

BCS Higher Education Qualification

Diploma

October 2021

EXAMINERS' REPORT

Professional Issues in Information Systems Practice

General comments

There continue to be some very good answers that demonstrated an appropriate understanding of the issues. There are also some answers which suggest that there are candidates who are not appropriately prepared for the range of topics on the paper.

We encourage all candidates to spend time preparing ahead of the paper, making use of Training Centres where they are available in the countries. It is helpful to review past papers and examiners' reports from recent years as part of the preparation but to also be familiar with the syllabus.

Candidates and Centres preparing candidates, are encouraged to review the updated syllabus when they register for the exams for the autumn of 2022 and beyond.

Question number: A1

Syllabus area: Professional Institutions, 1.1, and Professional Codes of Conduct and their limitations, 8.1.

Total marks allocated: 25

Examiners' Guidance Notes

Part a) asked about the purpose of professional bodies. Most candidates provided a reasonable answer for this part of the question. Better answers commented on the professional body being able to protect the interests of the profession, and also taking account of the public interest.

Part b) asked about the BCS Code of Conduct. This part of the question was answered reasonably, with candidates showing a general understanding of the four parts of the Code. Several candidates just repeated the terms from the Code and didn't show much understanding of the meaning of the four sections.

Question number: A2

Syllabus area: Human Resources Management, 9.6 and 9.7

Total marks allocated: 25

Examiners' Guidance Notes

Part a) asked about Human Resources Planning. This part was not answered well overall. A number of candidates talked more generally about recruitment activities. The answers would have been improved by discussing the need to use existing resource plans and forecasts for planning future human resource requirements.

Part b) asked about Management by Objectives. Overall, a number of candidates showed limited awareness of the concept of management by objectives and its application in practice. Better answers considered how objectives could be set to help managers and employees contribute towards achieving an organisation's objectives.

Question number: A3

Syllabus area: Organisations and their structure, 2.1

Total marks allocated: 25

Examiners' Guidance Notes

Part a) asked about sole traders and partnerships. This part was answered reasonably well, with candidates showing awareness of sole traders and partnerships. Some answers about partnerships could have been improved by discussing what happens to the ownership if a partner leaves the partnership.

Part b) asked about outsourcing. This was answered reasonably well, with candidates discussing some advantages for the use of outsourcing, including: the ability to allow management to focus on the core business activity, making it easier to manage and control the costs, ability to outsource to organisations with greater specialist knowledge, and the general ability to save money. Some answers could have included more detail.

Question number: B4

Syllabus area: Finance, 3.1

Total marks allocated: 25

Examiners' Guidance Notes

Part a) was about creating a cash flow statement, identifying the transactions in operating, investing, and financial activities separately using a given cash account summary. There were some good and excellent answers, which correctly identified the given transactions and their appropriate activity. Several answers were able to prepare some parts of the cash flow statement, but some of the transactions were not linked to the correct activities, or there were some mistakes in the calculations. Some candidates did not attempt this part of the question.

Part b i) asked for an explanation of both Fixed and Current Assets, and part b ii) asked for Long term Liability and Current Liability, using one example for each. There were some good answers with appropriate examples, but also several answers which demonstrated limited knowledge of the differences between the assets and the liabilities.

Question number: B5

Syllabus area: Legal Obligations, 5.1

Total marks allocated: 25

Examiners' Guidance Notes

Part a) asked about the Computer Misuse Act (CMA). On the whole, the answers for this part were reasonable. It was clear from some of the answers that students demonstrated good knowledge of the CMA, and which parts of the CMA would be relevant for the situation of a student modifying marks. Some answers briefly mentioned relevant issues but did not add detail that showed how the CMA applied to the scenario.

Part b) asked about data protection legislation applied to a scenario of updating data at a bank. Several answers identified relevant parts of the data protection legislation that were relevant, focusing on holding accurate information, and also the security of the personal data. Other answers just repeated the key parts of data legislation and did not include much, or any discussion, that highlighted which items were relevant to the scenario.

Part c) asked about sensitive personal data. There were mixed answers about this. Some answers stated that sensitive data covered items such as a customer address, which is relevant for data protection, but it is not an example of sensitive data. The answer should have highlighted data items such as racial and ethnic origin, religion and sexual orientation.

Some answers for this part c) were longer than the answers for parts a) or b). However, part c) was worth 5 marks, which was less than the other parts. It is good to see candidates discuss the issues, but the length of the discussion should be in proportion to the marks available.

Question number: B6
Syllabus area: The Internet, 7.1
Total marks allocated: 25
Examiners' Guidance Notes
Part a) asked about consumer protection legislation. Better answers discussed issues such as, providing information about the goods on sale before purchase, details about the prices and taxes that apply to the goods, information about delivery, and the right to cancel. Other relevant discussion was given credit. It was clear that some candidates were not prepared for this topic and just made some general comments about online selling.
Part b) asked about data protection legislation as it applied to an e-commerce company. There were several good answers, but also some answers that did not show an understanding of the material.