BCS Higher Education Qualification

Diploma in IT

23 March 2020

EXAMINERS' REPORT

IT Project Management

General comments[1]
Question A3 was by far the most popular, and A2 the least popular. A1 was usually answered best.

Question number: A1
Syllabus area: 1.4, 1.5, 1.9
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes
Part a (15 marks). This part question expected a memorandum format, but not all candidates provided this. Most answers distinguished clearly three main advantages and three main disadvantages of acquiring and installing an off-the shelf web-based system to replace the existing in-house system, bearing in mind the urgency of the requirement and the limited experience of the current in-house team (see section 1.4 of the standard text) Some of the descriptions of each point lacked depth. Occasionally candidates mis-read the question and presented two sets of advantages and disadvantages, one set for an off-the-shelf system and the other set for a replacement system developed in-house. **Part b (10 marks)** On the whole this part was not answered well. It required a clear description of relatively standard system development activities, tailored to suit an off-the-shelf system (see 1.4.7). Sometimes qualities were discussed, not activities.

Question number: A2
Syllabus area: 2.4, 2.5, 4.8
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes

This question is based on section 2.5 of the standard text.

Overall, answers displayed a very limited understanding of detailed resource allocation, particularly the need to consider both task dependences and differing resource costs. Also, is the primary project need overall duration or overall cost?

Part a (10 marks)

On the whole this part was very badly answered. It was not clear whether the few candidates who attempted this question understood the process of allocating resources to each of the identified development tasks in a project.

Part b (11 marks)

The first section of this part expected a table similar to example 2.1 showing each of the available resources and how they might be assigned to each of the tasks, bearing in mind task dependencies displayed in the question's A-on-N diagram. Most candidates provided only a brief description of such an allocation without referring to task dependencies.
The second section required a simple table of staff types, weeks worked, weekly rates and total cost per staff types, with overall totals.

Part c (4 marks)

This required the two tables produced for part b to be amended to meet the change in resource capability. Again not well answered.

Question number: A3
Syllabus area: 1.8, 1.3, 6.7
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes
Part a (8 marks) This part question related to documentation required at or after go-live, excluding those required before sign-off, such as user documentation (needed for training and acceptance testing). Answers were often quite vague. Importance was rarely discussed. **Part b (8 marks)** Acceptance testing is a key activity, particularly when accepting a system supplied by an external vendor. This question referred to different areas of acceptance testing, such as functionality of the new system, with an explanation of the importance of each. **Part c (9 marks)** This part question required a list of quantitative measures, such as number of faults recorded per week. **NOT** the standard project success criteria: time, cost and quality

Question number: B4
Syllabus area: **1.4 Stages of a development project** **1.6 Project management using a lightweight or agile approach with particular reference to incremental and iterative development approaches**
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes
In part a of this question most candidates were able to describe the three stages of a development project. High marks were achieved by those candidates who gave a full description and made reference to the main points that characterise each of the stages. Minimal marks were given to candidates who simply provided single line descriptions. Some answers showed that there was lack of clarity between the feasibility study and requirements stages of a development project. For part b of this question many candidates did not fully explain the advantages and disadvantages of using an incremental development method within the context of an agile process. Many answers gave an explanation of the approach that was not specific to an agile process, so gained minimal marks. In general answers did show an understanding of the key differences between the incremental and iterative methods. Those answers which did address the agile context of the question gained maximum marks. Overall, this question was well answered but did highlight the need for candidates to demonstrate a better understanding of the lightweight approach to project management.

Question number: B5
Syllabus area: **6.2 ISO 9001 and quality management systems, principles and features** **6.5 Quality assurance and quality control, project audit, and quality audit** **6.6 methods of enhancing quality, the different types of testing, inspections, reviews, and standards**
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes
Part a of this question required a description of five of the main principles of ISO 9001. This part of the question was generally well answered with candidates gaining higher marks for providing five good and comprehensive descriptions. Some candidates correctly identified five main principles but failed to go on and give an adequate description thus losing marks for making answers too brief. Part b of this question required an explanation of quality assurance procedures and processes. Many candidates tended towards an explanation that didn't focus on the assurance aspects of quality but referred to specific ISO 9001 systems. Answers that addressed roles of various actors within the quality procedures would gain maximum marks as would answers that mentioned the importance of quality assurance process requirements such as those required in the specification or implementation stages of a project. Very few answers gave a good explanation giving maximum marks although most candidates gained marks by showing an understanding of the general QA process. Part c of this question concerning peer review showed that many candidates could not articulate a clear explanation of the peer review process within the quality procedure framework of quality monitoring. Very few answers were comprehensive with giving advantages and disadvantages of the process and very few answers explained fully the meaning of a peer review. Many candidates took the opportunity for gaining some marks by giving a terse definition of peer review and giving at least one description of an advantage or a disadvantage that showed an appreciation of the process.