

NCC EDUCATION

INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA
IN
COMPUTER STUDIES

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

2nd DECEMBER 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 ANSWER THIS QUESTION

QUESTION 1**Marks**

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) An **abstract** is a particular type of summary of business information. List FIVE key points that define an abstract. 5
- *Aimed at a technical or expert audience*
 - *Selective data usually from a long specialist paper or article*
 - *Is descriptive rather than informative (emphasises what you did more than what you found out)*
 - *May briefly touch upon the actual research methods if appropriate*
 - *Will use language appropriate to the audience, using the same level of technical language and expertise found in the original report*
 - *Tends not to use bullet points*
 - *Will usually be between 150 to 250 words*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*
- b) One of the advantages of using a **memorandum** is that the writer can get straight to the point of the message without unnecessary explanation. Explain why this is. 4
- *Memo has a simple standardized format*
 - *Memoranda are intended exclusively for internal use, the communication will be between people who have a working relationship*
 - *It is reasonable, therefore, to assume the reader already knows the basic facts*
 - *Recipient will understand company jargon, acronyms and abbreviations*
- Up to 4 marks for explanation.*
- c) Before you begin the application process for a job vacancy, what FOUR questions should you ask yourself? 4
- *Is there scope for personal development and advancement?*
 - *What do I know about this company?*
 - *Do I really want this job if I were to be offered it?*
 - *Am I ready to make an application?*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*
- d) Within any organisation every employee will use two different types of communication: formal and informal.
- i) Describe TWO characteristics of FORMAL methods of communication. 2
- *Established within structure and procedures of the organisation*
 - *Routed through official channels*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 2 marks.*
- ii) Give TWO examples of situations in an organisation where INFORMAL communication would be used. 2
- *Lateral relationships e.g. between people on the same level or tier in the organisational structure*
 - *Conversations about things other than work e.g. hobbies and interests, gossip, current affairs*
 - *At a social event e.g. works outing*
 - *Any other sensible example*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 2 marks.*

e) Name and briefly describe THREE different **leadership styles**.

- *Autocratic – dominates group members, imposing his/her will on the rest of the group to achieve a single objective*
- *Laissez-faire – leader exercises little control over the group, leaving them to sort out their roles and tackle their work*
- *Democratic – makes decisions by consulting group, whilst still maintaining control*
- *Collective – based upon equality within the group; guidance exerted through the power of persuasion*

1 mark per style named and described to a maximum of 3 marks.

Total 20 Marks

CANDIDATES MUST ANSWER FOUR MORE QUESTIONS

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

- a) Briefly outline FIVE characteristics of the *style* and *content* of an **effective persuasive document**, such as a sales letter, designed to persuade the readers to spend their money on your products. **5**
- *Anticipate arguments and objections and structure an argument that leads the reader towards your goal*
 - *Grab the reader's attention by starting in a strong and original way or by promising something e.g. better profits or products*
 - *Give some background or history explaining your reasons for writing the document*
 - *Describe the product or service showing how it meets his/her needs*
 - *Answer any questions that might be forming in the reader's mind*
 - *Close with an action statement telling the customer how to acquire the product or service*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*

- b) You work for a computer sales company. The Managing Director is worried that your customers are not returning to the company for after-sales services, such as repairs and upgrades, but are going to other companies for these services. **15**

Your manager has asked you to write a letter to each of your customers to try to get them to come back to your company for after-sales services.

Write a persuasive letter in which you:

- Thank the customer for buying a computer from you.
- Explain the services you can offer.
- Explain why these services are important.
- Describe your promotional offers.
- Tell customers when they can come.

Your letter should follow the format of a formal business letter.

Layout should be of a consistent format throughout i.e. blocked, semi-blocked or indented style.

Award from 0 up to five marks for each of the following categories to a maximum of 15 marks. The following table is a guide.

NB If any or all of the categories deserve NO marks, then award zero marks.

