

NCC EDUCATION

INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA
IN
COMPUTER STUDIES

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

11TH MARCH 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
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QUESTION 1**Marks**

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) Formal reports usually include a section called **recommendations**.
- i) What sort of information is likely to be found in a recommendations section? **1**
- *Recommendations identify how the problem could be solved*
 - *What action should be taken*
- ii) How are recommendations arrived at? **1**
- *Recommendations should be made on the basis of the findings of the report*
 - *They should flow logically from the conclusions*
- iii) How are recommendations usually expressed? **1**
- *Generally expressed in the future tense*
- b) A job candidate's body language can be as important as what she or he actually says in answer to the interviewer's questions.
- i) Describe the body language of a job candidate who is **not interested** in the interview. **3**
- Body language:*
- *A person who slouches in their seat, with their legs outstretched, their hands in their pockets, looking out of window*
 - *Answers in a monotone*
 - *Yawning*
 - *Other appropriate example(s)*
- Up to 3 marks for description.*
- ii) Describe the body language of a candidate who is **very interested** in the interview. **3**
- Body language:*
- *Sitting straight up in seat*
 - *looking straight at interviewer (eye contact)*
 - *smiling etc*
 - *Other appropriate example(s)*
- Up to 3 marks for description.*

- c) The **secretary of a committee** has many duties and responsibilities. Briefly describe FIVE of them. 5
- *Ensures that lines of communication between committee members and the organisation as a whole are kept open*
 - *Administrative matters dealt with in consultation with the chair person*
 - *Chooses appropriate people to attend a meeting*
 - *Select convenient time, date and place for the meeting*
 - *Prepare and send out the agenda with any background material*
 - *Take notes during the meeting to produce minutes*
 - *Produce and distribute minutes of the meeting*
 - *Booking the venue*
 - *Ensuring there is sufficient seating*
 - *Provision of presentation equipment*
 - *Provision of paper and pencils*
 - *Provision of refreshments as necessary*
 - *Other duties*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*
- d) Explain why people who are expert in summarising business information are very useful to senior managers. 3
- *Information overload means there are large amounts of material in different media that need to be examined*
 - *Pressures on time and performance mean senior managers do not have time to evaluate all the information available*
 - *Effective summaries enable management to understand the key findings of the research and to request further, more detailed information on any aspect that might be of particular interest*
 - *Alternative points*
- Up to 3 marks for explanation.*
- e) Briefly describe THREE security problems with communicating by email. 3
- *Can be intercepted*
 - *Deleted information from a PC can be recovered*
 - *Lap top PCs vulnerable to theft and stored information and messages accessed*
 - *People print out emails and leave them on view*
 - *PCs may be left logged on and unattended allowing others to access the email accounts*
 - *Alternative points*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.*

Total 20 Marks

CANDIDATES MUST ATTEMPT FOUR FURTHER QUESTIONS

QUESTION 2**Marks****Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.**

- a) Your company has advertised the job of Marketing Assistant and you have been asked to join the panel to interview candidates for the post. **5**

Prepare FIVE questions to ask the candidates. Your first question should help each candidate to relax and be easy to answer. The remaining four should be 'open' questions designed to encourage the interviewees to give full and informative answers.

- *Opening questions: possibly about the journey to the interview or the weather etc.*

Subsequent questions should be 'open' questions typically beginning 'what', 'why', 'when', 'how', 'tell me...' or similar. Examples:

- *"Tell me about yourself"*
- *"Tell me about your current role..."*
- *"What do you consider to be your greatest strength/ weakness?"*
- *"What interests you about the position you've applied for?"*
- *"Can you give me an example of when you had to manage your workload to meet conflicting deadlines?"*
- *"What are your career plans, and how does this job fit in?"*
- *"Do you have any questions for me?"*

1 mark for appropriate opening question plus 1 mark for each subsequent well designed question up to 4 marks. [Maximum total 5 marks overall].

- b) You have just interviewed three candidates for the job and it has been decided to appoint Miss Jane Farr to the position of Marketing Assistant. **15**

You now have to write to Miss Farr to tell her that she has got the job.

The letter should:

- offer Miss Farr the job
- give a starting date for working
- state where and to whom she should report
- mention the inclusion of an information pack for new employees
- ask her to confirm acceptance of the offer within a specific period of time

Begin the letter on a new page of your answer booklet and use a formal business letter format.

Award up to five marks for each of the following categories to a maximum of 15 marks. The following table is a guide.

