

**NCC EDUCATION**

**INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA  
IN  
COMPUTER STUDIES**

**BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**

**10<sup>th</sup> JUNE 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) i) List THREE health problems that an employee might experience as a result of using a desktop computer system for long periods at work. 3
- *Back strain*
  - *Shoulder pain*
  - *Repetitive strain injury (RSI)*
  - *Eye strain*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.*
- ii) Identify THREE possible causes of the health problems you have listed in part (i). 3
- *Bad posture*
  - *Lack of formal training in keyboard use*
  - *Unsuitable desks and chairs*
  - *VDUs not maintained regularly to ensure clarity of screen display*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.*
- iii) Briefly describe FOUR actions that an organisation can take to help employees avoid these types of health problems. 4
- *Provide free regular eye tests*
  - *Provide ergonomically designed furniture*
  - *Provide training to adopt correct posture when involved in keyboard work*
  - *Ensure appropriate workstation arrangement*
  - *Maintain equipment regularly*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*
- b) i) What is the purpose of **note-taking**? 3
- *To provide a brief written record of longer pieces of work*
  - *To remind you of what you have read or heard at a particular time*
  - *If you were concentrating and understood the material when taking the notes, the rest of the information can be reconstructed from memory*
- Up to 3 marks for explanation.*
- ii) Why are the **first** and **last paragraphs** of a chapter in a book likely to be the most useful for note-taking? 2
- *First paragraph tells you what the chapter is about*
  - *Last paragraph usually gives a summary of the chapter's contents*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 2 marks.*
- c) i) What is a *histogram*? 1
- *A graphical representation of a frequency distribution*
- ii) Describe FOUR features of a *histogram*. 4
- *Looks similar to a bar chart*
  - *Frequency of the bar is represented by its area rather than its height*
  - *Both axes show numbers*
  - *Vertical axis shows frequency*
  - *Horizontal axis show the elements or groups of elements*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*

**Total 20 Marks**

**QUESTION 2**

**Marks**

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

a) Describe the differences between **commissioned** reports and **routine** reports.

**5**

*Commissioned reports:*

- *One-off reports with a specific purpose*
- *Also known as investigative reports because they usually require research with the resulting information summarized in an easy to read format*
- *Conclusions are an essential element of commissioned reports; recommendations are only included if asked for at the outset*
- *Examples of commissioned reports are: researching potential markets, forecasting demand for a new product, investigating increase in staff turnover*

*Routine reports:*

- *Progress reports issued on a regular basis e.g. weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually*
  - *Of a standard format so that it is easily identifiable by the recipient; frequently a pre-printed form is used for a regular report*
  - *Purpose is to give the reader adequate and accurate information*
  - *Do not include conclusions or recommendations: should be sufficiently comprehensive to enable the reader to reach own conclusions and then go on to make informed decisions*
  - *Examples: school report; production report; maintenance report*
- Up to 5 marks for description of differences.*

- b) You are arranging a short holiday as a gift for your parents. You have made a telephone booking for hotel accommodation for them in your country’s capital city in two weeks’ time. The hotel now requires confirmation of the booking in writing. 15

Write a letter in an accepted business format to the hotel confirming the arrangements.

To prevent any misunderstandings, you must include complete and clear information referring to the arrangements made. Therefore, the letter must include the following information:

- the date accommodation is required
- the number of nights’ accommodation
- the type of room
- the names of the people coming to stay
- a request for flowers and chocolates to be in their room on arrival

Invent any information that you need.

**Award 0 - 5 marks for each of the following categories to a maximum of 15 marks.**

**If any aspect of the letter totally fails to fulfil the requirements of a particular category, award NO marks for that category.**

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

**Total 20 Marks**

**QUESTION 3**

Marks

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

Recruiting organisations ask for different things in their job advertisements when inviting people to apply for vacancies.

