

NCC EDUCATION

**INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA
IN
BUSINESS**

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

SAMPLE 2006

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.

QUESTION 1

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

a) Briefly describe a **commissioned report** and give TWO examples of situations where a commissioned report might be asked for. **5**

- *'One off' report*
- *Also known as investigative report*
- *Prepared with a specific purpose in mind.*
- *Involves research and investigation*
- *Includes conclusions and recommendations*

Examples:

- *As part of a market research project*
- *To investigate levels of staff turnover*
- *To determine why complaints have increased*
- *A policy changing report*
- *To research potential markets*
- *To examine the cause of an accident in the workplace*
- *Other valid examples*

Up to 3 marks for description plus up to 2 marks for examples.

b) Reports need some kind of numbering system. Describe how the **decimal point referencing system** works. **5**

- *Major sections are given single Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3 etc) in sequential order*
- *The first level of sub-section within a major section will follow a decimal point (1.1)*
- *The first sub-section under that sub-section repeats the process (1.1.1)*
- *Theoretically it could be sub-divided many times within a report, but it is impractical and confusing to go beyond four numbers – i.e. three levels of numbers after the decimal point*
- *Some word-processing packages offer an 'autoformat' feature which can be set to award lines or paragraphs numbers automatically*
- *As points become more sub-ordinate, they are progressively indented across the page illustrating the relationships between them*

Up to 5 marks for description/illustration of the system.

c) If a job advertisement asks applicants to contact the company for an 'information pack' what would you expect to find in the pack? **5**

- *Details of the vacant post*
- *Job description*
- *Person specification*
- *Application form or instructions for applicants e.g. online applications*
- *Company literature/ information*
- *Contact details for an informal discussion*
- *Other valid answers*

Up to 5 marks for description.

d) The way you behave at a job interview will influence your prospective employer. Describe how you should behave in order to impress the interviewer. 5

- *Arrive on time, clean and conventionally dressed*
- *Wait to be asked to sit down.*
- *Sit properly: don't slouch or fidget*
- *Don't chew gum, eat or smoke*
- *Try to control any nervous habits you are aware of*
- *Try to stay calm, but don't take any tranquilising drugs or alcohol prior to the interview in the hope that it will help*
- *Always be polite*
- *Take the opportunity to talk on a subject that interests you, but don't bore the interviewer*
- *Prepare some sensible questions to use if asked*
- *On leaving, thank the interviewers for seeing you*

Up to 5 marks for description.

Total 20 Marks

CANDIDATES MUST ATTEMPT FOUR FURTHER QUESTIONS

QUESTION 2

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

a) You have to gather information for a course assignment. Describe in detail how you would approach the task and what information sources you could use. **10**

- *Are there any specific instructions as to what information is needed or how to gather it or what sources to use?*
- *Decide what information is needed: what do I want to know? What do I know about the subject already?*
- *Where might I find more information?*
- *Decide on a method of research and what skills will be needed*
- *Other valid answers*

Up to 5 marks for an answer demonstrating an understanding of planning and researching

- *Information sources: libraries for paper-based and electronic sources of information such as books, periodicals, abstract services, newspapers, CD ROMs*
- *The Internet – but only reliable websites*
- *People are resources too: talk to people and ask for advice from anyone who can help you with the task such as lecturers, fellow students or any other contacts you might have*
- *Contact organizations or companies relevant to the assignment*
- *Other valid answers*

Up to 5 marks for an answer demonstrating an understanding of potential information sources

b) You have collected lots of information for the assignment, much more than you need. Explain how you will decide what material to include and what to reject. **10**

- *Is it up to date? E.g. if you are dealing with a subject like computer technology where things change very quickly*
- *Is it accurate? If you have any doubt about the accuracy of the information, you should reject it. E.g. if it has been acquired from a personal web site on the Internet rather than an academic one*
- *Is it relevant? Does the information specifically relate to the enquiry? The material should be checked against the instructions*
- *Is it complete? Don't gloss over certain aspects of the project just because you have not researched them properly*
- *Avoid repetition of information just because you have found similar material from different sources*
- *Other valid answers*

Up to 2 marks per point to a maximum of 10 marks.

Total 20 Marks

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

a) When you are planning a presentation it can be helpful to know some things about the people who are going to be in the audience. Briefly describe FIVE things that you might want to know about the people coming to see your presentation. **10**

- *Who will they be?*
- *Will they be people who are senior to you, or your peers, or your subordinates?*
- *Will they come from outside your organisation?*
- *How many people will there be?*
- *What is their background and existing knowledge? E.g. are they specialist or non-specialist?*
- *What are their interests and values?*
- *Do they have a common language?*
- *Other valid answers*

Up to 2 marks per point to a maximum of 10 marks.

b) Explain how this type of information about the audience could affect your presentation and its content. **10**

- *Helpful in planning if you know what their aims and objectives are in attending your presentation*
- *Knowing why they are coming and what they expect to get out of the experience will influence the content*
- *If you can demonstrate in the first few sentences that you understand their concerns or needs, then you are far more likely to hold their attention for the remainder of the presentation*
- *If you can hold their attention, it is less likely that you will have problems with disruption etc.*
- *Aids practical arrangements such as seating, catering, handouts etc*
- *Other relevant answers*

Up to 2 marks for each answer which does not repeat the content of part (i) above to a maximum of 10 marks.

