NCC EDUCATION

INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA
IN
COMPUTER STUDIES
(IDCS v2008 & IDB v3)

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

14th SEPTEMBER 2008

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.

<u>Notice to Markers</u>

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

Suitable for IDB v3 & IDCS v2008
Based on Bovée & Thill's "Business Communication Today"
(8th & 9th editions)

QUESTION 1   **Marks**

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

A)   Ethics.

    i)   Explain briefly what the term *ethics* means.   **2**

- *The principles of conduct that govern behaviour in a society / a person or a group*
- *Defines the boundary between right and wrong in that group/ society*
- *Knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is the right thing to do*

    Up to 2 marks for explanation.

    ii)   List THREE (3) characteristics of **ethical communication**.   **3**

- *Includes all relevant information*
- *Is true in every sense*
- *Is not deceptive in any way*
- *An ethical message is accurate and sincere*
- *An ethical message avoids language or images that discriminate, manipulate or exaggerate*

    1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.

B)   Briefly outline FIVE (5) guidelines for conducting an effective online search.   **5**

- *Read the instructions for the search engine you are using*
- *Pay attention to the details: use of Boolean operator; stopwords; wildcards*
- *Review the search and display options carefully: presentation order of results; which field of a database is being searched*
- *Try variations of your terms: try abbreviations, synonyms, different spellings, open and compound forms*
- *Adjust the scope of your search if needed: specify fewer terms; use more terms to narrow search if huge number of hits produced*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.

C)   Give FIVE (5) common examples of types of **persuasive business messages**.   **5**

- *Requests for action*
- *Soliciting funds*
- *Asking for favours*
- *Asking for information*
- *Presentation of ideas*
- *Persuasive claims*
- *Requests for adjustment*
- *Marketing messages*
- *Sales messages*

1 mark per example to a maximum of 5 marks.

D) A multi-cultural workforce is made up of people from different backgrounds. **3**
  i) List THREE (3) cultural differences that might be found in a diverse workforce today.
- *National*
- *Religious*
- *Ethnic*
- *Gender*
- *Age*
- *Disability*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.

  ii) State TWO (2) competitive advantages that a diverse workforce can bring to business. **2**
- *A broader range of views and ideas*
- *A better understanding of diverse, fragmented markets*
- *A broader pool of talent from which to recruit*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 2 marks.

Total 20 Marks

Marks

QUESTION 2

<mark>Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.</mark>

A) **i)** Give a definition of a **team**. **2**

- *A unit of two or more people who share a mission*
- *They have a shared responsibility for working to achieve their goals*

Up to 2 marks for definition.

ii) Describe what is an **informal** team is. Give an example of such a team and explain what it is meant **6**
to achieve.

An informal team:

- *Not part of the formal organisation*
- *Assembled to resolve specific issues*
- *Often include representatives of many departments so those who have a stake in the outcome are allowed to provide input*
- *Disbanded once the goal has been achieved*

Up to 4 marks for description.

Example:

- *Problem-solving team or task force where the goal is to solve a problem or work on a particular activity or encourage employee participation*
- *Other valid example*

Up to 2 marks for example and explanation.

iii) Explain what a **committee** is. Give TWO (2) examples of types of committees and explain what each **7**
one does.

A committee:

- *Formal team that usually has a long life span*
- *Can become a permanent part of the organisation's structure*
- *Typically deals with regularly recurring tasks*

Up to 3 marks for description.

Examples:

- *an executive committee may meet monthly to plan strategy and review results*
- *a grievance committee may be formed as a permanent resource for handling employee complaints and concerns*
- *other valid example*

Up to 2 marks for each example and explanation, to a maximum of 4 marks.

B) Teams often use **shared workspaces** known as *virtual offices*. Describe what a virtual office is and how it **5** works.

