Question number: A1
Syllabus area: 1.1 The concept of a service   1.2 Understanding customer needs   1.3 Achieving operational excellence   4.2 Service desk   4.3 Fault logging and problem management   4.4 Customer account management
Total marks allocated:
Examiners' Guidance Notes
Two-thirds of candidates attempted this question. Just over half got a mark of over 10 out of 25 with the average mark just under 10.   Overall for this question, candidates should have recognised the points distribution between part a) (15 marks) and part b) (10 marks) and have structured their answers accordingly – many did not with, for example, a report in part b) twice the length of their answer to part a).   **Part a)** - Many candidates referred to both the Help Desk and the Service Desk. While this gained some marks, the Service Desk is more usually the function that attempts to resolve the requirement rather than just log it. A related oddity is that many candidates referred to the help desk as a tactical function and the service desk as a strategic function. Not only is this just wrong, but was a misunderstanding of the meaning of strategic.   Most candidates did offer three activities, although some might not be considered critical. Use of practical examples was given by perhaps two thirds of the candidates.   The first two papers were exemplary and gained full marks. Sadly, all following candidates failed to live up to this!   Another notable characteristic of these candidates is their reference to problem management and root cause analysis being undertaken by the service desk. This is of course not ITIL, but seems to be how they differentiate between the 'help desk' – what we would refer to as call reception, and the service desk (albeit wrongly)   **Part b)** - Although most candidates drafted a report, the structure rarely contained more than a cover page or heading and a signature. There could/should have been an introduction, summary and conclusion.   Many candidates thought 'customer-facing' meant an onsite service desk. This is not strictly always the case, although on this occasion no marks were deducted.   Very few candidates appeared to understand the terms efficiency and effectiveness. Instead the majority of candidates focused on the fact that a good service would ensure repeat business.   Perhaps about half of the candidates actually gave examples of ways to achieve service excellence.

Question number: A2
Syllabus area:
5.   Availability management
5.1   Performance measurement
5.2   Change management
5.3   Configuration management and version control
5.4   Resource scheduling
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes

Examiners' Comments

Between 40% and 50% of candidates answered this question. This was answered a little better that A1, with an average pass mark of just over 10 out of 25 marks and 56% at or above this score.

Part a) - Quite a number of candidates saw the word 'policies' and simply came up with security policies such as Data Protection Act and GDPR – none of which were relevant for this question.

Part b) - Very few candidates showed awareness of the difference between effectiveness and efficiency. Some marks (not as many of course) were given for referencing policies related to efficiency in part a) and vice versa.

Surprisingly, very few candidates created an answer in part b) that was in the form of a document for a board (i.e. group of high-ranking managers)

Only the better candidates referenced configuration management, but these were very few.

Question number: A3
Syllabus area:
5.   Availability management
5.2   Change management
5.4   Resource scheduling
5.7   Shift and team organisation
6.1   Monitoring of resource usage
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes

Less than two candidates out of five tackled this question. The proportion getting above 10 out of 25 was the lowest for any question in the examination, but the average mark was the highest. This was because there were exemplary candidates who scored highly, thus pulling the average up.

Part a)

Two or three candidates actually gave exemplary answers, but in the main, the answers were weak, sometimes with little more than three one-line questions.

Part b)

There was usual challenge with 'memorandum'. This needs more than simply an appropriate title, and should include an introduction, conclusions and recommendations.

Question number: B4
Syllabus area:
6.3   Developing investment plans
6.5   Security
6.6   Business continuity plans and contingency planning
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes
This question was the most popular on the paper and attracted over 90% candidates. Generally this was a wise choice as over two-thirds achieved a mark at or over 10 out of 25 marks. There was however quite a lot of bunching around the 10 mark level with few achieving outstanding scores.

As has been the case in other sittings, a number of candidates did not have access to the full range of marks available as they did not provide the THREE measures required in part a). Where more than three were provided, they tended to be individually weaker and did not score well. Where the measures were too similar to one another, the marks were awarded as appropriate.

The memorandum format requested in part b) was intended to allow a wider scope for discussing implementation and benefits, although only a minority of candidates took full advantage of this opportunity.

Question number: B5
Syllabus area:
3   Business processes
3.2   Specific business processes required…
3.4   Definition of service features and performance targets
7.2   Contracts
9.1   Service level agreement
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes
This was the second most popular question and was answered by four candidates out of five. It was not that successfully answered with an average mark less than 10 out of 25 marks. The highest mark scored was lower than any other top mark in the other questions.

Service level agreements are a core element of service management in an IT environment and there is clear advantage in being skilled in their development and operation. It is regrettable that candidates did not perform better in relation to this. Many of the answers provided by candidates were simply too shallow and/or vague to be awarded significant marks. Some material was of a very low standard, and only attracted very few marks.

Few of the arguments presented in part b) were well structured and in general they failed to explore the different requirements of service user and service manager.