band (0-5 marks).
- Responses to each sub-question must not exceed 750 words per sub-question (i.e. 3,000 words overall per submission).
- The two optional questions for the Innovation and Development award will be marked separately by a panel. The grades for these questions will not be included in the overall score of the main application.

New for 2025, a sample of applicants will be randomly selected to validate the responses given on their application in a virtual interview. This selection will be made following the application submission deadline on the 23 September 2025 and the selected applicants will be notified with a MS Teams placeholder invite for the week beginning on the 29 September 2025.

		11-15 marks	6-10 marks	0-5 marks
1.	<p>With relevant reference to the outcomes from your recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit:</p> <p>Explain how the site ensures the participation of <i>all</i> employee groups in the continual improvement of the Occupational Health & Safety Management System (OHSMS) and associated arrangements.</p>	<p>A full description of how the organisation ensures full (all) employee participation, and a full description/discussion of how these groups were identified i.e. RACI, employee job family assessment etc.</p> <p>A full discussion of the methods used to encourage and facilitate participation i.e. focus groups, safety forums, suggestion schemes and a full discussion of the arrangements made to enable this.</p> <p>The response is supported with clear examples of when and how this is done and how these contributed to continuous improvement and in turn accident reduction/cultural improvement(s).</p> <p>All examples are clearly related to the outcomes of the recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit.</p>	<p>An adequate description of how the organisation ensures full (all) employee participation. Some reference to how these groups were identified.</p> <p>Some reference to the methods used to encourage and facilitate participation but lacking depth.</p> <p>The response is supported with some examples of when and how this is done and how these contributed to continuous improvement and in turn accident reduction/cultural improvement(s).</p> <p>Some examples are clearly related to the outcomes of the recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit.</p>	<p>A basic description of how the organisation ensures full (all) employee participation. No reference to how these groups were identified.</p> <p>Basic reference to the methods used to encourage and facilitate participation but lacking in discussion.</p> <p>The response is supported with some examples of when and how this is done but lacking reference to how these contributed to continuous improvement and in turn accident reduction/cultural improvement(s).</p> <p>Few or no examples are clearly related to the outcomes of the recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit.</p>
2.	<p>With relevant reference to the outcomes from your recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit:</p> <p>Describe how the site has established suitable processes to recognise and support employee mental health.</p>	<p>A full description of how the how the approaches were identified, assessed for suitability and implemented.</p> <p>The response contains a wide range of relevant examples and all examples provided within the response are clearly related to relevant outcomes of the recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit.</p>	<p>An adequate description of how the how the approaches were identified, assessed for suitability and implemented.</p> <p>The response contains reference to some examples of the process used but lacks depth.</p> <p>Some outcomes are related to relevant outcomes of the recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit.</p>	<p>A basic description of how the how the approaches were identified. Lacking discussion of how these were assessed for suitability and implemented.</p> <p>The response contains limited use of examples of the process used.</p> <p>Few or no examples are clearly related to the outcomes of the recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit.</p>

<p>3. With relevant reference to the outcomes from your recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit:</p> <p>Describe how the emergency planning and associated arrangements are clearly linked to the risk assessment process and how this drives compliance.</p>	<p>A full explanation clearly demonstrating how emergency planning and associated arrangements are clearly linked to the risk assessment process and the methods used to achieve this.</p> <p>A range of relevant examples of campaigns, programmes and/or initiatives that will further drive focussed performance improvement and cultural engagement relating to risk management and ultimately compliance to the desired standard/outcome.</p> <p>All examples are clearly related to the outcomes of the recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit.</p>	<p>An adequate explanation exploring how emergency planning and associated arrangements are linked to the risk assessment process and the methods used to achieve this.</p> <p>A range of relevant examples of campaigns, programmes and/or initiatives that will further drive focussed performance improvement and cultural engagement.</p> <p>Some examples are clearly related to the outcomes of the recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit.</p>	<p>A basic explanation of how emergency planning and associated arrangements are linked to the risk assessment process and the methods used to achieve this.</p> <p>Limited examples of campaigns, programmes and/or initiatives that will further drive focussed performance improvement and cultural engagement.</p> <p>Few or no examples are related to the outcomes of the recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit.</p>
<p>4. With relevant reference to the outcomes from your recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit:</p> <p>Explain how the site's top management ensures the continued effectiveness of the OHSMS.</p>	<p>A full explanation of how Top Management is defined at the site.</p> <p>identifies the significant contribution this community makes to compliance, culture and engagement on health and safety matters and discusses the role they play in driving continual improvement in health and safety performance.</p> <p>The response is supported with clear examples of the methods used to determine relevance and the actions taken (planned or actual) to drive continual improvement of your health and safety performance at the site.</p> <p>All examples clearly related to the outcomes of the recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit.</p>	<p>An adequate explanation of how Top Management is defined at the site.</p> <p>Identifies the role, not fully appreciating the contribution, this community makes to compliance, culture and engagement on health and safety matters. Does not adequately discuss continual improvement.</p> <p>Some examples clearly related to the outcomes of the recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit.</p>	<p>A basic explanation of how Top Management is defined at the site.</p> <p>Identifies the role, not fully appreciating the contribution, this community makes to compliance but lacks discussion around culture and engagement on health and safety matters. Does not adequately reference continual improvement.</p> <p>Few or no examples are related to the outcomes of the recent Five Star Health and Safety Audit</p>