

**NCC EDUCATION**

**INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA**  
**IN**  
**COMPUTER STUDIES**

**BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**

**9<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2007**

**MARKING SCHEME**

Markers are advised that many answers in Marking Schemes are **examples only** of what we might expect from candidates. Unless a question **specifically states** that an answer is demanded in a particular form, then an answer that is correct, factually or in practical terms, must be given the available marks.

If there is doubt as to the correctness of an answer the relevant NCC Education textbook should be the first authority.

This Marking Scheme has been prepared as a guide only to markers. This is **ABSOLUTELY NOT** a set of model answers; **NOR** is the Marking Scheme exclusive, for there will frequently be alternative responses which will provide a valid answer.

**Notice to Markers**

**Where markers award half marks in any part of a question they should ensure that the total mark recorded for a question is a whole mark.**

**CANDIDATES MUST ATTEMPT THIS QUESTION**

**QUESTION 1**

**Marks**

**Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.**

- a) The secretary of a committee has to produce **minutes** of each meeting.

**5**

Briefly describe FIVE points of information that should be included in the notes taken for minutes of a meeting.

- *Record of the date, time and place of meeting*
- *List of all members present, officials first followed by alphabetical list of members*
- *List of apologies for absence (with reasons, if this is normal practice for the organisation)*
- *Summary of the main facts and arguments*
- *Note of resolutions passed with details of voting*
- *An objective record of discussion/ events*

*1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*

- b) You need to send an e-mail to the employees that you supervise to inform them about an important meeting on Friday. You also want to make sure they each bring a copy of a recent consultant's report to the meeting.

**5**

Decide on a **subject line** to use in the e-mail to ensure that they all attend the meeting and bring the report with them. Explain how you arrived at your decision.

- *Subject line needs to be interesting/ creative if recipient receives large numbers of e-mail messages*
- *Subject line should be brief as many e-mail systems truncate long subject lines*
- *Subject line needs to be descriptive and give a clear idea of the message's content*
- *Important to avoid putting something as ambiguous as "Meeting" as the recipients would probably not place much importance on the e-mail*
- *By using the subject line to state the task you want the recipients to carry out, you get their attention and let them know right away what they need to do*
- *Use a priority indicator e.g. urgent*
- *An effective subject line for this e-mail would be something like "Bring consultant's report to Friday's meeting"*

*1 mark for appropriate suggestion for subject line, plus 1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks for LOGICAL reasoning that explains how the decision was arrived at (overall maximum of 5 marks).*

- c) Research involves collecting and analysing data.

- i) State TWO ways of collecting data for analysis.

**2**

- *Reading*
- *Observation*
- *Using questionnaires*
- *Interviews*
- *Other valid methods*

*1 mark per point to a maximum of 2 marks.*

- ii) Define the term *primary data* AND give TWO examples of sources of primary data.
- *Original information never before collected by anyone else*
  - *Information gathered specifically for a new research project*
- 1 mark for definition.

**Examples:**

- *In history-based research, writings by people contemporary to the period under investigation*
- *Letters*
- *Diaries*
- *Notes taken at an interview or transcript of an interview*
- *Results of a questionnaire or survey designed specifically for the project*
- *Results of experiments*
- *Balance sheets*
- *Other valid examples*

1 mark per example to a maximum of 2 marks.

- d) i) In a particular set of figures or data, what is the *mode*? 1
- *The mode is the number that occurs most often*
- ii) What would be the *mode* for the following set of monthly salaries: \$1200, \$1200, \$1300, \$1500, \$1700, \$2000, \$2800? 1
- *\$1200*
- iii) What is the *median* of the set of monthly salaries listed above in part d) ii)? 1
- *\$1500*
- iv) What statistical term best completes this sentence? 1
- To find out your company's average utility bill, you would need to calculate the \_\_\_\_\_ of the last twelve bills.
- *Mean*
- v) An alternative to sequential notes is *diagrammatic* note taking. What is another name for this method of note taking? 1
- *Patterned note taking*

**Total 20 Marks**

**CANDIDATES MUST ATTEMPT FOUR FURTHER QUESTIONS**

**QUESTION 2**

**Marks**

**Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.**

- a) You work in the Customer Services department of a mobile phone company trading on the Internet. Your boss, Leo Bull, has asked you to reply to this LETTER OF COMPLAINT received from a dissatisfied customer: **15**

*Jo Browne  
99 Forest Road  
Smallville  
SM34*

*Tel: 01521 682554  
6 September 2007*

*To:  
Mr L Bull  
Customer Services Manager  
Direct Mobiles  
Liberty Street  
Metropolis  
M19*