	<i>1 mark</i>	<i>3 marks</i>	<i>5 marks</i>
<i>Content, relevance and organisation</i>	<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>
<i>Communicative quality</i>	<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>
<i>Accuracy of language</i>	<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>

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 3

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) There are four stages of development that newly-formed groups usually experience. Describe each of these stages:

i) Forming

4

- *The stage when the group first comes together*
 - *Behaviour is polite and safe, members look to leader for guidance*
 - *Little conflict as members are keen to be accepted*
 - *Members are guarded in their opinions and reserved*
 - *Impressions and views of other group members begin to be gathered*
 - *Controversy, serious topics and feelings are avoided*
- One mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks for description.*

ii) Storming

4

- *Competition and conflict emerges in relations between members*
 - *Factions or sub-groups form, personalities clash and issues are debated fiercely*
 - *Questions about rules and responsibilities arise*
 - *Conflicts about leadership, structure, power and authority*
 - *May be little communication between group members: some remain silent whilst others try to dominate*
 - *Group needs to move to a problem solving mindset in order to move to the next stage of development*
- One mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks for description.*

iii) Norming

4

- *Sub-groups recognise the advantage of working together so conflict disappears and there is a much stronger spirit of co-operation*
 - *Members more confident about expressing views and openly discussing these with the entire group*
 - *Level of trust increases and group becomes more of a unit as members have a sense of belonging*
 - *Ideas are shared, feedback is asked for and given, and possible actions explored*
 - *Creativity becomes higher as information is shared on a personal and task level*
 - *Generally the members feel good about being part of the group*
- One mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks for description.*

iv) Performing

4

- *People work independently, in sub-groups or as a total unit*
 - *Free exchange of ideas and information*
 - *High degree of support for individuals from the rest of the group*
 - *Group becomes productive because members are task oriented and people oriented*
 - *Morale is high and there is loyalty between members*
 - *Not all groups reach this stage*
- One mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks for description.*

- b) Explain how knowledge about group development could help you when you become a member of a newly-formed group. **4**

The candidate's answer should demonstrate an understanding of the way group theory might work in practice.

Although there are no prescribed answers for this question, explanations could include elements of the following: effect of conflict; evolution of personal relationships; anticipation of norming and performing stages; morale levels etc.

Up to 4 marks for an explanation.

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 4

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) You recorded a message for your secretary to send out as a notice, but she was feeling unwell and made a lot of spelling and punctuation mistakes. 10

Write out the following notice correctly.

The company managment is decided that, with affect from next wensday, their will no longer be a single thirty minuets brake for staff durring there shift's, in edition to the one-our lunchbrake. Instead of this, their will be too brake's of fifteen minuets each, one durring the morning and one durring the afternoon.

This is to promote effiience throughout the company.

The passage should be corrected as follows:

*The company **management** has decided that, with **effect** from next **Wednesday**, **there** will no longer be a single thirty **minute break** for staff **during their shifts**, in **addition** to the one-hour **lunchbreak**. Instead of this, **there** will be **two breaks** of fifteen **minutes** each, one **during** the morning and one **during** the afternoon.*

*This is to promote **efficiency** throughout the company.*

1/2 mark per correction to a maximum of 10 marks.

- b) You have bought some audio equipment from a local store and were very impressed with the quality of service given by the sales assistant. You decide to express your appreciation in some way. **10**

You can use any of the following methods:

- contact the store manager by telephone
- go in and speak to him face to face
- write a letter
- send an email message

Discuss the advantages **and** disadvantages of each of these communication methods **and** decide which one you think would be most effective in this situation. Give reasons for your choice.

There is no 'right' answer to the question but the answer should include pros and cons of each method of communication followed by a logical choice supported by two reasons.

Telephone call

- *quick and easy for the caller, but leaves no record*
- *manager could be too busy to talk or might forget the conversation*

Face to face conversation

- *more effort involved for the customer*
- *manager again might be busy and unavailable*
- *manager might not concentrate on content of message and fail to pass it on to the assistant*
- *face to face better than 'phone because can read body language and ensure message has been understood (feedback)*

Write a letter

- *more effort for the customer than other methods*
- *letter can be read by manager at leisure and take time to assimilate information*
- *a formal method of communication which provides a permanent written record and so there is more chance that the message reaches the assistant*

Send an email

- *easy for the writer assuming the email address is known or easy to find*
- *provides a record of the communication*
- *if manager receives a large volume of email, the message might be overlooked*
- *if message received, read and understood an email is easy to pass on to the assistant*
- *manager might not read emails regularly*

Up to 2 marks for description of advantages and disadvantages of each method to a total of 8 marks plus up to 2 marks for reasons for final choice [Maximum total 10 marks overall].

