

NCC EDUCATION

INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA
IN
COMPUTER STUDIES (v5.40)

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

8th JUNE 2008

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.

Suitable for IDCS v5.40 and IDB v2
Based on NCC Education's "Business Communication"

CANDIDATES *MUST* ATTEMPT THIS QUESTION

QUESTION 1

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) Explain the meaning of each of the following terms:
- i) Primary data 1
 - *Original raw information never before collected*
 - ii) Interview 1
 - *A formal conversation or discussion aimed to obtain information*
 - iii) Probability 1
 - *The total number of favourable outcomes divided by the total number of outcomes*
 - iv) Quorum 1
 - *The fixed minimum number of members of an organisation or society who must be present at a meeting for its business to be valid*
- b) Explain what a **commissioned report** is. 4
- *One-off report with a specific purpose*
 - *Usually requires research and investigation*
 - *Conclusions are an essential element*
 - *Recommendations only included if specifically asked for at the outset*
- Up to 4 marks for explanation.*
- c) Describe an **autocratic leadership style** and its effect on a group. 4
- *Leader dominates group members*
 - *Imposes his/her will on the group to achieve a single objective*
 - *Usually results in passive resistance from members*
 - *Requires continual pressure and direction from the leader to get things done*
 - *Generally this approach is not a good way to get the best performance from a group*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 4 marks.*
- d) Job advertisements sometimes ask applicants to contact the company for an *information pack*. List FIVE things that might be in the pack. 5
- *Details of the vacancy*
 - *Job description*
 - *Person specification*
 - *Application form or instructions for applicants e.g. online applications*
 - *Company literature/ information*
 - *Contact details for an informal discussion*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*
- e) Briefly describe THREE ways in which a **Chairperson's Agenda** is different from the normal meeting agenda sent out to other people invited to the meeting. 3
- *Includes additional notes and timings to help the chairperson lead and control the meeting*
 - *There is space for the chairperson to make notes*
 - *Any papers relevant to the planned discussions will be attached to the agenda*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.*

Total 20 Marks

CANDIDATES MUST ATTEMPT FOUR FURTHER QUESTIONS

QUESTION 2

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

a) Job applicants provide large amounts of information about themselves through application forms, letters and CVs. Explain why the **face-to-face interview** is still an essential part of the recruitment process. **8**

- *Does the candidate's appearance, demeanour and knowledge correspond to the information s/he has supplied about him/herself on forms etc?*
- *To see if the interviewer and interviewee can get along together*
- *Exchange of information is meant to be of mutual benefit. Both parties should learn from the exchange to enable each one to make decisions about suitability*
- *Opportunity for the interviewer to assess the candidate in various ways*
- *Self presentation i.e. manners and appearance helps employer decide how well they might or might not fit into the work team*
- *Disposition: is the person acceptable to others? Are they likely to influence others and in what way?*
- *Communication skills; body language*
- *How they deal with stressful situations; are they calm, cheerful, nervous?*
- *Physical characteristics: any health issues of occupational importance*
- *General intelligence*
- *Other valid points*

Up to 8 marks for a coherent explanation.

- b) You have been asked to design a new **job application form** for your organisation. The form must allow job seekers to include **all** the information needed for the recruitment process and which might normally be included in a CV and/or a letter of application. **10**

Using at least **one full page** of your answer booklet design a comprehensive **job application form** to fulfil these requirements.

The form should include any/all of the following fields of information:

- *heading/ logo*
 - *job title/ vacancy reference number*
- applicant's personal and contact details:*
- *name of applicant*
 - *address;*
 - *telephone number &/or email address*
 - *date of birth*

education details:

- *names of schools/ colleges*
- *dates attended*
- *qualifications/ awards achieved*

training/ courses taken since full time education ended:

- *institution*
- *dates attended*
- *additional qualifications gained*

details of previous/ current employment:

- *type of job*
- *employers' names and addresses*
- *dates of employment*
- *reasons for leaving previous employment*
- *previous salaries*
- *reasons for applying for this post*
- *relevant information concerning applicant's suitability for the job*
- *health information/ disabilities*
- *hobbies/ leisure pursuits*
- *referees names and addresses*
- *declaration concerning accuracy of information and applicant's signature and date*
- *other valid fields of information*

