BCS Higher Education Qualification

Diploma[1]

MAY 2021[2]

EXAMINERS' REPORT

IT PROJECT MANAGEMENT[3]

(delete all italics for final public version)

General comments[4]
The performance of candidate varied greatly between questions; it is critically important that candidates read the questions carefully and ensure they answer each part fully.

Table below to be copied for each question

Question number: A1
Syllabus area: 3.7
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes
56% of candidates attempted this question. • Many students described the *business roles* in the scenario (e.g. IT Manager, CEO) rather than *project roles* as required in part a). Many didn't even include the role of project manager. Project roles are well-defined in course texts and candidates need to be very familiar with them. • This had a knock on effect on part b)- incorrect project roles led to very low marks. • Candidates need to read the scenario carefully and provide a detailed response taking account of the skills, experience demands of current and proposed role, risk and alternatives available. Justifications for selection of staff for roles was almost non-existent. • Very few candidates attempted to provide a diagram of key project roles, or describe their responsibilities.

Question number: A2
Syllabus area: 1.4, 2.1
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes

39% of candidates attempted this question.
- Candidates generally distinguished correctly between Product breakdown structure and Work breakdown structure and provided diagrams.
- The better candidates used the key project stages identified in the scenario to inform their answer. Those who didn't often omitted important products or activities for this project.

Question number: A3
Syllabus area: 2.2, 2.3, 2.4
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes

86% of candidates attempted this question, and performance was generally strong.
- Most candidates were able to correctly draw an Activity-On-Node diagram showing dependencies, earliest start/finish times and they were able to correctly identify the critical path.
- Weaknesses were typically not showing the float for each node in the diagram and not providing a key for the elements shown in each node. Whilst a node has a generally accepted format, it is essential to make this explicit in an answer.
- Most candidates correctly identified the changes required in part b) but a significant number did not explain in detail how this affected each aspect of the node for D. Consequently, they lost marks, despite being able to identify that this modification caused an additional critical path. Good answers showed the revised node for task D
- For part c), Gantt charts were generally correct: weaknesses were typically in lack of provision of a key, and especially the lack of indication / labelling of float in the diagram.
- A few students drew Activity on Arrow diagrams instead of Activity on Node diagrams. These attracted no marks for part a).

Question number: B4
Syllabus area:
3.1 Team building theory and practice, structures, and responsibilities, including Belbin's team roles and Tuckman-Jensen stages of team evolution 3.4 Team management, motivation, retention
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes

For part a . Many candidates did not directly address the question in this part. Many answers tended to acknowledge the context but did not fully explore both strengths and weaknesses. For those candidates who did acknowledge Belbin and the classification of types, higher marks were obtained. For many candidates this part of the question was either ignored or given a cursory reference, this resulted in the loss of significant marks for the question as a whole

For part b performance was reasonably good with many answers indicating an awareness of the issues in staff management and motivation. Quite a few answers indicated little appreciation of motivation factors and tended to emphasise the use of penalties and coercion as a means of motivating team members, very few, if any marks were awarded for those answers

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Question number: B5

Syllabus area:

4.1   What to monitor and why: key project metrics related to time/progress. Costs. Scope/size of functionality -lines of code/function points. Quality – error reports

4.3   Project control through monitoring.

4.5   Types of report: exception, progress, and management reports

Total marks allocated: 25

Examiners' Guidance Notes

For part a Most of the candidates were unable to answer the question in a meaningful way, in only a few cases did candidates correctly identify the FP method and give an account of typical steps.

For part b Many candidates could not show the purpose of the project highlight report and were unable to correctly describe the contents. In some cases, a candidate would correctly describe the purpose but could not describe contents. In many cases candidates described the highlight report as a synopsis of the project description.

For part c Most candidates could describe some control strategies although many did not extend beyond a single control strategy. Most candidates achieved reasonable marks for this question, with a few gaining maximum marks for describing fully advantages and disadvantages of the three control strategy chosen.

Question number: B6

Syllabus area:

6.1   Definition of product quality and software quality

6.2   ISO 9001 and quality management systems: principles and features

Total marks allocated: 25

Examiners' Guidance Notes

Part a of this question asked for attributes of a product. Many answers tended to address issues of quality systems in general thus losing marks.

For part b Many answers tended to repeat answers made in part a and it was evident that many candidates were unable to extend those answers into general features of a quality management system in these cases marks were lost.

Part c had a specific requirement to address the principles of ISO9001. For many candidates this question was reasonably well answered with the key principles being outlined and described. In general part c proved a way for most candidates to gain overall higher marks for this question