



NCC EDUCATION

**INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA
IN
COMPUTER STUDIES**

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

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

8TH MARCH 2009

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.

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

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 rounded up to a whole mark.

SECTION A

CANDIDATES *MUST ATTEMPT THIS QUESTION*

QUESTION 1

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- A) List FOUR (4) preparation tasks that will make your business meeting successful. 4
- *Identify the purpose of the meeting ahead of time*
 - *Select the right participants for the meeting*
 - *Choose the time and facility carefully*
 - *Set a clear agenda*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*
- B) The introduction to a presentation should address THREE (3) goals: what are they? 3
- *To arouse the audience's interest in your topic*
 - *To establish your credibility*
 - *To preview your message – to prepare the audience for the body of your presentation*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.*
- C) Make a five-point checklist as a guide for creating **negative messages**. 5
- *Choose the best approach: direct or indirect*
 - *For an indirect approach, open with an effective buffer but don't mislead the reader into thinking the news might be positive*
 - *Provide reasons and additional information: explain why news is negative*
 - *Clearly state the bad news: state the bad news as positively as possible*
 - *Close on a positive note: express best wishes without being falsely positive*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*
- D) Briefly describe FOUR (4) ways that employers look for job candidates. 4
- *Look within their own organisations/ existing staff to promote*
 - *Referrals from people they know and trust/ personal contacts*
 - *Use an employment agency or search firm/ headhunter*
 - *Send representatives to college campuses to conduct student interviews*
 - *Review unsolicited résumés*
 - *Solicit applications from the general public, through their own websites, job boards and/ or by a variety of advertising*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*
- E) Outline briefly FOUR (4) reasons why it is important not to over-use technology if you wish to achieve effective business communication. 4
- *Technology is an aid to interpersonal communication, not a replacement for it*
 - *Technology cannot think for you or communicate for you, nor can it replace essential skills that you may lack*
 - *e.g. spellchecker will run words through the dictionary, but it doesn't know whether the words are being used correctly*
 - *The number of possibilities in many technological tools can get in the way of successful communication*
 - *e.g. presentation software can overload with special effects and obscure the message*
 - *If technological systems are not adapted to an organisation's/ user's needs, people won't use the technology successfully or at all*
- 1 mark per reason to a maximum of 4 marks.*

Total 20 Marks

SECTION B

CANDIDATES *MUST ATTEMPT FOUR QUESTIONS* IN THIS SECTION

Marks

QUESTION 2

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) Teams typically go through five phases before becoming effective. Briefly describe each of the following phases of team evolution:
- i) Orientation 2
- *members socialise and establish their roles*
 - *they begin to define their task or purpose*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*
- ii) Conflict 2
- *members begin to discuss their positions and become more assertive in establishing roles*
 - *if members have been selected to represent a variety of viewpoints and expertise, disagreements are a natural part of the process*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*
- iii) Brainstorming 2
- *members air all the options and discuss the pros and cons fully*
 - *at the end of the phase, members begin to settle on a single solution to the problem*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*
- iv) Emergence 2
- *team members reach a decision*
 - *consensus is reached when a solution is found that is acceptable enough for all members to support (even if they have reservations)*
 - *consensus will happen only after everyone has had an opportunity to communicate their positions and feel they have been listened to*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*
- v) Reinforcement 2
- *group feeling is rebuilt and the solution is summarised*
 - *members receive assignments for carrying out the group's decision and make arrangements for following up on those assignments*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*

- b) Formal meetings will have a person to record the minutes.
- i) Define the term *minutes*. **2**
- *A summary of the important information presented*
 - *A record of the decisions made during a meeting*
- Up to 2 marks for definition.*
- ii) List EIGHT (8) key elements that should be included in the minutes of a formal meeting. **8**
- *List of those present*
 - *List of those invited but did not attend*
 - *Times the meeting started and ended*
 - *All major decisions reached at the meeting*
 - *All assignments of tasks to meeting participants*
 - *All subjects deferred to a future meeting*
 - *Objective summaries of all important discussions*
 - *Names of those who contributed major points*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 8 marks.*

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 3**Marks****Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.**