- *Gives everyone on a team access to the same set of resources and information*
- *e.g. databases, calendars, project plans, e-mail, shared reference materials, team-created documents*
- *easy for geographically dispersed team members to access shared files anytime, anywhere*
- *files can be organised into a collection of electronic folders*
- *typically accessible through a web browser*
- *some systems have built-in intelligence to control which team members can read, edit and save specific files*
- *'revision control' allows only one person at a time to check on a file and also records any changes that person makes*

Up to 5 marks for description.

Total 20 Marks

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

A) Planning a presentation.

    i) First you have to define the **purpose** of the presentation.   **2**
What are the TWO (2) most common purposes for giving oral presentations?
- *to inform or to persuade*
- *collaborative presentation such as when leading a problem-solving or brainstorming session*
- *in rare circumstances, it could be to entertain the audience*

    1 mark per point to a maximum of 2 marks.

    ii) In the planning stages you need to develop a **profile of the audience** that will attend your **5** presentation.
Explain why it is important to know what the **emotional state** of people in the audience is likely to be.
- *Prepares you for their reaction*
- *Will they accept your message automatically or will they fight you every step of the way?*
- *Helps you to adjust your message and delivery*
- *In a live audience situation individual emotions can play off one another*
- *Worst case scenario: a herd mentality can take over where calm, accepting people can end up rejecting your ideas under the influence of the crowd's emotions*

    Up to 5 marks for explanation.

B) Organising a presentation.

    i) Describe how you would **define the main idea** of your presentation.   **3**
- *Work out the one message that you want the audience to take away with them*
- *Know what you want them to do after listening to you*
- *Compose a one-sentence summary that links the subject and purpose to the audience's frame of reference*
- *If the main idea cannot be expressed in a single sentence, it hasn't been defined clearly enough*

    Up to 3 marks for description.

    i) Give TWO (2) reasons why it is particularly important to **limit your scope** for oral presentations. **4**
    To ensure the presentation fits the allotted time:
- *There may be multiple presenters scheduled to speak one right after the other so there is little or no flexibility in time allowed for each*
- *If too much material, you may have to rush or miss out some of the content*
- *If you have too little material, you might have to ad lib to fill the time left*

    To make sure the content meets audience needs and expectations:
- *If too much detail at the wrong level is included, the audience may not understand it or bother listening to it*

    Up to 2 marks for each reason to a maximum of 4 marks.

C) Writing your presentation.

    i) What are the THREE (3) functions of an effective **introduction**?   **3**

- *To arouse the audience's interest in the topic*
- *To establish the presenter's credibility*
- *To prepare the audience for what will follow: the body of the presentation*

    1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.

    ii) Outline THREE (3) ways of **holding the audience's attention** during your presentation.   **3**

- *Relate the subject to audience's needs: people are interested in things that affect them personally*
- *Anticipate questions: address these in the body of the presentation, but hold some material back to use in questions and answers session*
- *Use clear, vivid language: use familiar words and concrete examples – people become bored if they don't understand the speaker*
- *Explain the relationship between the subject and familiar ideas: give people ways to categorise and remember your points*
- *Ask for opinions or pause for questions and comments: gives the audience a chance to switch from listening to participating and helps them engage with the message*
- *Illustrate your ideas with visual aids: enlivens the message and helps audience to remember it more effectively*

    1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 4 **Marks**

A) Social, political and financial events can dramatically affect the job market making it change from year to year.

   i) Briefly describe FIVE (5) things that employers now look for in job applicants.   **5**

- *People who are able and willing to adapt to the new dynamics of the business world*
- *Those who can survive and thrive in uncertain and fluid situations*
- *People who will continue to learn throughout their careers*
- *Team players with strong work records*
- *Leaders who are versatile*
- *Employees with diversified skills and varied job experience*
- *Expect college graduates to be sensitive to intercultural differences*
- *To have a sound understanding of international affairs*
- *People who have studied abroad, learned another language or can other wise demonstrate an appreciation of other cultures*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.

   ii) You have been successful in your application for employment. Why should you bother to continue improving your skills once you have a job?   **2**