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 5

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) You have been asked to write a report for your organisation.
- i) Give FOUR reasons why you have to record the sources of information used in the published report. **4**
- *Credits the person who created the original material*
 - *Shows the readers that your content or argument is supported by other credible secondary sources*
 - *Readers can explore the topic in more detail if they wish by going to the quoted sources*
 - *If you are working in a large organisation your reports might be used by colleagues in the future and in different organisations*
 - *Avoids accusations of plagiarism*
- 1 mark per reason to a maximum of 4 marks.*
- ii) Briefly describe THREE ways that you could show acknowledgment of sources of information in the published report. **3**
- *Footnotes – appear at the foot of the page on which the information is used*
 - *Endnotes – appear at the end of the report*
 - *Bibliography – list of sources used in the report*
 - *Other form of acknowledgement*
- 1 mark per method to a maximum of 3 marks.*
- b) During your research for the report you have found some useful information on the Internet but you know that a lot of web-based information can be unreliable.
- i) Describe in detail how you would decide whether this Internet source of information should be included in your report. **10**
- *Is it a recommended website or a link from such a website?*
 - *Does it have a reputation for honesty/ reliability/ accuracy? Is the content peer reviewed such as in an online journal?*
 - *Is the source potentially biased? Its source of funding could influence its output. In order to interpret an organisation's information you need to know its point of view.*
 - *What is the purpose of the material? Was it designed to inform others of recent research, advance a position or to stimulate discussion? Or was it merely promoting a product i.e. advertising?*
 - *Is the author credible? Is s/he well-known in this field or an amateur or just a 'blogger' expressing an opinion?*
 - *Where did the source get its information? It is most likely to be from a secondary and so can be checked out for accuracy elsewhere*
 - *Is the information current? Check the publication date. Business related fields change quickly and information can soon be out of date*
 - *Do the source's claims stand up to scrutiny? Do the projected outcomes make sense?*
 - *Other logical approaches*
- Up to 10 marks for description.*
- ii) What THREE pieces of information should you include in any acknowledgement of Internet information sources? **3**
- *Author*
 - *Website address*
 - *Date the website was accessed*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.*

Total 20 Marks

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

- a) Explain why **feedback** is essential for successful communication. **5**
- *To be successful, communication has to be a two way process; feedback is evidence of the completion of the communication cycle*
 - *The success of a message can only be measured by the effect it has on the receiver; feedback is the receiver's response to the message*
 - *Feedback is needed to confirm understanding*
 - *Feedback ensures that the desired response is made or action is taken*
 - *If there is no response/ no feedback to a message, the sender knows that follow-up is required to attempt to complete the communication cycle*
- Up to 5 marks for explanation.*
- b) Communication within an organisation can be very complex and people often have to decide whether to pass on information or to keep it to themselves.
- i) Explain why a manager might not share information with other people. **5**
- *To preserve confidentiality or trade secrets*
 - *Some information may be shared only on a 'need to know' basis : consequently it must be withheld from some members of staff*
 - *May see subordinates as a threat to power or authority: deliberately withholding information reduces the potential for others to progress*
 - *Manager may be overburdened with work and forget to pass on information, but not consciously withhold it*
 - *Message may become distorted in the telling so that the real information doesn't reach its target*
 - *Other logical answers*
- Up to 5 marks for explanation.*
- ii) Explain what benefits there might be for an organisation if a manager shares information with the staff. **5**
- *Helps others to take responsibility*
 - *Improves decision-making*
 - *Encourages effective downward communication*
 - *There may a legal requirement to do so e.g. local agreement with Trades Union or local representative*
 - *Other logical answers*
- Up to 5 marks for explanation.*
- iii) Describe how poor communication might affect a business and its workers. **5**
- *Failure of formal channels of communication result in dependency on informal communication which might be inaccurate and/ or misleading*
 - *Employees may not know what they should be doing (or not doing)*
 - *Impacts on morale*
 - *Decreases motivation*
 - *Possible negative effect on goods or services produced by the company*
 - *Poor public image of organisation leading to decrease in demand for goods/services*
 - *Other logically argued outcomes*
- Up to 5 marks for description.*

Total 20 Marks