

NCC EDUCATION

**INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA
IN
COMPUTER STUDIES (v2008)**

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

8th JUNE 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.

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.

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

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| CANDIDATES <i>MUST</i> ATTEMPT THIS QUESTION |
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QUESTION 1**Marks**

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) List FOUR of the stages of a methodical research process for information. 4
- *Plan*
 - *Locate data and information*
 - *Process data and information*
 - *Apply your findings*
 - *Manage information*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*
- b) Technology makes it easier for work colleagues to communicate and to share information. In this context what does the term **flexible workstation** mean? 4
- *Many workers have abandoned PCs in favour of laptop computers.*
 - *Laptops can be taken home, used while traveling and/ or at meetings.*
 - *Back at the office a docking station transforms the laptop into a full-featured PC with network connection.*
 - *Workers without permanent desks sometimes share PCs that automatically reconfigure themselves to access the individual's e-mail and files.*
- Up to 4 marks for description.*
- c) Successful business communication across the world calls for knowledge of different cultures. Outline THREE characteristics of a **low-context culture** and give ONE example of this type of culture. 4
- *People rely more on verbal communication and less on circumstances and cues to convey meaning.*
 - *A speaker may feel responsible for transmitting the meaning of the message and may put sentences in chronological sequence to establish a cause and effect pattern.*
 - *Rules and expectations are usually spelled out through explicit statements such as "Please wait until I'm finished".*
 - *The primary task of communication in this type of culture is exchanging information.*
 - *Examples are: US, UK, Northern European countries such as Germany.*
- Up to 4 marks for characteristics and one example.*
- d) List the FOUR major categories of **informational reports** and give an example of each. 8
- *Reports to monitor and control situations: e.g. plans, operating reports, personal activity reports.*
 - *Reports for implementing policies and procedures: e.g. policy reports and position papers.*
 - *Reports to demonstrate compliance: e.g. quarterly and annual income tax reports.*
 - *Reports to document progress: e.g. status reports, lists of project risks and concerns.*
- Up to 2 marks for each category correctly named and example given to a maximum of 8 marks.*

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 2

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) Write a memorandum for trainee managers to tell them about a chairperson's role and duties when preparing for and running meetings. **12**

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;

1 mark at marker's discretion for incomplete headings/ format.

Introduction

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

1 mark for introduction.

Main body should include some of the following points:

- *Decide on the purpose of the meeting and ensure all participants know: informational or decision-making meeting?*
- *Select the right participants: too many and the meeting will be too long; for problem-solving invite only those who will help meeting reach its objective.*
- *Choose the appropriate time and facility: morning sessions usually more productive than afternoon; consider seating, room, lighting, temperature, acoustics, and refreshments.*
- *Set the agenda: distribute well thought out agenda to participants giving them time to prepare.*
- *Keep meeting on track: guide, mediate stimulate and summarise; but cut off discussion if need be to stay on schedule.*
- *Follow agreed rules: use a system of rules for speaking, proposing new items to discuss, voting and so on.*
- *Encourage participation: some will talk, others stay quiet – draw out quiet ones and ask for their input; tell the talkative ones to let others contribute.*
- *Participate actively: try to contribute to both the subject of the meeting and the smooth interaction of the participants; use listening skills and observation to size up interpersonal dynamics then use this to help group achieve its goals.*
- *Close effectively: verify objectives have been met or arrange for follow up work if needed; summarise conclusion of discussion or list the actions to be taken; ensure everyone agrees on the outcome.*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 8 marks.

1 mark available for communicative quality: Is it clear what the writer is trying to say? Is the handwriting and presentation acceptable?

Maximum overall total marks: 12

- b) Members of a team play various roles which fall into different categories: *self-oriented* roles are mainly about fulfilling the personal needs of the team member, while *team-maintenance* roles help everyone to work well together.

- i) Name and describe TWO **self-oriented** roles. **4**

- *Controlling: dominating others by exhibiting superiority.*
- *Withdrawing: retiring from the team by becoming silent or by refusing to deal with a particular aspect of the team's work.*
- *Attention seeking: calling attention to oneself and demanding recognition.*
- *Diverting: focusing the team's discussion on topics of interest to the individual rather than those relevant to the task.*

Up to 2 marks for each role named and described correctly to a maximum of 4 marks.

ii) Name and describe TWO **team-maintenance** roles.

4

- *Encouraging: drawing out others by showing verbal and non-verbal support, praise or agreement.*
- *Harmonizing: reconciling differences among team members through mediation or by using humour to relieve tension.*
- *Compromising: offering to yield on a point in the interest of reaching a mutually acceptable decision.*

Up to 2 marks for each role named and described correctly to a maximum of 4 marks.