- a) Compare Curriculum Vitae (CVs) with application forms as methods of selecting candidates for job interviews. **4**
- *Application forms are produced by the company with set questions designed to acquire all necessary information*
  - *CV is a document produced by the candidate and may not contain all the information required*
  - *Standardization of application forms makes it easier to compare applicants as the same information is given in the same order by each candidate*
  - *Application forms have to be printed and sent out by company which costs time and money – although online recruitment now makes this cheaper and easier*
  - *Other valid points*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*
- b) Why might a **recruitment agency** prefer CVs to application forms? **3**
- *CVs are versatile: can be kept on file and used for a variety of different vacancies and companies*
  - *Easier for a candidate to email a CV than to fill in a different form for each vacancy with the same agency*
  - *Information can be sent and received more quickly*
  - *Other valid answer*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 3marks.*
- c) A job advertisement specifies that applicants send CVs rather than application forms. Briefly describe FIVE **advantages** that this could give a job applicant. **5**
- *Produced by the candidate so provides an opportunity for a marketing exercise to sell him/herself*
  - *Information included can be more detailed than that asked for on an application form and arranged to the writer's specification*
  - *Possible to emphasise different aspects of experience and/or education to suit each application*
  - *Opportunity to omit certain information that might not help in the application*
  - *A functional format CV allows writer to highlight particular strengths and experience by arranging them in an order which supports the job target*
  - *Other valid points*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*
- d) List EIGHT points which must be covered in a **job application letter**. **8**
- *Job title and any reference number or post number*
  - *Where you read about or heard about the vacancy*
  - *Why you are interested in the post*
  - *Why you are qualified to do the job*
  - *Why your education, experience and skills are appropriate for the job*
  - *Personal attributes which demonstrate how well you will fit into the organisation*
  - *Refer to enclosed CV and/ or any other documentation you may have included*
  - *End by expressing the desire to attend for interview*
  - *Ensure that all requirements specified in the vacancy information have been covered*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 8 marks.*

**Total 20 Marks**

**QUESTION 4**

Marks

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

a) Describe FOUR ways in which organisation charts could help to make organisational communication more effective. **8**

- *Formal communication is established within an organisation's structure and routed through official channels: organisation charts are a visual representation of the structure*
- *Official channels of communication are founded on working relationships and reporting lines such as direct and indirect line relationships, lateral relationships and so on which are clearly shown on the charts*
- *Charts can indicate accountability and responsibility of individuals in the organisation: essential information in the event of enquiries, disciplinary matters or disputes*
- *Size and geographical spread of an organisation can impact on its ability to communicate internally and externally: chart can give a clear impression of these factors*
- *Planned organisational change or its implementation are other factors affecting organisational communication: charts can illustrate the possible effects on channels of communication by a proposed change; actual change should be documented in the form of amended organisation chart showing new arrangements; it is important to keep charts up to date*
- *People at all levels on a vertical organisation chart can see the hierarchical arrangement and identify who needs to know any particular information: who must know first, then who should know, and then who could know*
- *Other logical examples*

*Up to 2 marks per point well described to a maximum of 8 marks.*

b) Explain the key differences between **tactical** and **operational** decisions. **6**

- *Tactical decisions are made by middle managers and are concerned with allocation of resources available to meet the objectives set by strategic decision-makers*
- *Managers break strategic information into steps or stages of action*
- *Risk is limited and emphasis is on the control of a main functional area*
- *Concerned with what happens in a 12 month period and with meeting targets within an allocated budget*

*1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.*

- *Operational decisions are taken at supervisory/ junior management level under clearly defined rules and within available resources*
- *Can occur daily using very up to date information such as the quality of performance of machinery and operatives, and the consumption of materials*
- *Operational decisions could be made by computer using the relevant data; tactical decisions are not so scientific because of the unpredictability of the outside world on which the organisation depends*

*1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.*

c) Business messages can fail for a variety of reasons.

6

Name AND briefly describe THREE **barriers to communication (noise)** that can make communication difficult or impossible.

- *Distractions: physical distraction such as bad telephone connections, poor acoustics, illegible writing or printing, uncomfortable furniture any of these can affect the way messages are prepared and delivered and the way the audience interprets them.*
- *Emotional/ personal problems: rationality is weakened*
- *Information overload: sheer number of messages can mean that it is difficult to discriminate between useful and useless information*
- *Perceptual differences: individual perception affects interpretation of information which can distort meaning of the message*
- *Language differences: could be different nationality or use of specialist vocabulary or jargon which is not understood by recipient*
- *Deceptive tactics: deliberate distortion such as omission of crucial information, exaggeration, downplaying risks*
- *Other valid answers*

*Up to 2 marks per description to a maximum of 6 marks.*

**Total 20 Marks**

**QUESTION 5**

Marks

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

Some of your managers have asked for guidance to help them run meetings more confidently.

