

BCS Higher Education Qualification

Diploma

October 2021

EXAMINERS' REPORT

IT Project Management

General comments

The standard of written English was generally good. However, the performance of candidates varied greatly between questions.

Key messages:

- Candidates need to take careful notice of mark allocation, making a clear point for each mark available and providing justification for their answer where a judgement (e.g. advantage/disadvantage) is stated.
- It is critically important that candidates read the questions carefully and ensure they answer each part fully.

Question number: A1

Syllabus areas: 1.5 , 1.9, 1.10

Total marks allocated: 25

Examiners' Guidance Notes

The majority of candidates attempted this question.

- a) Answers were generally very brief: where 3 marks are available 3 clear points need to be made for full marks. E.g. Who can raise an RFC? what stage in the process is an RFC raised? who receives it? What does it typically contain? Is it verbal or a document? Candidates rarely distinguished between the review and feasibility assessment of RFC.
- b) Candidates generally provided valid answers for advantages/disadvantages of OTS software, the best candidates provided a justification/explanation for the advantage/disadvantage. For example, 'Cost of maintenance' is not a valid disadvantage without an explanation, since all software has maintenance costs.
- c) A significant proportion of candidates did not provide CRITERIA for judging the selection of the component.

Question number: A2

Syllabus area: 2.2, 2.3

Total marks allocated: 25

Examiners' Guidance Notes

A large number of candidates attempted this question.

- a) Candidates generally answered this part well. It was pleasing to see most candidates now providing a key for the layout of their nodes.
- b) The best candidates explained fully the effect of the changes in the AoN diagram, including EST/EFT/LST/LFT for the nodes affected, together with actions that the PM should take. However, many answers were too brief to attract many of the 7 marks available.

Question number: A3

Syllabus area: 6.4

Total marks allocated: 25

Examiners' Guidance Notes

Fewer candidates answered this question than any other on the examination paper.

- a) Few candidates were able to provide clear detailed differences between product quality and process quality. The best candidates elaborated with reference to ISO standards and examples.
- b) Most candidates who attempted this question were unable to identify the underlying principles of the CMM, but the majority were able to correctly identify most levels of the CMM and to elaborate suitably on the *Initial* level. However, many were unable to provide clear differences between *Repeatable* and *Defined* levels, and statements that one was higher than the other attracted no marks without clear explanation.

Question number: B4

Syllabus area: 3.1, 3.4, 3.5

Total marks allocated: 25

Examiners' Guidance Notes

- a) The majority of candidates correctly identified the role of the project manager. The best candidates **elaborated and explained the key activities** of the project manager to obtain full marks.
- b) 12 marks were available: 4 for each of the 3 Belbin roles, which therefore required 2 strengths and 2 weaknesses of each. Many candidates correctly analysed the question in this way, and attempted to provide distinct points. Unfortunately, a significant proportion of candidates interpreted the role names as **Project activities**, rather than **Belbin role personality types** as specified in the question.
- c) The question on Job satisfaction factors attracted a wide variety of answers, with many candidates gaining marks for explaining how Maslow's Hierarchy, Herzberg's motivation theory or Hackman & Oldham's Job Characteristics model were relevant. Elaboration and explanation were key to gaining high marks. Simplistic answers such as simply stating 'high pay' attracted no marks.

Question number: B5

Syllabus area: 4.3, 4.6

Total marks allocated: 25

Examiners' Guidance Notes

- a) Very few candidates were able to explain clearly the activities involved in monitoring and controlling a project; many appeared to not understand the question and articulated the software development lifecycle.
- b) Most candidates who attempted this question were able to provide some valid suggestions for the impact of the 3 strategies listed to bring a project back on track. It was good to see some detailed explanation of how such things as cost may or may not be impacted, and the marks awarded largely depended on a valid justification.
- c) Hardly any candidates were able to explain what a cumulative resource chart is. Unfortunately, those who attempted to answer did not often provide an example diagram as requested in the question.

Question number: B6

Syllabus area: 2.7, 5.2

Total marks allocated: 25

Examiners' Guidance Notes

- a) Most candidates were able to provide an advantage of *Expert opinion* (based on experience) and most analysed the question well, providing a list of points. However, good marks required clear explanation / justification for the advantage and this was an aspect that was lacking in many cases. Unfortunately, a significant proportion of candidates did not correctly explain what 'Brainstorming' means.
- b) This part listed 3 basic terms used in Risk assessment. Very few were able to explain *Risk Proximity*, while a large proportion were able to correctly state an equation for *Risk exposure* and the best candidates elaborated with an explanation. Whilst many candidates clearly demonstrated an understanding of the concept of *Risk Impact*, the answer required more explanation than was often provided to obtain full marks.
- c) To obtain good marks it was essential to provide an example of a probability impact grid – and the best candidates included a discussion of how specific risks could be plotted in the grid, and consequently prioritised.