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 3

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) *Ethics* are the accepted rules of conduct that govern behaviour in society.
- i) Briefly outline THREE characteristics of **ethical** communication. 3
- *Includes all relevant information.*
 - *Is true in every sense.*
 - *Is not deceptive in any way.*
 - *Messages are accurate and sincere.*
 - *Avoids language and images that exaggerate, discriminate or manipulate.*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.*
- ii) Briefly outline THREE characteristics of **unethical** communication. 3
- *Can include falsehoods*
 - *Can include misleading information*
 - *Can withhold important information*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.*
- b) Explain how each of the following methods can make the content of a message *unethical*.
- i) Plagiarism. 2
- *Presenting someone else's words or other creative product as your own.*
 - *Plagiarism can also be illegal if it violates a copyright, the legal protection for the expression of creative ideas.*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*
- ii) Selective misquoting. 2
- *Deliberately omitting damaging or unflattering comments.*
 - *Aim is to paint a better (but untruthful) picture of you or your company.*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*
- iii) Misrepresenting numbers. 2
- *Increasing or decreasing numbers.*
 - *Exaggerating, altering or omitting statistical data.*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*
- iv) Distorting visuals. 2
- *Making a product look bigger.*
 - *Changing the scale of graphs and charts.*
 - *Aim is to exaggerate or conceal differences.*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*
- c) What are the differences between an **ethical lapse** and an **ethical dilemma**? 6
- Ethical dilemma:*
- *a choice between alternatives that may all be ethical and valid.*
 - *occurs when the choice is unclear because two or more alternatives seem equally right or equally wrong.*
 - *or alternatives may lie somewhere in the grey area between clearly right or clearly wrong.*
- Ethical lapse:*
- *knowing that something is wrong and doing it anyway.*
 - *occurs when someone makes a conscious choice that is clearly unethical or illegal.*
 - *can be a tempting choice when under pressure to produce results or to justify decisions by deliberately misrepresenting a situation.*
- Up to 6 marks for differences clearly explained.*

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 4

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) Success in finding the right job can depend upon how carefully you plan, write and complete your *résumé* (sometimes known as a *Curriculum Vitae* or CV).
- i) Explain what a *résumé* is and describe its function. 3
- *Résumé is a structured, written summary of a person's education, employment background and job qualifications.*
 - *A persuasive business message intended to stimulate an employer's interest.*
 - *Aim is to get an invitation for interview where the employer will meet you and learn more about you.*
- 1 mark for definition and up to 2 marks for explanation to a maximum of 3 marks.*
- ii) Describe how you would arrange your personal information in a *chronological résumé*. 4
- *Work experience section dominates and is placed in the most prominent slot immediately after name and address (and objective, if used).*
 - *Jobs are listed sequentially in reverse order beginning with the most recent/ current employment.*
 - *Under each job, responsibilities and accomplishments should be described, giving most space to the most recent and relevant positions.*
 - *If you're just graduating with limited work experience, the order can be varied by putting educational qualifications before your experience focusing attention on the academic credentials.*
- Up to 4 marks for description.*
- iii) The chronological approach is the most common way to organise a *résumé* and most employers prefer it. What are the THREE key advantages of this approach? 3
- *Employers are familiar with the format and can easily find information.*
 - *It highlights growth and career progression.*
 - *It highlights employment continuity and stability.*
- 1 mark per advantage to a maximum of 3 marks.*
- b) A good *résumé* is organised around your **strengths** and should highlight the qualities that employers are looking for. However, you also have to be aware of **weaknesses** in your life and career.
- Describe how you could deal with each of the following problems when writing your *résumé*:
- i) Frequent job changes. 2
- *A number of short-term jobs of a similar nature can be grouped under a single heading.*
 - *If you've been a victim of circumstance e.g. made redundant because of a merger, find a way to convey this information or include it in the cover letter.*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*
- ii) Gaps in work history. 2
- *Mention relevant experience and education gained during the employment gap.*
 - *If gaps are due to a personal problem e.g. drug or alcohol abuse, or mental illness, use a cover letter to offer honest but general explanations about the absences.*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*
- iii) Lack of experience. 2
- *Mention related volunteer work.*
 - *List relevant course work and internships.*
 - *If appropriate, offer hiring incentives such as 'willing to work nights and weekends'.*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*

- iv) Job termination/ dismissal from employment. 2
- *Be honest, and show you are hardworking.*
 - *Counter concerns by providing recommendations and evidence of completed projects.*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*
- v) Criminal record. 2
- *A criminal record does not have to be disclosed on a résumé, but you may be asked about it on an application form or at interview.*
 - *Laws about what employers can ask vary from country to country.*
 - *If you are questioned, answer truthfully otherwise you could be dismissed later: be prepared with answers to explain mitigating circumstances, rehabilitation etc.*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 5