- a) To help these managers conduct successful meetings, write some guidelines about the chairperson's role and duties. Give your answer in the form of a **memorandum**. **16**

*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 e.g. As a result of recent requests from some members of staff, I am providing guidance on how meetings should be led*

*Up to 2 marks for introduction.*

*Main body should include some of the following points:*

- *Chairperson should be prepared for the meeting and be familiar with procedures*
- *Practical preparation for the meeting e.g. authorizing and checking agenda*
- *Open and close the meeting; ensure a quorum is present; convey apologies; approving minutes*
- *Manage time carefully so that the meeting starts and ends on time*
- *Keep to the agenda and ensure all items of business are dealt with fairly/ impartially*
- *All attendees should be clear about the objectives of the meeting and the person leading the meeting should steer the discussion toward these aims*
- *Ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute*
- *Keeps discussions to the point*
- *Stops anyone taking over the meeting and keeps order when there is disagreement*
- *Sums up discussion at the end*
- *Checks everyone understands what has been agreed*
- *Work with the secretary in compiling agendas, drafting minutes and calling meetings*

*1 mark per point to a maximum of 10 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) Conflict is a natural part of any team experience and can be a problem. However, when handled correctly conflict can improve a team's performance. Briefly describe FOUR ways that conflict might make a team **more** effective. **4**

- *Important issues are forced into the open*
- *Attempts to resolve conflict can increase members' participation*
- *Develops self-control: personality differences have to be set aside to make progress with the work*
- *Highlights importance of considering other party's needs*
- *Encourages exchange of opinions and information*
- *Can improve communication generally as members have to listen to each other and ask questions to help understand each others' needs*
- *Generates creative ideas for the solution to a problem*
- *Underlines need to reach compromises or mutually acceptable solutions*
- *If viewed as the 'storming' stage of group development, 'norming' can't be far behind*

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

**Total 20 Marks**

## QUESTION 6

Marks

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

- a) You have recently graduated from a business college and have been asked by your old school to give a presentation to senior pupils about research skills. 15

Prepare a **structured short presentation** about research skills. Include various information sources that students might use AND explain the importance of recording publication details (referencing) of sources in written work.

**Overall structure:**

**Must have an introduction, a main body and a conclusion**

**Up to 3 marks for structure.**

### **CONTENT**

**Introduction should include:**

- **Who the speaker is**
- **What s/he is going to speak about**
- **Why s/he is going to speak about that particular topic**

**Up to 3 marks for content of introduction.**

**Main body:**

- **What do I know about the subject already? Who do I know who can help me? i.e. using people as a resource**
- **Description of paper based information sources such as books, newspapers, specialist journals and periodicals, abstract services**
- **Services provided by libraries and learning centres**
- **Description of computer based information sources such as CD Roms, Internet, data banks, computerised catalogues**
- **Primary and secondary research**
- **Other relevant points**

**1 mark per point about information sources and research to a maximum of 5 marks.**

- **Reasons for documenting sources**
- **Plagiarism**
- **How to reference/ document information sources in written work**
- **Other relevant points**

**1 mark per point relevant to documenting sources to a maximum of 3 marks.**

**Conclusion:**

- **Should summarise main points and come to a tidy finish**

**1 mark for conclusion**

**Maximum overall total 15 marks.**

- b) There are a number of steps to follow when preparing a summary of written material. The first is to check that you understand your instructions or terms of reference. Briefly outline another FIVE steps of the procedure. **5**
- *Read the material to get an idea of the general sense*
  - *Identify and make notes of the key points which are relevant to the terms of reference*
  - *Write out a rough draft using your own words*
  - *Check the number of words in the draft and reduce if necessary*
  - *Re-read the draft to check it still makes sense and is grammatically correct*
  - *Write out or type up a fair copy of the summary making further improvements if needed*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*

**Total 20 Marks**