

Home inspector

Technical training programme for new entrants

A unique partnership between **Safe as...** and Sheffield Hallam University



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The time to qualify as a home inspector is now

2007 is fast approaching and with it a business opportunity you can't afford to miss.

Home information packs have been given the go ahead by the government for 2007. A significant number of professionals are already signed up with the **Safe as...** assessment centre to make sure they qualify in time for the 'dry run' in 2006.

But what if you are missing some of the key home inspection knowledge and skills or you are completely new to the residential profession?

About the training programme

In partnership with **Safe as...**, the Home Inspector Training Services (HITS) team at Sheffield Hallam University has developed a new home inspector training programme. Designed for people with little or no knowledge or experience, the programme will help you gain the skills and understanding needed by the National Occupational Standards for home inspectors.

A combined approach

The new entrant training and assessment programme has two main elements. Because of the association with **Safe as...**, the programme combines assessment and training so you can progress towards the diploma in home inspection along a faster track.

Training – eight distinct modules that cover the 'knowledge and understanding' needed by the different units of the diploma in home inspection

Assessment – this will run alongside the training and continue after you complete the training modules. The **Safe as...** assessment centre will provide all the assessment needed by the diploma in home inspection including compiling 10 home condition reports (including one accompanied with an assessor) and the external test.

Who can take the programme?

This course is open access and you do not need any specific qualifications. However, we have designed the course to suit people with the following characteristics:

- Well motivated, enthusiastic self learners who are able to direct their own study programme
- Literate and numerate people able to cope with a level of study equivalent to HNC/HND or NVQ level 4
- Be able to commit sufficient time to build up the necessary knowledge in a relatively short space of time. We estimate a minimum of 350-400 study hours over a 10-12 months.

It is your responsibility to assess your own suitability for the course. **Safe as...** or SHU cannot be responsible for this.



Programme benefits

More than just training

The fees will include all assessment and training costs; there will be no hidden extras. However, your fee does give you a range of extra benefits:

- ABBE registration fees
- External examination fees
- Face to face training sessions
- Refreshments and lunches
- Training course materials – comprehensive training notes
- One day RdSAP software training provided by Elmhurst Energy
- HCRwriter software – free access to submit home condition reports while training
- eNVQ – free access to the easy, online evidence recording system
- Online eCPD portal
- Access to insurance cost reinstatement and RdSAP software
- Discount on **Safe as...** reading list publications from RICS Books
- RICS learning resources – CPD/LLL events and RICS Library
- Free newsletter.

Plus...

Links with employers

Once you start your training you will want to convert your new skills and knowledge into income as soon as possible. The **Safe as...** HITS partnership can, through our close contacts with home information pack providers and other employing organisations, create links between you and potential employers at all stages of the programme. For instance:

- Sponsored course materials and facilities
- Sponsored lunches
- Employer presentations.

There will be a big demand for new home inspectors during 2007 and beyond, so taking the training programme offers you excellent career opportunities.

The Home Inspector's handbook

A copy of the Home Inspector's handbook is included in the cost of the programme.



Einstein television network

Through a unique partnership between **Safe as...**, HITS and Einstein television network, a number of television programmes have been produced and are available for viewing online. You will be able to subscribe to these short but effective programmes at discounted rates. So far, the following topics are planned:

- The home inspection
- The condition rating process
- Dealing with listed buildings
- Handling further investigations
- Building movement
- Dampness.

Other programmes may be added later in the series.

What the training does not include

The course fee does not include:

- Text books for the background reading (you will need to buy approximately 15-20 books/publications in total)
- Any travel and overnight costs associated with the face to face training sessions.

You will also need access to a computer with a fast connection to the internet together with the skills to use them both!

The programme

The training programme is made up of eight distinct modules. You can take these as either single or double modules as outlined below:

1. Introduction to the training programme (single module)

This first one day session will introduce you to the programme, learning strategies and resources, the assessment process as well as some of the 'soft skills' included in Unit 1 of the diploma in home inspection. Topics will include:

- Planning the application
- The assessment process
- Tools for assessment
- Working in an effective and professional manner
- Scope of technical knowledge needed
- Resources and sources of information
- Learning strategies and techniques.