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

The two most common *primary research* methods are **surveys** and **interviews**.

a) **Surveys** can provide a lot of information but they are only useful when they are both *reliable* and *valid*.

i) What do the terms 'reliable' and 'valid' mean when describing the results of a survey? 2

- *A survey is reliable if it produces identical results when repeated.*
- *A survey is valid if it measures what it's intended to measure.*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 2 marks.

ii) For a survey to produce valid results, it is important to choose the right participants. What TWO things should you consider when choosing people to participate in your survey? 2

- *It must be a representative sample of the population of interest.*
- *There must enough people participating to have a statistically valid survey.*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 2 marks.

b) Many researchers prefer to use the Internet to conduct surveys.

i) List FOUR **advantages** that online surveys have over traditional paper-based techniques. 4

- *Usually faster to create*
- *Easier to administer*
- *Faster to analyse*
- *Less expensive*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.

ii) There are some disadvantages to online surveys. Briefly describe TWO of them. 2

- *Speed and convenience of online surveys can make researcher forget that survey still needs careful planning.*
- *Can suffer from sampling bias: survey captures the opinions only of the people who visit the site, but they might not represent the population that the site owner needs to know about.*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 2 marks.

c) **Interviews** to be conducted for *primary research* need careful planning to get useful results. 10

Outline FIVE guidelines to help a researcher write a good set of interview questions.

- *Think about sequence: arrange the questions in a way that helps uncover layers of information or that helps the subject tell you a complete story.*
- *Rate your questions and highlight the ones you really need answers to: if you start to run out of time during the interview, you may have to skip less-important questions.*
- *Ask smart questions: if you ask a question that your subject perceives to be less than intelligent, the interview could go downhill.*
- *Limit the number of questions: for a half-hour interview, plan on 15 to 20 questions, bearing in mind that open-ended questions can take longer to answer than closed questions.*
- *Edit your questions: try to make the questions as neutral and easy to understand as possible, then practice them beforehand to ensure you are ready for the interview.*

Up to 2 marks per guideline properly elaborated to a maximum of 10 marks.

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 6**Marks****Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.**

- a) Explain how performing oral presentations can influence your career success. **5**
- *Presentations give the opportunity to use all the communication skills learned.*
 - *E.g. research, planning, writing, visual design.*
 - *Use of interpersonal and non-verbal communication too.*
 - *A chance to demonstrate the ability to think on your feet.*
 - *Shows ability to grasp complex issues.*
 - *Ability to handle challenging situations.*
 - *Demonstrates all the attributes that executives look for when searching for talented employees to promote in the organization.*
 - *Oral presentations can let your personality shine through in a way that a written report can't.*
- Up to 5 marks for coherent and logical explanation.*
- b) To avoid over-loading your slides with information, handouts are a good way to give your audience extra material.
- i) Name and describe FIVE different types of material suitable to use in handouts for a presentation. **10**
- *Copies of presentation slides: audience members often like to have print versions of the slides used by the speaker, containing the speaker's comments about each slide and blank lines for note-taking.*
 - *Websites: list of websites related to the topic are useful; provide each site's URL and a one- or two-sentence summary of its content.*
 - *Case studies: summaries of case studies along with references and contact information.*
 - *Articles and technical papers: magazine articles that supplement the presentation's content and any technical papers that provide in-depth coverage of the material used in the presentation.*
 - *Complex charts and diagrams: charts and tables that are too unwieldy for slides/ screen or that demand thorough analysis; more detailed versions of the charts or graphics used for the presentation slides.*
 - *Other material: brochures, pictures, outlines, copy of the presentation agenda, any relevant and useful information.*
- Up to 2 marks per point to a maximum of 10 marks.*
- ii) Explain why it can be difficult for a presenter to decide on the best time to distribute handouts. **5**
- Timing can depend upon:*
- *the content of the handouts*
 - *the nature of the presentation*
 - *personal preference of the presenter*
- Pros and cons:*
- *some people prefer to distribute material before the presentation begins so that the audience can take notes.*
 - *but this allows the audience to read ahead instead of listening to the presenter.*
 - *this can be a problem if the subject is sensitive and an indirect approach was planned by the speaker as the audience will know the conclusions and recommendations before the speaker has built up to them.*
 - *other speakers tell the audience about the types of information that will be included in the handouts, but delay distributing anything until they've finished speaking.*
- Up to 5 marks for a well-balanced and coherent explanation.*

Total 20 Marks