
Examiners' commentary

2017–2018

CO3318 Information systems management – Zone A

General remarks

Overall the performance on this examination was satisfactory. Candidates are once again asked however to pay attention to the presentation of their work. Please remember to write legibly and to structure your answers in a way which shows the logic of your thinking. Make use of underlining and clear paragraphs. Please start each question on a new page.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- a. i. Good answers to this question recognised that in order to provide a comprehensive answer, it was necessary to address issues not only surrounding policies on use of emails but also to discuss ethical issues which might arise in this scenario. In particular, the scenario stated that the member of staff had a serious medical condition, and this needed to be recognised and discussed for its ethical implications.
- ii. Having identified the appropriate steps to deal with an ethical issue in part (i), good answers to this section discussed various ethical principles such as the Utilitarian Principle or Kant's Categorical Imperative and their applicability in this scenario.
- b. There are a number of tools, techniques and frameworks which are available for performance management and which were discussed in answering this question. The majority of candidates chose to discuss the Balanced Scorecard, in an appropriate level of detail.

Question 2

- a. Good answers to this question recognised that the scenario was referring to a business process re-engineering initiative and hence described the steps specific to this type of initiative. The question illustrates the importance of reading the given scenario carefully, to ensure that answers are adapted to the particular situation described. Not all candidates did so.
- b. As in part (a), once candidates had correctly identified that this was a business process re-engineering initiative many of them went on to discuss the Five Levels graph, which is typically applied to determine the benefits of this type of initiative.

Question 3

- a. Answers to this question were generally disappointing. However, where candidates pointed out that in order to achieve a return on IT investments, organisations need not only to invest in the technology but also pay attention to resources and capabilities, they did well. In particular those candidates who went on to provide examples of what is meant by resources and capabilities, and how they might be invested in, did particularly well in answering this question.

- b. Answers to this question were well done. Candidates identified a wide range of benefits arising from the introduction of the new database. In some instances, candidates categorised the benefits in some way, such as identifying different groups of beneficiaries, and were awarded additional marks for doing so. Other good answers divided the benefits into those which are tangible and those which are intangible.

Question 4

- a. This was a straightforward question and required candidates to identify the various types of outsourcing available such as total, selective, transitional or transformational. Where candidates went on to discuss each of these types of outsourcing in depth, they received additional marks.
- b. Where candidates lost marks on this question it was as a result of failing to provide a critical assessment. Many candidates pointed out the benefits of outsourcing well, but failed to pay sufficient attention to potential drawbacks.

Question 5

- c. This was a broad question and allowed for a wide variety of responses. Once again it was important that candidates paid sufficient attention not only to the opportunities for e-business but also considered the drawbacks in detail. Where examples were given of both opportunities and drawbacks, students scored additional marks.
- d. Good answers to this question provided a definition of critical success factors and then continued to discuss how they should be necessary and sufficient for the organisation to achieve its objectives. Candidates lost marks on this question where they failed to provide good examples of how IT systems may be used to facilitate the achievement of the critical success factors.