*Dear Mr Bull*

*Re: Mobile telephone Sendak model S505 – 07981 255447*

*On 1 May 2007 I purchased via the Internet a Sendak S505 mobile telephone from your company at a cost of \$195 including delivery.*

*I am very disappointed because the telephone has never worked properly. Your service department's telephone is hardly ever answered and when it is, the engineer seems to know nothing about this model of telephone. I have been sent TWO replacements, but neither of these has worked either.*

*To resolve the problem, I require you to refund in full the cost of the telephone and the delivery charges: \$205 in total. As I have suffered extreme inconvenience having no reliable mobile telephone for FOUR months I think it is fair to receive some compensation for this too.*

*I expect to hear from you within the next fourteen days. If I hear nothing by the end of the two weeks, you will hear from my lawyer.*

*I can be contacted at the above address or the landline telephone – but not on the mobile.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Jo Browne*

Write a **letter of adjustment** to Ms Browne dealing with **all** the points made in her letter and apologizing for the poor service she has received.

*Layout should be of a consistent format throughout i.e. blocked, semi-blocked or indented style and letter should include the following content:*

- *Statement of regret: acknowledgement and confirmation that the complaint is understood*
- *Cause of defect: explanation after investigation of problem*
- *Action to be taken: explanation of action to adjust the problem*
- *Apology: express hope that goodwill will be maintained*

*Award from 0 up to 5 marks for each of the following categories to a maximum of 15 marks. The following table is a guide.*

*NB If you consider that any or all of the categories deserve NO marks, then award zero marks accordingly.*

	<b>1 mark</b>	<b>3 marks</b>	<b>5 marks</b>
<b><i>Content, relevance and organisation</i></b>	<i>The answer does not cover many elements of the task. There is just a solid block of text with no paragraphing. There is little attempt to follow the format of a business letter.</i>	<i>Some of the points in the task are covered. Some attempt has been made to use paragraphs. Some attempt has been made to follow the format of a business letter.</i>	<i>The candidate covers all points in the task. There is a clear introduction, body and conclusion; paragraphs are used throughout. The format of a business letter is followed closely.</i>
<b><i>Communicative quality</i></b>	<i>The meaning of the letter is difficult to follow. Much of the wording has to be read several times to understand what the candidate is trying to say. Poor handwriting makes many words illegible.</i>	<i>The message is generally clear but some wording is a little confusing. The presentation is generally clear but some words are illegible.</i>	<i>It is clear what the candidate is trying to say. There is no strain on the reader and sentences do not have to be read twice to gather meaning. Handwriting and presentation are very good.</i>
<b><i>Accuracy of language</i></b>	<i>Inability to use grammar and spelling correctly makes much of the letter difficult to understand.</i>	<i>There are some grammatical and spelling mistakes in the letter but these do not generally impede understanding.</i>	<i>There are very few grammatical or spelling mistakes in the letter.</i>

- b) Business writing should always reflect the fact that business people are both men and women. List FIVE 5 examples of ways to ensure you do this in your business writing.
- *Use occupational titles which do not imply gender*
  - *e.g. doctor, lawyer, engineer do not imply gender*
  - *e.g. use head teacher rather than head mistress or head master; firefighters rather than firemen*
  - *e.g. sales force, employees or staff rather than 'salesmen'*
  - *Eliminate masculine pronouns: refer to groups rather than individuals e.g. 'supervisors should...' is better than 'each supervisor should tell his staff...'*
  - *Use both masculine and feminine pronouns if appropriate and not too clumsy: e.g. his or her, s/he*
  - *Be consistent in the way you refer to males and females: use titles for both, or full names for both e.g. if a man is addressed as 'Mr' then a woman must be addressed as 'Ms' or 'Mrs' or 'Miss'*
  - *A department can be 'manned', but it can just as easily be 'staffed'*
- 1 mark per point/ example to a maximum of 5 marks.*

**Total 20 marks**

### QUESTION 3

Marks

**Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.**

- a) You wish to apply for this job advertised in your local newspaper:

OPPORTUNITY FOR RECENT GRADUATE  
Games software company requires a  
Marketing Assistant with a real interest and enthusiasm  
for computer games.

Apply in writing quoting job reference HR35A to:  
Adam White, Personnel Manager,  
Yazzoo Games, Unit 6, Woods Industrial Estate,  
Sunny Valley, S22 3EQ

Enclose an up-to-date CV including the names and addresses of two referees  
Closing date for applications: 3 October 2007

- i) Write a curriculum vitae (CV) in the format of your choice to submit to the firm, inventing any 10 information that you may need.

