

**NCC EDUCATION**

**INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA**  
**IN**  
**COMPUTER STUDIES**

**BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**

**13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2007**  
**(REVISED)**

**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) 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.*
- b) 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*
- c) 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.*

- d) 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.*
- e) 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.*

**Total 20 Marks**

**CANDIDATES MUST ATTEMPT FOUR FURTHER QUESTIONS**

**QUESTION 2**

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**

### QUESTION 3

Marks

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

- a) Name and describe FOUR items that would appear on a typical meeting agenda. 8
- **Apologies for absence:**  
*'apologies' announced of any member unable to attend; secretary will have been informed in advance by individual members.*
  - **Minutes of the last meeting:**  
*minutes to be read and approved; members will have received a copy beforehand; chairperson asks members whether the minutes represent a true record of the events of the last meeting.*
  - **Matters arising:**  
*if a particular item has been pursued since the last meeting, there may be something to report – this sort of matter is often deferred until later in the meeting.*
  - **Correspondence:**  
*any correspondence received since the last meeting that relates to the current meeting will be discussed.*
  - **Presentation of accounts (or Treasurer's report):**  
*Summaries of accounts are distributed to members who are asked to recommend adoption or approval*
  - **Special business:**  
*any exceptional item planned for discussion*
  - **Any other business:**  
*allows additional items to be introduced; members may feel some items have been overlooked or not been given sufficient attention; if the topic turns out to be important, it may well appear in its own right on a future agenda.*
  - **Date of next meeting:**  
*chairperson's duty, in consultation with other members, to decide upon the date of the next meeting; the current meeting is then formally closed and the finishing time recorded by the secretary.*
- Up to 2 marks per agenda item correctly named and described to a maximum of 8 marks.*

- b) During presentations members of the audience are usually polite and interested in what is being said. Occasionally, however, difficult situations arise when an audience member decides to disrupt the presentation.
- i) How could a presenter deal with someone who persists in interrupting the presentation? 4
- *Tell the person that even if there is some contention, it cannot be allowed to disrupt proceedings and that they can discuss any issues after the presentation.*
  - *Ask the rest of the audience if they want to respond to a negative point which has been raised.*
  - *Avoid entering into an argument but if situation becomes inflamed, adjourn for a comfort break to allow everyone to calm down.*
  - *Give any persistent disrupter a job to do, such as taking notes of the proceedings or distributing handouts.*
  - *Any other reasonable action to resolve the problem or retrieve the situation.*
- One mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*
- ii) What lessons might be learned when a presentation doesn't go according to plan? How might this affect the way someone prepares future presentations? 4
- *Self-reflection: presenter might consider the quality of the presentation content or his/her performance e.g. Did I not get the audience's attention? Why not? Was it boring? Was I boring?*
  - *Consider introducing evaluation sheets to get feedback on what went wrong and what went right in a presentation.*
  - *Plan for future presentations to use a flip-chart to list points, so if there is repetition of a contentious subject identify it on the chart and indicate that it has already been raised.*
  - *Ensure that the objectives for the session are clearly stated and displayed: when a disruption occurs, the presenter can point out that there is a danger that the objectives won't be met, and that other members of the group perhaps have an interest in the wider picture.*
  - *Any other appropriate ideas or responses.*
- One mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*
- c) At the end of the presentation it is common for a presenter to invite questions from the audience. Describe how a presenter would ensure that all questions are dealt with effectively and fairly. 4
- *Be observant so that you can be sure not to ignore anyone.*
  - *Take one question at a time, remembering which member of the audience needs your attention next.*
  - *Repeat any question you are asked so that you can be sure all the audience has heard it.*
  - *Separate multi-part questions, so that you can clearly answer each part in its turn.*
  - *If you do not know the answer, then say so: respect of the audience is retained if you are honest.*
  - *Tell them that you will find the answer and tell them how you will inform them.*
  - *At the end of the time allowed for questions, thank everyone for their questions and close the event.*
- One mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*

**Total 20 Marks**

**QUESTION 4**

Marks

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

- a) Formal **working relationships** affect the flow of information in an organisation. Describe each of the following working relationships and give ONE example of each type of relationship in a typical organisation.
- i) Lateral relationship 5
- *Exists between people on the same level or tier in the structure.*
  - *People in this relationship have to co-operate and work well together.*
  - *Supervisory influence may be required in the event of conflict.*
  - *This relationship indicates the extent to which a team spirit is prevalent.*
  - *Any appropriate example e.g. heads of department such as production manager and personnel manager; jobs within departments such as health and safety officer and industrial relations officer.*
- One mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks for description plus one mark for example to a maximum total of 5 marks.*
- ii) Line relationship 4
- *Sometimes known as 'vertical' relationship referring to arrangement of jobs on a vertical organisation chart.*
  - *Subordinate reporting to a superior and the superior issuing orders and instructions for the subordinate to act upon.*
  - *Accountability and responsibility are reflected very clearly in this relationship.*
  - *Indirect line relationship exists where other levels of supervision intervene e.g. managing director and a factory operative.*
  - *Any appropriate example e.g. factory operative and supervisor.*
- One mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks for description plus one mark for example to a maximum total of 4 marks.*
- b) The **structure** of an organisation will affect the flow of information and the way that decisions are made. 4  
Describe a **centralised** structure and explain how it might affect the decision making process in that organisation.
- *Decisions come from a central hub of senior management whose communication with each head of department or branch is strong.*
  - *The effect may be paternalistic, stimulating a feeling of belonging to a caring family.*
  - *Communication between department heads may be less strong being controlled by senior management at the hub.*
  - *Some students may draw a diagram to illustrate the structure: page 1-18 of the Business Communication textbook gives an example, but any clear and appropriate diagram should be given a mark.*
  - *The effect is that of strong communication links from the hub outwards but with weaker links between the departments negatively affecting information flows around the organisation and ensuring control from the centre.*
- Up to 4 marks for description AND explanation of the effect of the structure on decision making.*

- c) Briefly describe each of the following **reading techniques** and give an example of how it might be used.
- i) Light reading 3
- *Reading for enjoyment or your own interest.*
  - *E.g. reading a novel or newspaper.*
  - *Might be difficult to remember the detail of what has been read because the reading was for entertainment, not to be tested in an exam.*
  - *Information is not retained in long-term memory and is forgotten quite quickly.*
- Up to 2 marks for description plus one mark for example to a maximum of 3 marks.*
- ii) Receptive reading 3
- *A slow process because may need to read and re-read to understand main ideas and key points, but irrelevant sections can be skipped.*
  - *Taking notes helps to assimilate information.*
  - *Also known as reading for study: reading to understand and remember what has been read to be used in assignments, projects, exams.*
- Up to 2 marks for description plus one mark for example to a maximum of 3 marks.*
- iii) Name ONE other reading technique. 1
- *Skimming*
  - *Scanning*
- One mark for one technique correct named.*

**Total 20 Marks**

**QUESTION 5**

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. **5**  
Briefly describe FIVE **advantages** that this could give a job applicant.
- *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 6

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

Marks

- a) Your company has advertised the job of Personnel 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 Mr. John Brown to the position of Personnel Assistant. You now have to write to Mr. Brown to tell him that he has got the job. The letter should:

- offer Mr. Brown the job
- give a starting date for working
- state where and to whom he should report
- mention the inclusion of an information pack for new employees
- ask him 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**