½ mark per point to a maximum of 10 marks

- c) Give TWO reasons why a Human Resources Manager might prefer a candidate to complete one of the company's own job application forms rather than send in a letter or CV. **2**
- *application forms are produced by the company with set questions designed to acquire all necessary information*
 - *CVs and letters are documents 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*
- 1 mark per reason given to a maximum of 2 marks.*

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 3

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) E-mail is a very fast way of sending information, but to communicate **effectively** there are some rules that you should follow.
- i) Why must careful consideration be given to the composition of the **subject lines** of business e-mail messages? **3**
- *Need to be descriptive: particularly important when e-mail is being sent to someone who receives large numbers of messages; the user might only open e-mails that look important or interesting*
 - *Should be brief: some e-mail systems might truncate long subject lines*
 - *Be creative with description: should not be a complete sentence, but should give a clear idea of the message content*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 3 marks.*
- ii) Why is it important to plan the **page layout** of business e-mail messages carefully? **2**
- *People find text harder to read on a computer screen than on a piece of paper*
 - *E-mail usually read in a document window with scrollbars which can make it difficult to follow the flow of a long paragraph*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 2 marks.*
- iii) *Netiquette* is a set of basic rules that e-mail users are encouraged to follow. Give FIVE basic rules of *netiquette*. **5**
- *Use capital letters and exclamation marks sparingly for emphasis as these are perceived as shouting*
 - *Do not quote back an entire message when only responding to one or two points*
 - *When forwarding a message put your comments at the top of the message*
 - *Do not overuse acronyms like BTW (by the way) or IMHO (in my humble opinion), not everyone is experienced with this jargon and the point of the message might be missed*
 - *Do not forward personal e-mail messages to a discussion group or distribution list without getting the author's permission first*
- 1 mark per point to a maximum of 5 marks.*

- b) You work in the Customer Services department of a sales company trading in small electronic goods on the Internet. Your boss Frank South has asked you to reply to this LETTER OF COMPLAINT received from a dissatisfied customer: **10**

*Kevin Trip
12 Temple Mount
Old Milton
NT34 5LE*

1 June 2008

*To: Mr F South
Customer Services Manager
Gadgets Galore
201 Oak Road
London
NW2 7RE*

Dear Mr South

Re: Orange Media Player Model NWF-898

On 1 February 2008 I took delivery of an Orange Digital Media Player Model NWF-898 purchased via the Internet from your company at a cost of \$550 including delivery.

I am very disappointed with this device because I have had problems with it from the beginning. In spite of several telephone conversations and e-mail correspondence with your service department about the problem no solution has been found. In March I was promised a replacement, but I still haven't received it.

This product is of very poor quality and was never fit for purpose and I require you to refund in full the cost of the player and the delivery charges: \$550 in total.

I look forward to your reply and refund within the next fourteen days. If I hear nothing at the end of the two weeks, I shall seek help from my solicitor.

Please contact me at the above address or by' phone 021 358963

Yours sincerely

Kevin Trip

Write a LETTER OF ADJUSTMENT to Mr Trip dealing with all the points made in his letter.

Letter should be coherent, legible and fulfil the purpose set out in the question.

Layout should be of a consistent format throughout i.e. blocked, semi-blocked or indented style and should include the following pieces of information:

- *Sender's address or letterhead*
- *Recipient's address*
- *Date and reference*
- *Subject heading*
- *Salutation and corresponding complimentary close*

Up to 2 marks for layout and headings. 1 mark at marker's discretion for incomplete content.

Content of letter should cover the following:

- *Statement of regret: acknowledgement and confirmation that the complaint is understood*
- *Cause of defect: explanation after investigation of problem*
- *Action to be taken: explanation of action to adjust the problem*
- *Apology: express hope that goodwill will be maintained*

Up to 2 marks per point to a maximum of 8 marks.

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 4

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) Business messages today can be conveyed by many different media e.g. e-mail, voice mail, telephone calls, text messages, letters, memos, notice boards and so on. **4**

Explain how having to deal with large numbers of messages in these many different forms might have a bad effect on communication in business.