- *To distinguish yourself from your peers*
- *To make yourself more valuable to your current and potential employers*

Up to 2 marks for answer.

   iii) List FIVE (5) ways in which you can continue to improve your skills.   **5**

- *Acquire as much technical knowledge as possible*
- *Build broad-based life experience and develop social skills*
- *Learn to respond to change in positive and constructive ways*
- *Keep up with developments in your industry and the economy: read widely*
- *Learn to see each job as an opportunity to learn more, and to expand knowledge and experience*
- *Take on as much responsibility as you can outside your job description*
- *Share what you know with others – don't hoard knowledge and hope to make yourself indispensable: helping others to excel is a skill*
- *Understand the big picture: knowing your own job inside and out isn't enough any more*
- *Understand that what counts isn't only who you know, but also what you know and who knows you*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.

B) You are looking for work and decide to write an **unsolicited application letter** to a local company that has not advertised any vacancies but for whom you would like to work.

   i) What is the function of the **opening paragraph** of an unsolicited application letter?   **2**

- *The letter is a form of self-advertisement so the opening paragraph should capture the reader's attention,*
- *convey clearly the reason for writing,*
- *and give the recipient a compelling reason to keep on reading*

Up to 2 marks for answer.

ii) What would you include the **middle section** (main body) of your unsolicited application letter? **4**

- *Include your strongest selling points in terms of potential benefit to the organisation*
- *Should build the reader's interest in you and create a desire to interview you*
- *Create a rounded picture of your potential contribution to the firm*
- *Back up assertions with convincing evidence*
- *Refer to enclosed résumé*

Up to 4 marks for answer.

iii) What are the TWO main functions of the **final paragraph** of your unsolicited application letter? **2**

- *To ask the reader for a specific action – an interview*
- *To facilitate a reply – make it easy for the reader to respond*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 2 marks.

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 5   **Marks**

A)   A formal report can have supplementary parts which provide information for readers looking for more details.

   i)   What does an **appendix** contain?   **1**

   - *Materials related to the report but not included in the text because they are too bulky, too lengthy or lack direct relevance*

   ii)   List FIVE things that might be contained in an appendix.   **5**

   - *Sample questionnaires*
   - *Sample forms*
   - *Computer printouts*
   - *Statistical formulae*
   - *Financial statements and spreadsheets*
   - *Copies of important documents*
   - *Complex illustrations*
   - *Glossary*
   - *Visuals if they are too large to fit on one page or are only indirectly relevant to the report*

   1 mark per example to a maximum of 5 marks.

   iii) What is an **index**?   **1**

   - *An alphabetical list of names, places, subjects mentioned in the report, along with the page numbers on which they occur*

   iv)   What is a **bibliography**? Why does a formal report need a bibliography as a supplement?   **3**

   A bibliography:
   - *A list of secondary sources consulted when preparing the report*

   1 mark for definition.

   A report needs a bibliography:
   - *To fulfill the ethical and legal obligation to credit other people for their work*
   - *To assist readers who may wish to research the topic of the report further*

   Up to 2 marks for reason.

B) You will have to write many **negative** business messages in your career.

   i) Give FIVE circumstances in which you would use the **direct approach** in a letter which contains bad news for its recipient. **5**
   - *The reader is aware of the possibility of negative news*
   - *The reader is not emotionally involved in the message*
   - *You know that the reader would prefer the bad news first*
   - *You know firmness is necessary*
   - *You want to discourage a response*

   1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.

   ii) When would you use an **indirect approach** in a negative message? **1**
   - *If the news is likely to come as a shock or surprise but you want to maintain a good relationship with the recipient*

   iii) What is the sequence of elements in a message using the **indirect** approach? **4**
   - *Buffer (a neutral or positive statement)*
   - *Explains the reasons*
   - *Clearly states the negative news (de-emphasising it as much as possible)*
   - *Closes with a positive statement*

   1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.

   Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 6 **Marks**

A) Problems in research can be avoided by careful planning.

i) List THREE (3) sources of information you would use at the beginning of your research to **explore the** **3**
general subject area.