- a) Discuss the *pros and cons* of each of the following methods of delivering a presentation.
- i) Memorising the speech. 4
- *Unless you are a trained actor you should avoid trying to memorise a speech, especially a long one as you might forget your lines*
 - *It might sound stilted*
 - *To address audience questions as you go, you have to be flexible enough to adjust your speech as you go*
 - *Memorising the opening, or a quotation, or concluding remarks can boost confidence and strengthen the delivery*
- Up to 4 marks for answer.*
- ii) Reading a copy of the speech. 3
- *If it is a technical or complex presentation, it might be best to read it*
 - *If you decide to read it out, practice enough so that eye-contact can be maintained with the audience*
 - *Use triple spacing, wide margins and large type; you can also include stage cues such as 'pause', 'lower voice', 'raise hands' and so on*
- Up to 3 marks for answer.*
- iii) Speaking from notes. 3
- *Usually the most effective and easy delivery method to use with note cards, an outline or visual aids*
 - *Gives you something to refer to but still allows for plenty of eye-contact, interaction and improvisation in response to audience feedback*
 - *Use stiff note cards: nervousness is more easily exposed by shaking sheets of paper*
- Up to 3 marks for answer.*
- b) Briefly describe FIVE (5) techniques you can use to appear more confident in front of an audience. 10
- *Prepare more material than necessary so that the extra knowledge will reduce nervousness*
 - *Rehearse the presentation to become as familiar as possible with the topic and so, less likely to panic*
 - *Think positively: see yourself as a polished professional and your audience will too*
 - *Visualise your success and tell yourself you are ready and able to handle any situation that might arise*
 - *Take a few deep breaths and remember that the audience wants you to succeed*
 - *Be ready by memorising the first sentence of your presentation*
 - *Be comfortable: dress appropriately for the situation; adjust the temperature of the room to suit you; reduce distractions*
 - *If you feel you are losing your audience, don't panic: pull them back by asking for their opinions or questions and involving them in the action*
 - *Keep going no matter what, because you will get better and more confident as you go along*
- Up to 2 marks per point to a maximum of 10 marks.*

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 4**Marks****Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.**

- a) Briefly describe the main differences between **informational** reports and **analytical** reports. 2
- *Informational reports offer data, facts, feedback and other types of information, without analysis or recommendations*
 - *Analytical reports offer both information and analysis, and they can also include recommendations*
- Up to 2 marks for answer.*
- b) i) Give FOUR (4) reasons why it is important to give directions to readers to help them find their way around a report. 4
- *Readers might miss important points or give up before they reach them*
 - *Important for people from other cultures and countries whose language skills and expectations might differ from yours*
 - *Readers lack the time or inclination to plough through a long report page by page (or screen by screen)*
 - *Nowadays people want to be able to browse quickly, find a section of interest and read the detail*
- 1 mark per valid reason to a maximum of 4 marks.*
- ii) Briefly outline FIVE (5) ways in which **headings** can help readers to understand a report. 5
- *Headings are brief titles that cue readers about the content of sections that follow*
 - *Improve readability and are useful markers for clarifying the framework of a report*
 - *Visually indicate shifts from one idea to the next*
 - *A combination of headings and sub-headings helps readers to see the relationship between subordinate and main ideas*
 - *A busy reader can understand the gist of a document merely by scanning the headings*
 - *In an online report, headings can be used to provide hyperlinks to other sections or websites*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*
- c) Traditionally, communication is either oral or written.
- i) Give THREE (3) examples of **oral** communication used in business. 3
- *Any 3 of the following: face-to-face conversations; speeches; presentations; meetings; employment interviews; performance evaluations; other valid examples*
- 1 mark per example to a maximum of 3 marks.*
- ii) Briefly outline THREE (3) **advantages** of oral communication. 3
- *Immediate feedback*
 - *Ease of interaction*
 - *Involve rich non-verbal clues (physical gesture and vocal inflection)*
 - *Emotion can be expressed*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.*
- iii) Briefly outline THREE (3) **disadvantages** of oral communication. 3
- *Participation restricted to those physically present*
 - *No permanent verifiable record provided – unless recording equipment available/ present*
 - *Reduce the communicator's control over the message*
 - *Often rule out the chance to revise or edit your spoken words*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.*

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 5**Marks****Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.**