2. The construction of residential properties (double module)

This will introduce you to the construction of residential properties including flats, system built properties, modern methods of construction as well as traditional building techniques (listed buildings, etc), plus:

- Introduction to building regulations, approved inspectors and warranty schemes
- Environmental and site wide issues
- Soils and foundations
- Walls, window and door openings
- Roofs – pitched and flat
- Floors – solid and timber
- Windows and doors
- Finishes, kitchens and bathrooms
- Flats, system buildings, listed buildings and modern methods of construction.

3. Inspecting buildings (single module)

This allows you to develop your knowledge and understanding of property inspection and related issues, covering:

- The home condition inspection
- Measuring buildings for various purposes
- Introduction to insurance cost reinstatement
- Using site notes, use of images
- Pre-inspection checks and enquiries including information on matters relating to property

- Health and safety issues related to people and property including:
 - legislation, duties and responsibilities
 - typical risks in the office, travelling, empty and occupied properties, use of equipment, etc
 - emergency procedures
 - risks to property – vandalism, arson, squatters, etc.

4. Energy and buildings (single module)

This introduces you to broader issues of energy use and energy conservation as well as some aspects of the RdSAP protocols and methods. However, you are unlikely to gain all the knowledge needed to qualify as RdSAP inspector through study of this module alone. Although you can also take the online top up training from Elmhurst Energy Services. The content includes:

- Energy and the environment
- Energy and the domestic sector
- Rationale behind the government schemes
- Standard Assessment procedures and RdSAP
- Energy rating organisations
- Data collection for RdSAP
- Interpreting the results and giving advice.

5. Building pathology (double module)

Effective diagnosis of building defects is at the heart of the home condition report. Without this, the condition rating process will be inaccurate and misleading. This double module will introduce you to the principles of building pathology and how they can be applied to the most common building defects, including:

- Principles of building pathology
- Major building defects including:
 - building movement
 - dampness
 - timber problems
 - roofing problems
 - chemical deterioration
- Methods of repair and how to recognise them.

6. Assessing building services (double module)

Most experienced residential professionals will admit to having gaps in their knowledge when it comes to services. Rather than referring the problems to other specialists to investigate, home inspectors will have to be more positive when assessing the condition of the services in a property. This module will look at the type of service systems in residential properties as well as the common problems that can occur, such as:

- Electrical systems
- Gas (natural and LPG) and oil supplies
- Water – including hot and cold water services, rising main, private water supplies etc
- Heating systems including solid fuel, gas (natural and LPG), electrical, oil and alternative sources
- Drainage systems including mains drainage and private systems.

7. Legal issues (double module)

A great many legal issues impinge on the work of the home inspector and this module aims to review the most important ones. Topic areas will include:

- Introduction to the legal system including contract, tort and land law
- Landlord and tenant issues including shared ownership, tenanted properties, short-hold, student accommodation and HMOs
- Other property related matters including easements, restrictive covenants, adverse possession, dilapidations, party wall legislation, boundaries etc
- Development control (planning, listed buildings, conservation areas etc).

8. Home inspector technical training (double module)

Once the previous modules have been completed, you can move on to the well-established home inspector technical training module. This looks at all aspects of the HI's role including:

- Relevant legislation
- Customer relations
- Conditions of engagement, codes of conduct etc
- Condition rating
- Report writing
- Reinstatement cost calculations.

Using the unique virtual property on Sheffield Hallam University's website, this module will create a simulated but realistic environment where you can develop your skills.