- *Read industry publications*
- *Visit competitors' websites*
- *Interview experts within your own organisation*
- *Scan contents and indices of books on the subject*
- *Do an online search to identify terminology, key organisation and experts*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.

ii) Explain why it is a good idea to develop a **problem statement** at this stage of your research planning. **2**

- *It defines the problem or purpose of the research: the decision you need to make or the*
  conclusion you need to reach at the end of the process
- *If someone assigned you the research project, you can take this question back and ask*
  whether answering this specific question will meet his/ her expectations

Up to 2 marks for explanation.

iii) What is **information gap analysis**? **2**

- *An effective technique for identifying the specific pieces of information you need to acquire*
- *By focusing the researcher's effort, it helps to make best use of limited research time and*
  money

Up to 2 marks for answer.

iv) What are the FIVE (5) steps of an **information gap analysis**? **5**

1. *Clarify the decision or conclusion to be reached*
2. *Identify any sub-questions that would help you address that ultimate decision or conclusion*
3. *Identify the information you need in order to answer those sub-questions*
4. *Identify any existing information that you and others in your organisation already have that*
   might provide at least a partial answer
5. *'subtract' the step 4 from step 3to assess the information gap*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.

B) Describe FOUR (4) ways of evaluating the credibility of an Internet information source that would help you decide whether to include it in your project. **8**

Does it have a reputation for honesty and reliability?
- *Better to use information from a publication with a reputation for accuracy*
- *Find out how the publication accepts articles and whether it has an editorial board*

Is the source potentially biased?
- *Depending on what it stands for, an organisation's messages may be written with a certain bias which is neither bad nor unethical*
- *Its source of funding could influence its information output*

What is the purpose of the material?
- *Was it designed to inform others of recent research, advance a position or to stimulate discussion?*
- *Was it designed to promote or sell a product?*
- *You need to distinguish between advertising and informing*

Is the author credible?
- *Is s/he well-known in this field?*
- *Is the author an amateur or just a 'blogger' expressing an opinion?*

Where did the source get its information?
- *Many sources of secondary information get their material from other secondary sources; if so, the information can be checked out for accuracy elsewhere*
- *Find out who collected the data, the methods used, their qualifications and their professional reputation*

Can you verify the material independently?
- *Verification can uncover biases or mistakes*
- *Important when it goes beyond simple facts to include projections, interpretations and estimates*

Is the information current?
- *Check the publication date to ensure you are using the most current information available*
- *Business related fields change quickly and published information can become obsolete in a short time*

Is the material complete?
- *Have you accessed the entire document or only a selection from it?*
- *What has been excluded? Do you need more detail?*

Do the source's claims stand up to scrutiny?
- *Does the information make sense? E.g. do any projected outcomes add up and make sense?*
- *Other logical approaches*

Up to 2 marks for each evaluation method described to a maximum of 8 marks.

Total 20 Marks

Question	Learning Outcome						Business Communication Today (Bovée & Thill)	
	1 info flows	2 research info	3 written communication	4 inter-views	5 meetings & groups	6 presentations	*8th edition*	*9th edition*
Q1a) i) ii)	5						23/24	24/25
Q1b)		5					314	343
Q1c)			5				276	304
Q1d)					5		63	64
Q2a)					15		34	36
Q2b)					5		47	49
Q3a)						7	469	499
Q3b)						7	472	501
Q3c)i)						3	478	507
Q3c)ii)						3	480	509
Q4a)i)				5			519	P-2
Q4a) ii) iii)				7			522	P-5
Q4b)				8			554	583
Q5a)			10				446	475
Q5b)			10				234	265
Q6a)		12					305	334
Q6b)		8					306	336
Total marks	5	25	25	20	25	20		120marks
Recom'd %	16.67%	16.67%	16.67%	16.67%	16.67%	16.67%		
Actual %	4%	21%	21%	16.5%	21%	16.5%		