

BCS Higher Education Qualification

Professional Graduate Diploma

May 2021

EXAMINERS' REPORT

Professional Issues in Information Systems Practice

General comments

The paper has an overall pass rate that is similar to recent years.

It is good to see candidates that demonstrate an understanding of the range of issues covered in this module. However, there are a number of candidates where the answers are brief or the candidates have only answered half of the question in any real detail. This suggests that there could be more thorough preparation on more of the topics.

Sometimes candidates are writing what they know about a topic, instead of using that knowledge to answer the question. For example, when asked about the BCS Code of Conduct, some candidates are reciting as much of the code as they can remember. However, the question asked about two benefits of adopting the code and for some examples. When preparing for the exam, candidates are asked to think about how the topics could be applied. There will be some marks for the knowledge, but better answers and more marks will be available when that knowledge is used to address what is asked about.

Some answers do not make it clear which parts of the question are being answered. That has improved over the last few sittings of the paper, but we think that more candidates could clearly indicate the question and question part at the start of the answer.

Question number: A1

Syllabus area: Professional Codes of Conduct

Total marks allocated: 25

Examiners' Guidance Notes

Part a was about the benefits of adopting the BCS Code of Conduct. Overall, there were some good answers that showed an understanding of the Code. A number of candidates tended to just list everything they knew about the BCS Code of Conduct without strictly adhering to the criteria asked for in the question. In many cases, candidates wrote more for Part a than Part b, although Part b was worth more marks.

Part b was about the way that professional bodies can contribute to professional practice. This was answered less well than Part a. Answers would be improved by including an appropriate number of examples that are requested in the question – three in this question. Some answers did not distinguish between the examples, which makes it harder to mark and award credit.

Question number: A2
Syllabus area: Organisations and their structure
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes
<p>Part a was about the important characteristics of a limited company.</p> <p>Part b was about executive and non-executive directors.</p> <p>A number of candidates only answered one of the question parts, which suggests limited preparation for this topic. As with A1, the answers sometimes answered more about what the candidate knew about the limited companies and did not specifically address totally what the question was asking.</p>

Question number: A3
Syllabus area: Human Resources Management
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes
<p>Part a was about Job Design. This was answered well in most cases, but a number of candidates did not provide examples for each of the three techniques.</p> <p>Part b was about Job Evaluation schemes. Overall, there were some good answers. Other answers could have been better structured. Again, the answers would have been improved by including examples.</p>

Question number: B4
Syllabus area: Finance and Management Accounting
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes
<p>Part a was about creating a Profit and Loss statement for a given scenario. This part was answered reasonably well. A number of candidates showed an understanding of the general ideas, but made some mistakes in the calculations and didn't calculate the correct gross and net profits.</p> <p>Part b was about Discounted Cash Flow Analysis. Whilst there were some good answers, this was answered less well. A number of answers were short, which suggests a lack of preparation of this particular topic.</p>

Question number: B5
Syllabus area: Legal Obligations and Intellectual Property
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes
<p>Part a was about Data Protection legislation. This was answered reasonably well, with candidates showing awareness of the legislation. Some answers just wrote down general points about Data Protection and did not specifically address the question.</p> <p>Part b was about copyright law. Again, this was answered reasonably well, but a number of answers talked generally about copyright issues and didn't attempt to discuss the types of protection that the law could provide for a business.</p> <p>Some answers were short, suggesting limited preparation for these topics.</p>

Question number: B6
Syllabus area: Legal Obligations
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes
<p>Part a was about Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.</p> <p>Part b was about the Freedom of Information Act.</p> <p>There were some good answers for parts a and b, but a number of answers showed limited knowledge of the acts and how a business or public authority would comply.</p> <p>Some answers were short, suggesting limited preparation for these topics.</p>