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

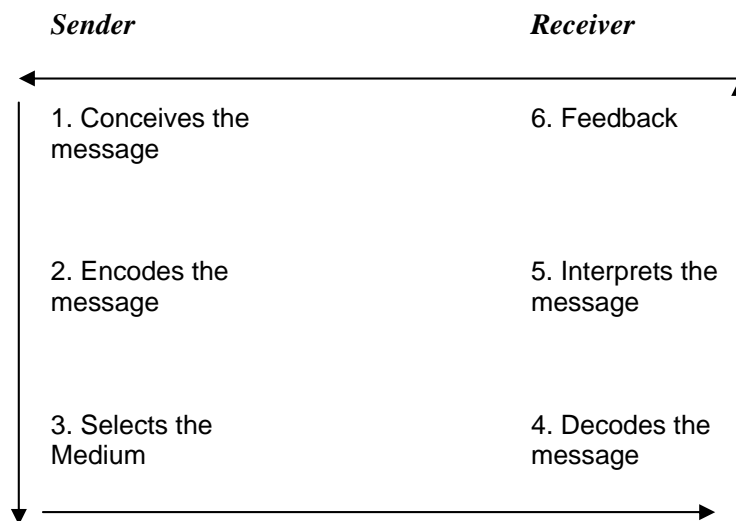
Total 20 marks

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

- a) Communication is a two-way process where a successful message is both transmitted and received.

10

Draw and clearly label a simple diagram to show the stages of a two-way communication process.



1 mark per correct stage named to a maximum of 6 marks.

1 mark for each heading to a maximum of 2 marks.

1 mark if all stages in correct order/ arrangement.

1 mark for neatness and clarity.

Overall maximum 10 marks.

- b) Developments in information technology have given many people the freedom to work away from their office base: they may work from home or whilst on the move.

10

Describe and discuss some of the problems that workers might experience with these new ways of working.

- *Technological failure/ breakdown of equipment or services*
- *Companies' increased ability to contact employees wherever they are has resulted in workers feeling that they can never escape work*
- *Effectively 'on-call' even when supposedly on holiday or off sick*
- *Gives rise to stress and stress-related illnesses*
- *Line between work and home becomes blurred*
- *Can become lonely working at home and alienated from colleagues and office culture*
- *Need for self-discipline working at home to set own deadlines and targets*
- *Likely to be many distractions at home*
- *Individuals need privacy and organizations have to accept that employees have a life outside the workplace*
- *The idea of the workplace has become confused because it is no longer in one place*
- *The term 'global office' is sometimes used to describe the workplace meaning that it is everywhere and no respecter of time*
- *There is a need to redefine 'workplace', 'office hours' and other phrases related to working life*
- *Other valid examples or argument*

Up to 10 marks for description of problems and meaningful discussion.

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 4

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

You have been asked to join an interview panel to recruit staff for your organisation.

- a) List FIVE documents that you should have available when interviewing the candidates. 5

- *Job description of the vacancy*
- *Person specification for the vacancy*
- *Original job advertisement*
- *Details of each candidate's application*
- *Notes of items in each application that you think need further explanation*
- *List of questions to ask the applicants*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.

- b) Give FIVE reasons why you should ensure that there are no interruptions such as visitors or telephone calls during the interview. 5

- *Gives the interviewee a bad impression of the interviewer and of the company*
- *Suggests that the interviewer is disorganized and unprofessional*
- *Will disrupt the flow of conversation*
- *Breaking off an interview to do something else sends a semiotic message to the interviewee saying "you are not as important as this other person or telephone call"*
- *Constitutes bad manners on the interviewer's part*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.

- c) To help them decide whether the candidate would be suitable for the job, each member of the panel has an assessment form which they use to measure the characteristics and abilities of each candidate. 10

Name and briefly describe FIVE characteristics and abilities which should be included on the assessment form.

