

BCS Higher Education Qualification

Diploma

October 2023

EXAMINERS' REPORT TEMPLATE

IT Project Management

Questions Report:

	All markers of section A are required to add comments here:
A1	<p>This question was a popular choice with over 67% of candidates attempting it and over 80% achieving a pass mark.</p> <p>Most candidates gave good, comprehensive answers to questions on the probability impact grid and explained the meaning of impact and likelihood of grid measurements. Similarly good answers were given to identify low and high-risk measurements. For part c), on the way in which the grid is used in a project management context, many answers fell short of saying that the grid showed the degree of seriousness, and few answers suggested that a good answer would state the risk can be distinguished into accepted versus controlled through viewing the control line.</p> <p>Parts d) and e) were well answered with most acknowledging the purpose of the line. Explanations of accepting the risk were not generally well answered. A good answer emphasises that you should do nothing when accepting a risk. Many answers tended to offer some form of mitigation that would allow the risk. Similarly, risk avoidance tended to repeat answers the same as mitigated acceptance. Answers did exhibit a good understanding of ways in which to transfer risk by for instance giving risk liability to an insurer.</p>
A2	<p>This question was the least popular choice amongst candidates. Slightly over 26% attempted it. 40% achieved a pass mark.</p> <p>Part a) was generally well answered with answers showing a good understanding of the role of the PBS and WBS structures.</p> <p>In part b) many answers gave a reasonable account of whether PBS and WBS were alternatives to each other. However, many answers failed to complete the question requirements to justify the answer.</p> <p>Part c) required an answer based on a specific app requirement for an environmental charity. Many answers went on to proceed with lengthy descriptions of completely unrelated applications such as online shopping. Many answers showed a difficulty in choosing entries for the PBS and freely interchanged items that should appear in the WBS. Subsequently, many marks were lost for inappropriate product entries. In cases where the entries were generally acceptable, candidates did not cite the twelve product entries that the question required.</p>

	<p>Similarly, in part d) the requirement was to cite ten different activities in the WBS. Answers here were generally short of the ten required and many exhibited the same degree of uncertainty between a PBS product entry and WBS activity entry. Few answers to this part cited the required environmental app.</p> <p>Parts c) and d) accounted for 16 marks (the majority for the whole question) Many marks were lost for not following the question requirements.</p>
A3	
	<p>This proved to be the most popular choice for candidates with over 82% choosing it but only 33% achieving a pass mark.</p> <p>Part a) required an explanation of the necessity to monitor and control a project. Many answers showed a good appreciation of the need to measure actual progress against planned and good answers tended to show the need to control budgets and meet specifications, amongst others.</p> <p>Part b) was about difficulties in monitoring a software development project. This part was generally quite poorly answered with many answers either being terse or focusing on almost anything to do with difficulties often encountered in a project. These answers indicated a misinterpretation of the question which was about difficulties in actually carrying out monitoring rather than difficulties encountered within a project. Good answers would indicate the abstract nature of software, the complexity of software, making estimation of time and cost difficult.</p> <p>Part c) addressed the need for information required in project monitoring and a description of the formal reports to be expected. This part of the question had generally poor answers. Aspects of project progress that would need to be monitored, such as progress reports Gantt charts, expenditure versus planned expenditure charts, or timesheets for resource usage, would be the basis of a good answer, but very few answers included some or any of those indicators. For appropriate reports, many answers were unable to provide a suitable report for the question context and answers tended to include erroneous suggestions such as feasibility reports rather than a good answer which would be highlight reports or team leader progress reports.</p> <p>Part d) was generally well answered by candidates. The question was concerned with the advantages/disadvantages of control strategies that might help an ailing project back on track. Many good answers were given that included an advantage and disadvantage of working longer or increasing resources, amongst other relevant strategies. Many answers erroneously veered into discussions of EVA and CBA being undertaken or introducing risk avoidance/risk mitigation strategies. A number of answers sought an inappropriate control strategy of revisiting aspects of the project specification to identify why the project is failing.</p>
B4	
	<p>This question was popular, with 79% of candidates attempting it, however only 30% of those achieved a pass mark. Most candidates were able to identify advantages and disadvantages of buying in software applications and provided suitable detail to support their judgement. However, few candidates were able to explain configuration management and provided general answers about the project change control process.</p>

	<p>Similarly in part c), few candidates explained clearly configuration IDs and the configuration control process.</p> <p>In part d), few candidates differentiated correctly the purpose/leader of a post-implementation review – being related to business needs and requirements – and the lessons learned report – being related to the development process.</p>
B5	
	<p>This question was popular, with 64% of candidates attempting it, however only 39% of those achieved a pass mark.</p> <p>In part a) the best answers discussed the role of process quality and metrics for product quality, including ISO standard quality indicators. Part b) was well answered by many candidates, with correct identification of the CMM levels, though there was often insufficient detail to explain and differentiate the meaning of the levels clearly.</p> <p>Part c) requested candidates to explain the inspection testing technique. The best answers clearly identified and explained who was involved, and the stages (preparation, meeting, recording of actions, follow-up remedial work). Many candidates provided generic answers about software testing and consequently gained low marks for this part.</p>
B6	
	<p>This question was popular with 76% of candidates attempting it, however only 39% of those achieved a pass mark.</p> <p>Most candidates clearly identified the difference between democratic and autocratic management styles in terms of decision making but many did not differentiate between permissive and directive approaches. Many confused permissive autocrat with directive democrat and lost marks for not explaining when each approach may be appropriate.</p> <p>Part b) asked for two ways in which staff resources might be acquired together with an advantage and a disadvantage of each. The best answers provided detailed explanations, for example outsourcing or appointing agency contract staff. They also clearly justified an advantage and a disadvantage. A significant number of candidates discussed recruitment methods, despite the question stating that there was no time available for recruitment and consequently attracted no marks for that part.</p> <p>In part c, many candidates discussed how motivation could be improved, but did not define and differentiate job enlargement and job enrichment which lost them marks. It is always essential for candidates to define any technical terms to demonstrate they understand them.</p>