*CV can be either chronological or functional format but should include the following content:*

- *Personal details: name, address, contact details*
  - *Education: schools, colleges/ universities attended and dates*
  - *Qualifications: exam boards, subjects, grades, dates exam taken in reverse chronological order*
  - *Any other training*
  - *Work experience: dates, job titles, outline of duties, name and address of employer*
  - *Interests*
  - *Additional information: e.g. driving licence, first aid qualification, special skills, any disabilities or special circumstances*
  - *Referees: two names and contact details*
- One mark per point to a maximum of 8 marks.*

*Up to 2 marks available for layout/ design and presentation i.e. neatness/ handwriting.*

ii) Write a letter of application for the job described in this advertisement. You may invent any information that you may need. **10**

- *Answer should be in the form of a standard business letter in a consistent format throughout i.e. blocked, semi-blocked or indented style*  
*1 mark for consistent layout/ format*

*Should include the following:*

- *Sender's address; recipient's name and address; date and reference; subject heading; appropriate salutation and complimentary close*

*2 marks for all correct headings and remainder of letter in appropriate format; for incomplete formats 1 mark available at marker's discretion*

*Content of letter should include the following:*

*Introduction*

- *A clear statement of the reason for writing: e.g. stating position applied for, how the writer came to know about the vacancy*

*Up to 2 marks for good introduction.*

*Main body of letter*

- *Relevant education and training*
- *Experience, interests or skills relevant to the post*

*Up to 2 marks for main body*

*Conclusion*

- *Why applicant wants the job and what special value s/he will bring to the organisation*

*1 mark for conclusion*

*Up to 2 marks available for communicative quality: Is it clear what the writer is trying to say? Is the handwriting and presentation acceptable?*

**Total 20 Marks**

**QUESTION 4**

Marks

**Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.**

a) Explain how the exchange of large numbers of messages could create a **barrier** to effective business communication. **4**

- *Too much information can lead to information overload*
- *Information overload constitutes ‘noise’ in communication theory which can prevent effective communication*
- *Too many messages makes it difficult for employees to extract the most important data and can result in ill-informed decisions and/ or reduced productivity*
- *Companies’ ability to communicate with staff at any time e.g. at home, on holiday can create stress/ illness and resentment impeding the communication process*
- *Other logical points*

*1 mark per point contributing to a logical explanation to a maximum of 4 marks.*

b) Describe the different phases of a two-way communication process from the point of view of both the receiver and the sender. **12**

*The sender:*

- *Conceives the message: has an idea and wants to share it; develops the message*
- *Encodes the message: considers the audience to decide on an appropriate and effective code that the intended receiver will understand; a code may be the language, audibility and tone of the spoken word or the language and legibility of the written word*
- *Selects the medium of transmission to deliver the message to the receiver e.g. speech, writing, image, etc*

*The receiver:*

- *Receives the message and de-codes it: not always guaranteed – noise can impede message e.g. spam filter intercepts the e-mail or receiver cannot hear you*
- *Interprets the message: in successful communication, the receiver understands it as intended by the sender; receiver formulates a response*
- *Provides feedback: responds in some way enabling the sender to evaluate the effectiveness of the original message*

*Up to 2 marks for each phase described, to a maximum of 12 marks.*

c) Briefly describe **FOUR word processing functions** that have improved office workers’ productivity in the business writing process. **4**

- *Editing: facility to make changes to a document before printing on paper*
- *Formatting options to improve the appearance of business documents: different fonts and character sizes; borders*
- *Tables and drawings: easily created and inserted into documents*
- *Templates: various letter layouts, memos, CVs etc*
- *Spelling and grammar checkers: built-in dictionaries; correction of grammar and punctuation*
- *Thesaurus: provision of synonyms and antonyms*
- *File merge: text files can be merged with other data files e.g. addresses enabling production of ‘personalised’ standard forms and letters*
- *Other valid examples of word processing functions*

*1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*

**Total 20 Marks**

## QUESTION 5

Marks

**Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.**

- a) Your manager has expressed concern about the amount of time members of staff are spending using e-mail during working hours. She has asked you to write some guidelines for staff to follow regarding the proper use of e-mail in the workplace. **10**

In the **form of a memo** to all staff, write a set of FOUR guidelines for appropriate use of e-mail at work. Invent any information you may need.

*Answer should be in the form of a standard memo and include the following headings:*

- *Memorandum/ memo or letterhead; to; from; date; subject*

*2 marks for all correct headings and remainder of memo in appropriate format; for incomplete formats 1 mark available at marker's discretion*

*Introduction*

- *Why the memo has been written and what it is about*

*Up to 2 marks for introduction.*

*Main body could include some of the following points or other useful guidelines:*

- *Restrict e-mail usage to appropriate content*
- *To reduce volume of e-mail sent don't use 'reply all' button on every message response unless it is really necessary*
- *Use informative subject lines so readers can determine priority. If you need action, state it in the subject line*
- *Avoid personal use of e-mail at work*
- *Pay attention to e-mail hygiene i.e. ensure attachments are virus-free and don't forward suspect messages*
- *Take time to consider whether an alternative method of communication might be more suitable e.g. pick up the telephone and talk about it instead*
- *Other valid guidelines for effective e-mail use*

*1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*

*Up to 2 marks available for communicative quality: Is it clear what the writer is trying to say? Is the handwriting and presentation acceptable?*

- b) In many business organisations, e-mail is the usual way to communicate with staff but it may not always be the most appropriate method of communication. 6

Give THREE examples of workplace situations where you think that e-mail should **not** be used and briefly explain why.