- a) You have applied for a job and been asked to attend a job interview.
- i) Explain why it is important to learn as much as you can about the organisation before you go for the job interview. **3**
- *A serious candidate is expected to demonstrate at interview a thorough understanding of the organisation*
 - *Knowledge of company operations, its markets and its strategic and tactical challenges enables you to ask the right questions*
 - *Also enables you to prepare for certain questions from the interviewer*
 - *Helps you to understand if it's the type of organisation you'd like to work for*
- Up to 3 marks for explanation.*
- ii) List FIVE (5) types of information that you might learn from the **organisation's own website**. **5**
- *Company profile*
 - *Key executives/ executive biographies*
 - *Press releases*
 - *Financial information/ annual reports*
 - *Products and services*
 - *Locations and divisions*
 - *Company 'mission'*
 - *Employee benefits*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*
- iii) Give FOUR (4) examples of **other information sources** that you could use to find more information to help you in the interview. **4**
- *Competitors' websites*
 - *Industry-related websites*
 - *Marketing materials: e.g. brochures, catalogues*
 - *Company publications: e.g. newsletters*
 - *Newspapers; professional trade journals/ periodicals*
 - *Career centre*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*

- b)** You have had your interview and the company has offered you the job. Write a letter of acceptance using any standard format. **8**

Answer should be in the form of a standard business letter in a consistent format throughout i.e. blocked or modified block (indentations optional). Simplified format is not appropriate for this task.

- *1 mark for consistent layout/ format*

Letter layout must include:

Sender's address; recipient's name and address; date; job reference or heading; appropriate salutation and complimentary close; enclosure indication (if appropriate to content)

- *2 marks for all correct elements; if incomplete, 1 mark available at marker's discretion*

Tone should be positive/ enthusiastic

- *1 mark for tone*

Content of letter should include the following:

Introduction: a clear statement of the reason for writing; confirms the specific terms of the offer with a good news statement i.e. identify the job you are accepting and express thanks

- *1 mark for introduction.*

Main body of letter: any necessary/ miscellaneous details e.g. date you can start; any information requested by new employer

- *Up to 2 marks for main body.*

Conclusion: refer again to the good news and look toward the future or similar positive statement.

- *1 mark for conclusion*

Maximum 8 marks in total.

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 6**Marks**

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) Business research will be more effective if you follow productive research procedures. 5
 Give FIVE (5) reasons why it is so important to have a **proper plan for your research** before starting.
- *researching without a plan wastes time and usually produces unsatisfactory results*
 - *familiarising yourself with new subject areas before you start can save time*
 - *developing a problem statement will define the purpose of the research and guide the investigation*
 - *identifying information gaps will help to focus the research on the most critical questions*
 - *comparing what you need to know with what you already know will identify the most important research questions*
 - *prioritising your research needs is essential as you won't have time to answer every question you might have identified*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*
- b) **Processing the data** you have found is a key stage of research. Explain what each of the following statistical terms means:
- i) Trends 3
- *repeatable patterns taking place over time*
 - *includes growth, decline, and cyclical trends that vary between growth and decline*
 - *by observing data over a period of time, you can detect patterns and relationships that can help to answer important questions*
- Up to 3 marks for answer.*
- ii) Causation 3
- *shows cause-and-effect relationships between two factors where one of them causes the other to happen*
 - *can help to understand why something is happening*
 - *causation can be easy to assume, but difficult to prove*
- Up to 3 marks for answer*
- iii) Correlation 3
- *the simultaneous change in two variables that are being measured*
 - *e.g. customer satisfaction dropping when product quality drops*
 - *but may not necessarily be causally related*
- Up to 3 marks for answer*
- iv) Cross-tabulation 1
- *a technique for exploring the relationships between sub-sets of data*
- 1 mark for answer.*

- c) The final stage of business research is to apply your findings.
- i) You have been asked to **draw a conclusion** from the information you have found. Explain what this means. **3**
- *A logical interpretation of the facts based strictly on the information included in the report*
 - *A logical conclusion is one that follows accepted patterns of inductive or deductive reasoning*
 - *Must not be based on unproven premises, appeal to emotion, use generalisations or contain any other logical fallacies*
 - *May not obviously flow from the evidence: personal or organisation's values may influence conclusions*
 - *If conclusion is potentially biased for any reason, there is an ethical responsibility to explain this to the audience*
- Up to 3 marks for explanation.*
- ii) You have been asked to **make recommendations** from the information you have found. Explain what this means. **2**
- *An opinion based on reason and logic about the course of action that should be taken*
 - *Should be based on logical analysis and sound conclusions*
 - *Should be practical and acceptable to readers*
- Up to 2 marks for explanation.*

Total 20 Marks