External examination revision and support

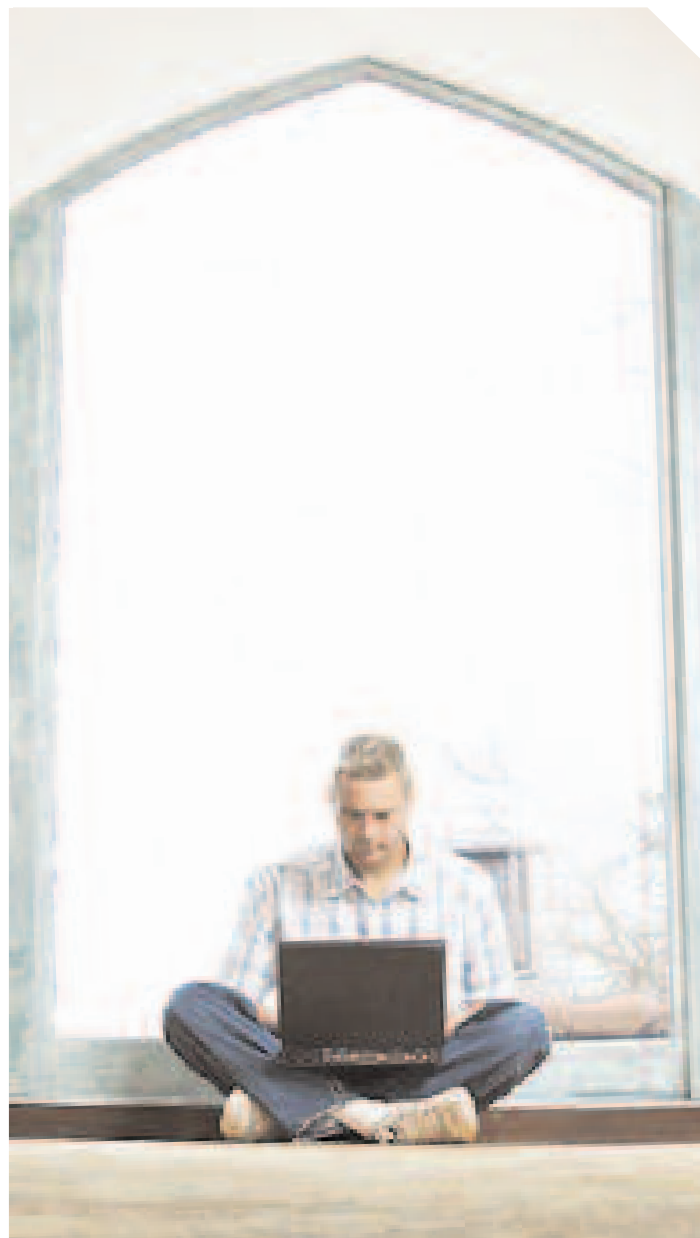
A number of half-day revision and support sessions will be held at appropriate times for those who are planning to take their ABBE external examination.

Additional training modules (optional)

If you want extra support during the assessment process an additional module will be available. This is not included in the price of the programme.

Type 3 home inspector technical training

You can upgrade your home inspector technical training module to our 'Type 3' course. This is a credit-bearing module recognised by the Awarding Body of the Built Environment (ABBE) and Sheffield Hallam University's credit rating system. The module includes formal assignments with extensive feedback from university staff to help you reflect and improve on your skills. You need to produce two home condition reports and a SAP assessment for assessment and these can be used as part of the 10 reports needed for your diploma in home inspection.



Training programme structure

All training modules will have three phases:

1. Pre-course activities – you will be expected to complete specially designed self-study packs **before** the face to face training sessions. These will include:

- Background reading guides that will help you gain the most useful reading and reference material possible using your own resources. You will need to buy a number of important text books to support your learning
- The HITS team will provide a number of formative exercises or worksheets.

2. Face to face training – delivered by a member of the HITS/SHU team, these sessions will take place in Coventry on specified weekdays. The training will build on the pre-course reading lists and worksheets and include non-assessed tests to help assess your own progress through the programme and diploma.

3. Post course reflection and assessment guidance – this is a very important part of the programme and is divided into two parts:

1. Specific guidance will be given on how you can link the training modules with the National Occupational Standards competencies in the HI diploma. This will help you to provide the assessment centre with the evidence of competence needed.
2. Any training event will always identify some gaps in knowledge and you will be encouraged to reflect on the training experience and set an action plan of improvement for the future.



Learning support

We have designed this training programme to be efficient, effective and flexible. There is no formal assessment associated with the training modules themselves and you will not get individual feedback from the HITS Team. Although **Safe as...** assessment centre will be allocating assessors towards the later stages of the diploma, you will have to monitor your own performance. However, the programme will include a number of features that will make this easier:

Pre-course technical orientation and resources

This information module will help those with little or no technical knowledge to build up that required for the later stages of the HI diploma. The module includes:

- **Property familiarisation worksheets** – these will help you look at property in a different way, helping you develop a technical awareness of the buildings that are seen everyday
- **HITS guide to technical resources** – the HITS team have produced an annotated guide to the technical information that will be helpful during the assessment process
- **HITS mentoring guide** – although background knowledge is important, applying that knowledge is at the heart of the diploma. You will be encouraged to link up with a suitable 'mentor' who will be able to help and advise during the programme. A wide range of people and organisations could fulfil this role but we think an experienced residential practitioner will be the most useful.