- *Disciplinary matters: these sorts of interviews and exchange of views should be conducted face to face according to the rules of the organisation e.g. with an employee representative or witness to the conversation*
- *Records should be kept of interviews and subsequent actions in case of appeals against dismissal*
- *To deliver bad/ tragic news e.g. news of redundancy, sudden death of an employee: these are matters requiring human contact and comfort*
- *To send obscene or defamatory or threatening material: organisation could be held responsible for breaking the law*
- *Highly confidential matters: security problems; best to avoid possibility of hacking, forwarding or mistaken revelation of message content*
- *To deliver formal contracts or other legal documents which require signatures and sometimes a witness to signature: hard copy is required in these situations*
- *Other valid and well-reasoned examples*

*1 mark per example identified plus 1 mark for short explanation to a maximum of 6 marks. [3x2]*

- c) The size of a group can affect its efficiency and behaviour.

- i) Briefly describe how the efficiency of a group might be negatively affected if it were made up of more than fifteen members. 2

- *Low participators stop talking to other members of the group and either stay silent or talk only to the few*
- *Interaction and creativity could freeze*

*1 mark per point to a maximum of 2 marks.*

- ii) Briefly explain how large groups sometimes can have advantages over smaller groups. 2

- *They can solve certain types of problems more effectively than smaller groups e.g. where there is a correct and viable answer such as the cheapest method of building something*
- *More information and knowledge brought together*
- *More chance of the group containing an expert who know the answer*

*Up to 2 marks for explanation.*

**Total 20 Marks**

**QUESTION 6**

Marks

**Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.**

a) There are several steps in the planning of an oral presentation. Describe what each of the following stages in planning a presentation involve:

i) Formulate the objectives.

5

- *Decide what the purpose of the presentation is*
- *This should take the form of a simple statement of intent*
- *e.g. to raise funds, to update colleagues about a situation, to persuade your audience to take a particular course of action*
- *Decide how many different objectives can be covered in the time allowed for the presentation*
- *Concentrate on no more than two objectives*
- *Any more than two might distract the audience's focus from the point of the presentation*

*1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*

ii) Define the structure and content.

5

- *Decide what information to include and in what order*
- *“Tell them what you are going to tell them; tell them; tell them what you have told them.”*
- *Basic structure is: introduction; main content; conclusion; questions*
- *Introduction: opening remarks, purpose and outline of content. Introduce yourself.*
- *Main content: main points of presentation, with supporting facts and figures where appropriate*
- *Conclusion: summary of the main points, together with concluding remarks that you want the audience to remember about the presentation*
- *Questions: taken at the end usually so that your flow is not disrupted during the main part of the talk*

*1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*

- b) Explain why both the **beginning** and the **end** of a presentation are very important and worth particular attention in your planning. **10**

*The beginning of a presentation:*

- *Need to get the attention of the audience from the outset; you have only a limited time so make every moment count*
- *Opportunity to create a rapport with the audience*
- *Helpful if you have identified your audience and their expectations: if the first few sentences demonstrate understanding of their needs and concerns, you will hold their attention*
- *Establish a theme to start the audience thinking about the subject matter straightaway; usually done by stating the main objective*
- *Present your structure: explain briefly how the talk will proceed, so that you set their expectations*
- *Administration: make a note of any admin details that need to be announced at the start such as when a coffee break will occur*

*1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*

*The end of the presentation:*

- *This is final impression you make on your audience and will probably be the thing they remember most*
- *Use this opportunity to reinforce your main objective e.g. by summing up or repeating the main idea or presenting a final slide with one final culminating idea or phrase to leave them with*
- *The way you deal with questions at the end can leave a lasting impression*
- *Be honest: if you can't answer a question say so and ensure that you find the answer and contact the questioner after the event; you will retain the respect of the audience*
- *Take questions one at a time, remembering which member of the audience needs your attention next; be observant so you can be sure not to ignore anyone*
- *Leave giving out handouts until the end to avoid disrupting proceedings during the main part of the presentation*
- *Thank everyone for their questions/ attendance and formally close the proceedings.*

*1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*

**Total 20 Marks**