- *Too much information can lead to information overload*
- *Information overload constitutes ‘noise’ in communication theory which can prevent effective communication*
- *Too many messages makes it difficult for employees to extract the most important data and can result in ill-informed decisions and/ or reduced productivity*
- *Companies’ ability to communicate with staff at any time e.g. at home, on holiday can create stress/ illness and resentment impeding the communication process*
- *Other logical points*

1 mark per point contributing to a logical explanation to a maximum of 4 marks.

- b) Advances in the use of computer and telecommunications technology have changed the ways that business and communication is conducted. **6**

Identify SIX positive effects of these advances in Information and Computer Technology on how a business operates today.

- *Speed of communication has increased so information can be processed faster*
- *Access to more/ different information can help with decision making*
- *Businesses can reach a wider audience*
- *Employees can become more productive*
- *The business can be more competitive*
- *Employees can work from home reducing overheads*
- *Computers can do repetitive jobs*
- *It may be possible to reduce the workforce, saving on costs*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 6 marks.

- c) **Informal** communication occurs during casual conversation and social situations. If this becomes the main method of communication, an organisation could have serious problems with its **formal** methods of communication.

- i) What might cause an organisation’s formal communication methods to fail? **5**

- *Management’s failure to ask for or to listen to feedback from the rest of the organisation*
- *‘No news is good news’: management can mistakenly assume that everything is working and communication is happening*
- *Organisation’s ability to communicate can be affected by its size and/ or its geographical spread*
- *Implementation of change to organisation’s structure can have an effect: different reporting lines so there is doubt as to who is reporting to whom, who needs to know and what do they need to know?*
- *Changes to procedures: lack of understanding/ failure of new procedures forces staff to resort to informal methods.*

Up to 5 marks for coherent explanation.

- ii) What can an organisation do to ensure that its formal communication methods work well? 5
- *Problems of size and spread can be dealt with by formation of smaller teams where ideas and knowledge can be easily shared to tackle well-defined tasks*
 - *Management should be prepared to recognize individual needs and talents when planning major re-organisations*
 - *Need to acknowledge the potential problems associated with change and make special efforts to ease the flow of information and to improve communication*
 - *Management should invite feedback and monitor the situation following any major change*
- Up to 5 marks for coherent description of remedial action.*

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 5

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

- a) Advice for preparing a presentation usually emphasises the importance of ‘knowing your audience’. **10**

Explain **in detail** how having lots of information about your audience can help you when preparing and delivering your presentation.

- *Any knowledge about the expected audience helps the creation of rapport between the speaker and the spectators*
- *Knowing why they are attending and what they expect to get out of the presentation helps you plan the content to suit these aims so satisfying their expectations*
- *The number likely to attend enables effective practical preparation e.g. size of room, number of chairs, handouts etc. Poor arrangements won't get the audience on your side.*
- *Knowing the status of the audience members such as whether they are seniors, peers or from outside the organisation will affect your choice of style and content e.g. to use specialist vocabulary or not/ what to explain or not, so making your presentation accessible to all*
- *Anticipating any opposing views they are likely to have prepares you for arguments and questions showing that you are well informed*
- *If you are ready for arguments or disruption you are more likely to keep cool, remain in control and maintain your dignity thus earning the respect of your audience*
- *Other valid points*

Up to 2 marks per point BUT ONLY IF point is properly explained and elaborated possibly with examples, to a maximum of 10 marks.

- b) During presentations members of the audience are usually polite and interested in what is being said but sometimes an audience member decides to interrupt the presentation. **4**

Outline FOUR things that a presenter could do to solve the problem of someone who persists in disrupting the proceedings.

- *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.

- c) A presenter will usually invite questions from the audience at the end of the event. **6**

Describe what a presenter can do to make sure that all questions are dealt with effectively and fairly.

- *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 6 marks.

Total 20 Marks

QUESTION 6

Marks

Throughout the question, please credit any valid alternative point.

a) Name SEVEN items that would appear on a typical meeting agenda and describe in detail what each of them means. 14

- *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; 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 properly described to a maximum of 14 marks.

b) A meeting is more likely to succeed if it is run according to agreed **ground rules**. Give SIX examples of the kind of statements that might make up ground rules for a meeting. 6

- *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*

1 mark per point to a maximum of 6 marks.

Total 20 Marks