Learning syndicates

At your first training session, you will be allocated to a 'learning syndicate'; this is a group of people from differing backgrounds and experience who can potentially provide mutual support during the training programme, the diploma and beyond!

Diagnostic tests

Towards the end of every face to face training session, you will be set a multi-choice formative assessment. Similar to the awarding body's external test, it will help you:

- Assess the amount and depth of knowledge you have gained, and
- Get you used to the format of the final test.

Training timescales

The training programme is a fast moving, intensive programme of study. To be successful, you must be able to commit enough time and energy to make sure you keep pace. The programme is rigidly organised and there is little flexibility on the timing of your face to face sessions.

Before you enrol, you will be given a list of dates of when these will take place. If you are unable to attend your scheduled sessions, it may not be possible to arrange alternatives at a later date, as they all are likely to be full. Sheffield Hallam University will not accept responsibility for providing any alternatives dates. Please check your scheduled dates to make sure you can attend.

Attendance at the training sessions is not mandatory and non-attendance will not affect your progress. However, attending is the best way of gaining the knowledge and understanding that you will need to be a home inspector.

Your commitment

The training modules will be either single or double. The figures below will give you an idea of how many study hours you will need to complete them:

Single modules		Double modules	
Pre course reading	15hrs	Pre course reading	30hrs
Pre course activities	15hrs	Pre course activities	30hrs
Face to face training	7 hrs	Face to face training	15hrs
Post course reflection	3 hrs	Post course reflection	5hrs
Total	40 hours	Total	80 hours

These figures are based on our experience of delivering similar training courses across a number of different sectors. The amount of time will vary on individual circumstances and will be influenced by your:

- Individual learning styles and existing study skills
- Existing knowledge of the residential sector
- Broader work based skills.

For the whole programme, the total study hours will be between 400-500 hours depending on your circumstances.

2006 dates for training programme one

Intro to the programme	23 January
Construction of residential properties	22/23 February
Inspecting buildings	20 March
Energy and buildings	24 April
Legal issues	22/23 May
Building pathology	28/29 June
Assessing building services	24/25 July
Home inspector technical training	4/5 September

These dates may occasionally have to be adjusted depending on staff and accommodation availability.

Fees and payments

To fees for the module are:

- £5 900 (RICS members)
- £6 300 (non RICS members)

Registering on the programme

To secure your place on the programme please complete and return the booking form plus a £500 deposit (non-refundable). Please send your payment by cheque made payable to RICS to:

RICS
12 Great George Street
Parliament Square
London SW1P 3AD
United Kingdom

The balance will be payable by 9 January 2006

Further information and contacts

Safe as... +44 (0)20 7222 7000
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Terms and conditions

This programme is organised by **Safe as...**

- You need to send your £500 non-refundable deposit with the registration form as we cannot reserve places without payment. You then need to pay the balance 14 days before you start module 1. If you do not pay in time you will forfeit your place and deposit
- Confirmation of registration and receipted invoice will be sent in acknowledgement of all bookings
- Cancellations must be made in writing
- No refund will be paid to candidates withdrawing at anytime after the course has started
- If you are funding the course through a finance company you will be liable for any outstanding loan repayments if you withdraw from the course at any time
- Substitute delegates will be accepted in advance of module 1
- Payments from overseas may only be made in sterling, by International Monetary Order, by credit card or by cheque drawn upon a UK bank
- **Safe as...** is not liable for bank charges or any other costs incurred by delegates in attending the event
- **Safe as...** reserves the right to refuse entry to delegates if it chooses
- **Safe as...** reserves the right to change the venue and/or course tutors at any time and without prior notice
- **Safe as...** also reserves the right in its absolute discretion to cancel the programme.

Safe as... is the home inspection and assessment service from RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors). As the leading source of property knowledge worldwide RICS promote best practice, represent consumers' interest and provide impartial advice to society, businesses and the government.

For more on how RICS and **Safe as...** are guiding the nation through home buying reform go to www.rics.org/safeas or email safeas@rics.org

Further information and advice

If you need further information at this stage about the diploma or the process of achieving it, you can contact the **Safe as...** assessment centre on **+44 (0)870 333 1600**

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