Examiners' commentary 2018–2019

CO3353 Software engineering project management – Zone B

General remarks

Overall candidates performed well on this examination. Answers to questions were mainly well structured and candidates had taken care to read the questions and provide appropriate answers.

However, there is still room for improvement on this paper in that there is a tendency for some not to take sufficient care in the presentation of their answers. For example, each question or sub question should always be started on a new page.

Another drawback in the performance of this paper was that candidates failed to pay sufficient attention to their handwriting. In many instances the examination script proved very difficult for the examiners to read. Candidates are reminded that it is very important that they present their work in a clear and legible way.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

a. This question was based on a scenario. The question was only worth three marks and therefore simply required candidates to identify the particular lifecycle model that they would choose, for example, the Waterfall Model.

b. This part of the question was in general satisfactorily answered. Good answers to this part of the question identified the key pertinent characteristics in the case study and selected the life cycle model accordingly. They also discussed the benefits of the model that they had selected as well as pointing out the disadvantages of using other methods within the context of this particular case study.

c. A range of answers were suggested for the **four** requirements elicitation difficulties that might be experienced in this project. There was no one correct answer to this question as a range of issues were suggested and were acceptable, such as stakeholders not knowing what they want or political factors getting in the way.

Question 2

a. Many candidates did not choose this question. It was a straightforward question requiring a discussion on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Good answers to this question provided a drawing of the hierarchy and then discussed each of the levels contained within it. This was a very appropriate way of approaching the question. Some excellent answers also described the advantages and limitations of the framework.

b. There were many interesting suggestions as to how a manager could meet the needs of their staff at each level, for example, to support the need for Self-Actualisation by ensuring personal development or the need for esteem by showing people they are valued by the organisation. It was

necessary for candidates to make suggestions for each level as requested in the question.

c. This question was only worth 3 marks and therefore required only succinct answers to be provided. For example, candidates could have stated that interaction-oriented people are motivated by the presence and actions of co-workers and work well in groups.

d. This question was poorly answered. Most candidates failed to define the People Capability Maturity Model as a framework for assessing how well organisations manage the development of their staff.

Question 3

a. This was a straightforward question and the topic is discussed in the CO3353 subject guide. Varied answers were acceptable, and could have included some of the following questions:

- Do we have good tools for doing things this way?

- Do we understand how to use them?

- Do we know what we are trying to achieve?

A shortcoming in answering this question was that some candidates failed to provide **five** issues to be discussed and only provided two or three issues.

b. This question was well answered. Candidates provided both descriptions of each of the UML diagrams as well as an illustration of each.

c. In general candidates found this question challenging. The question asked for a 'critical' assessment of the value of developing architectural models, so there was a requirement to identify both the advantages and disadvantages of this practice.

Question 4

a. There were a wide range of answers suitable for this question as there are a wide variety of risks associated with a software engineering project. Good answers to this question tended to classify these risks into various categories, such as those risks arising from the fact that projects are getting bigger. Candidates then went on to elaborate on the risks associated with larger projects such as the increase in the number of personnel required to work on them, complexity, etc.

b. This was a straightforward question. The subject guide describes the PMBOK® framework that identifies six elements associated with the Monitor and Control Process.

c. This question was poorly answered. Few candidates correctly defined a risk register. Good answers stated that a risk register reflects the residual risks in a project. It shows the status of the project after the mitigation has been brought into the project plan.

Question 5

a. There were a variety of answers to this question but it was important that they specifically focus on the characteristics of the Spiral Model. Many candidates discussed the fact that one journey round the axis of the Spiral can represent one iteration of a process model. However it was important to discuss the role of the identification of risk in the Spiral model, as it is a major defining characteristic of this model.

b. This was an interesting question that allowed candidates to give some of their own thoughts on the principals of good project document

management. A wide variety of suggestions were received such as giving the document a different date in its filename, ensuring the changes in name are reflected in the document itself in the header or footer, etc. The majority of answers were well thought through and were acceptable.

c. There are many issues associated with continuous quality assurance. Some of those that were more commonly mentioned in the answers were ensuring compliance with agreed standards, application of the four Cs, verification, etc.