- *Qualifications and experience – education, level of achievement; special prizes; any obvious weaknesses*
- *Physical characteristics – any defects of health or physique that might be of occupational importance; how agreeable the appearance, bearing and speech are; how important this is for the job*
- *General intelligence – there is a need to distinguish between knowledge and skill, and the candidate's general intellectual capacity; some people have intelligence they do not use, while others have limited intelligence but use it to their best advantage*
- *Special aptitudes – evidence of mechanical aptitude, manual dexterity, facility in use of words or figures*
- *Interests – are they intellectual, practical, physically strenuous, social, artistic? Level of ability. Are interests related to the skills needed for the job?*
- *Disposition – acceptable to others? Likely to influence others and in what way? Calm, cheerful, independent, predictable?*
- *Circumstances – able to travel? Free to transfer to another location?*

Up to 2 marks for each aspect named and described to a maximum of 10 marks.

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 5

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

a) What is a **notice of meeting** and what information should it include? 5

- *a communication sent well in advance of the meeting date to all those expected to attend giving notice of the forthcoming meeting*
- *sent by the person authorized to call the meeting (usually the Chairperson, but often signed by the Secretary)*
- *must show title of the meeting, date, time and place*
- *should specify whether agenda is attached*
- *must be signed and designation of signatory stated*
- *other valid points*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.

b) Name and briefly describe FIVE items that would appear on a typical **agenda for a meeting**. 10

- *apologies for absence:*
'apologies' announced by 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 and relating 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 and to close the meeting formally; the finishing time recorded by the secretary

1 mark for each agenda item named plus 1 further mark for description to a maximum of 10 marks.

- c) There are now many Internet-based meeting methods available. Give FIVE reasons why organisations still hold meetings where people gather together in person, sometimes from different parts of the country. **5**
- *bringing several people together for the specific purpose of discussion creates a special kind of relationship which cannot be reproduced electronically*
 - *drawbacks associated with some alternative meeting methods where there is no visual contact with other participants therefore no body language clues*
 - *audio only methods: few clues from vocal tones to the emotion being shown by the participant*
 - *participants reliant on Internet connection working properly*
 - *face to face verbal communication enables instant feedback and promotion of discussion and ideas*
 - *communication in person more likely to take place in an ordered manner*
 - *social aspect important to group relationships: encourages cohesiveness, sense of belonging, common purpose*
 - *if properly led/ chaired participants' individual strengths and talents are used to maximum effect*
 - *other valid points*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*

Total 20 Marks

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

- a) **Feedback** from your audience can help you to improve your presentation technique.

10

Using one full page of your answer booklet, design an **evaluation form** for members of the audience to complete. This should enable you to gather comments and opinions about the presentation and your performance.

Example on page 7-19 of Business Communication textbook, but this is not prescriptive.

- *Neatness – 1 mark*
- *Up to 2 marks for ease of completion by user i.e. is it clear what is asked of the user? Does it make sense and so on?*

Content might include any of the following:

- *topic of presentation/ name of presenter/ date*
- *style of delivery*
- *pace*
- *use of handouts*
- *use of visual aids*
- *response to questions*
- *presenter's knowledge*
- *rapport with audience*
- *other remarks*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.

- *Up to 2 marks for inclusion of a grading system (e.g. very good, good, satisfactory etc.) with a key to the grading/scoring.*

Maximum 10 marks in total.

- b) A presentation is usually structured in this order: introduction, main content, conclusions, and questions.

- i) List FOUR points that you should include in the **introduction** of a presentation.

4

- *introduce yourself*
 - *opening remarks*
 - *purpose of the presentation*
 - *outline the content to follow*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*

- ii) Give TWO points that you would include in the content of a **conclusion**.

2

- *summary of the main points*
 - *concluding remarks that you would like the audience to remember about the presentation*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 2 marks.*

- iii) Explain why it is usual to take questions at the **end** of a presentation.

2

- *so that your flow is not disrupted during the main part of your talk*
 - *logical point for the audience who will have absorbed information contained in the talk and had time to formulate queries*
- Up to 2 marks for an explanation.*

- Marks**
- iv) Presenters usually leave the **issue of handouts** until they have finished the presentation. Give TWO 2
reasons why this is usually the best time to do so.
- *Issuing them earlier distracts the audience*
 - *People will begin to read the handout rather than attending to what the presenter is saying*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 2 marks.*

Total 20 Marks