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 4

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) In any working group, there is always the possibility of conflict.
- i) Describe what might **cause conflict** within a group. 5
- *A breakdown of one or more stages in the communication process*
 - *Some interference along the channels of communication*
 - *Genuine misunderstanding between members*
 - *Personality conflict*
 - *History of disagreement between particular members*
 - *Other relevant answers*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*
- ii) Explain how these types of conflict can be dealt with by the group's members and its leader. 5
- *Problems should be brought out into the open and dealt with as soon as possible*
 - *Those in conflict have a duty to set aside personality differences in favour of getting on with the job*
 - *Group leaders should facilitate and recognise the talents of all concerned*
 - *Conflict should not be suppressed; negative feelings can be expressed and dealt with by the team members themselves*
 - *Dealing with and managing conflict can be a way of improving group performance*
 - *Other relevant answers*
- Up to 5 marks for explanation.*
- b) In your working life you will find it very useful to understand the ways in which groups, teams and individuals behave in the workplace. Discuss how these skills might help you in your future career. 10
- *In the course of your career you will be expected to deal with a wide variety of people and you will not be able to choose the people with whom you work*
 - *You will need to know how to deal with people within the organisation: those who occupy similar levels in the hierarchy to yourself, those in senior positions and those in more junior positions*
 - *You will need to know how to deal with people from other organisations, customers and the public at large*
 - *Work situations will demand your involvement in a group or groups, and you may need to adopt a strategy for coping with people you would not choose, in any other situation, as associates*
 - *The requirement to work with others stems from the need for particular talents and specialisms which need to be combined towards the success of a project or task*
 - *Most situations require a meeting of minds and talents in the workplace, the ability to recognise those talents in yourself and others is a valuable resource*
 - *Understanding the different characteristics of people or identifying 'team types' can assist planning of group work, understanding conflict and so on*
 - *Identifying your own 'team type' will lead to self-knowledge and might help in choosing an appropriate role or in career development*
 - *Other relevant answers*

Up to 10 marks for a coherent discussion of the subject demonstrating an understanding of the application and implications of what has been learned generally about working in groups.

Total 20 Marks

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

- a) Within any organisation every employee will become involved with two different types of communication: formal and informal.
- i) Describe the characteristics of **formal** methods of communication and give THREE examples of situations in an organisation where formal communication would be the norm. **5**
- *Established within structure and procedures of the organisation*
 - *Routed through official channels*
 - *Other relevant answers*
- Up to 2 points for description.*
- *Meetings*
 - *Dealing with customers*
 - *Superior/ subordinate interactions*
 - *Interviews*
 - *Any other sensible example*
- 1 mark per example to a maximum of 3 marks.*
- ii) Describe the characteristics of **informal** methods of communication and give THREE examples of situations in an organisation where informal communication would be the norm. **5**
- *Arises from incidental meetings, social situations and spontaneous gatherings*
 - *Informal methods should be supplementary to formal ones in an organisation*
 - *If informal communication dominates, there could be problems with formal communication channels*
- Up to 2 marks for description.*
- *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 example to a maximum of 3 marks*

- b) Advances in the use of computer and telecommunications technology have had a huge impact on the way in which information is collected and presented. **10**

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages that these advances have brought to business organizations.

Advantages:

- *Data processed faster, in greater volumes and with greater accuracy than possible with manual systems*
- *Information can be gathered from a variety of electronic sources, combined and presented as a composite document of text, graphics, images and distributed in electronic form*
- *Speedy and efficient: instant transmission of text etc via email*
- *Can incorporate most up to date information*
- *Creates a professional image*
- *Transmission of data is electronic as opposed to shifting paper around*
- *Other advantages*

Disadvantages:

- *Although management has to have access to more information to help in decision making, information overload can be a problem*
- *Automation of the office means a commitment to continual change*
- *Investment in hardware and software is on-going and never-ending because of the rapid pace of change*
- *Development of ever more sophisticated systems renders today's 'state of the art' equipment outdated almost as soon as it is put into use*
- *Greater need to ensure security of data against industrial spies/ hackers*
- *Need to prevent accidental display of an organisation's confidential data on the Internet*
- *Other disadvantages*

Up to 10 marks for detailed discussion.

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 6

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) Name and describe in detail FIVE items that appear on a typical meeting agenda. 10
- **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 and 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 and to close the meeting formally; the finishing time recorded by the secretary

Up to 2 marks for each agenda item named and FULLY DESCRIBED to a maximum of 10 marks.

- b) Explain why a meeting is more likely to succeed if it is run according to agreed **ground rules** and give **examples** of the sort of matters that ground rules might deal with. **10**
- *Every meeting needs rules*
 - *Rules range from the very rigid – such as for a disciplinary hearing – to casual for an informal meeting*
 - *Having rules to follow will help to avert conflict*
 - *If there is conflict, the rules will help to resolve it*
 - *If everyone signs up to the agreed rules, the group members will be less likely to contravene them*
 - *Fosters cohesiveness and shared aims where maybe few exist*
 - *Any other sensible reasons*

Examples of ground rules:

- *start on time*
- *finish on time*
- *no interruptions*
- *listen to each other*
- *take account of other people's contributions*
- *no mobile telephones*
- *no substitute members without agreement*
- *no smoking*
- *keep to agreed remit*
- *action items to be agreed at (or by) end of each meeting*

Up to 10 marks for a reasoned explanation including relevant examples - maximum of 5 marks for examples.

Total 20 Marks