

BCS Higher Education Qualification

Professional Graduate Diploma

October 2025

EXAMINERS' REPORT

Computer Services Management

General Comments:

In general, candidate responses demonstrated appropriate subject knowledge. However, a significant proportion of candidates lost marks for failing to respond in context, particularly when questions required application to specific scenarios rather than theoretical descriptions. However, it was refreshing to see good answers being provided for questions on Service Level Agreements and consumer support structures, with candidates demonstrating solid understanding of stakeholder roles and Service Desk operations. Unfortunately, Problem Management as a topic is still proving difficult for many, with Question B5 achieving the lowest average mark.

Questions Report:

A1	<p>15 candidates attempted this question with an average mark of 59%.</p> <p>This question examined candidates' understanding of contract management, focusing on due diligence prior to contract signing, end-of-contract options, and contract breakpoints.</p> <p>Part a) asked candidates to explain steps an organisation can take prior to signing a contract to ensure supplier reliability. Well-prepared candidates identified due diligence activities such as taking up references from other customers, conducting financial research using annual reports and filed accounts, performing internet and social media research, and evaluating information gathered through the tender process. Weaker responses focused on contract content rather than pre-contract verification activities or provided only superficial mentions without adequate explanation of how each step contributes to supplier assessment.</p> <p>Part b) required candidates to describe two end-of-contract options with benefits. Strong responses covered options such as allowing the contract to roll-on (benefit: minimum effort), renegotiating with the existing supplier (benefit: simpler than re-tendering whilst potentially achieving savings), or ending and re-tendering (benefit: opportunity for new suppliers and better pricing). Some candidates only identified options without explaining their benefits, which limited available marks as specified in the rubric.</p> <p>Part c) tested understanding of contract breakpoints. Successful candidates defined a breakpoint as a clause allowing early termination or renegotiation,</p>
----	--

	<p>explained its use in managing supplier performance or responding to price benchmarking, and provided relevant examples. Common weaknesses included confusing breakpoints with general termination clauses or failing to provide a practical example of when a breakpoint might be invoked.</p>
A2	<p>19 candidates attempted this question with an average mark of 62%.</p> <p>This question assessed candidates' knowledge of change management controls and the different types of change recognised in IT service management.</p> <p>Part a) asked candidates to describe actions and controls used to minimise change-related incidents. Strong responses included impact identification using configuration management, circulating change requests to approvers and reviewers, testing the change, maintaining access-controlled storage for final software versions, and carrying out phased deployments. The question specifically asked candidates to 'describe', so simple bullet points with no explanation received only 1 mark each, while well-described controls with practical context scored up to 4 marks each.</p> <p>Part b) required candidates to describe the differences between Standard, Normal, and Emergency changes with two examples of each. Excellent responses explained that Emergency changes respond to major incidents or security threats and require ECAB approval, Normal changes follow the RFC process with CAB review and approval, and Standard changes are pre-approved with documented procedures. Many candidates could describe the change types adequately but failed to provide the required two examples for each type, limiting their marks. Candidates should note that examples are essential when specifically requested.</p>
A3	<p>40 candidates attempted this question with an average mark of 62%.</p> <p>This was the most popular question in Section A, testing candidates' understanding of SLAs, stakeholder roles, and service consumer definitions.</p> <p>Part a) asked candidates to identify and describe drawbacks of not having an SLA for both service provider and customer perspectives. Strong responses addressed both perspectives as required: customer drawbacks including lack of confidence in the provider, service performance below requirements, and poor communication; service provider drawbacks including undefined requirements, excess delivery costs, and unreasonable requests.</p> <p>Part b) required listing three stakeholders who are not service consumers with their benefits. Successful candidates identified stakeholders such as service provider staff (employment income), shareholders (return on investment), government (tax revenue), local community (local jobs and charitable contributions), or regulatory bodies (compliance). Weaker responses confused consumers with other stakeholders or provided benefits that were not clearly linked to the stakeholder identified.</p>

	<p>Part c) tested understanding of Customer, Sponsor, and User roles. Most candidates correctly identified that customers define service requirements on behalf of users and take responsibility for outcomes, sponsors are accountable for funding and budget approval, and users simply use the services to perform their work. Some responses confused these roles or provided overlapping definitions.</p>
B4	<p>39 candidates attempted this question with an average mark of 65%.</p> <p>This was the highest-scoring question overall, examining candidates' knowledge of consumer support mechanisms, Service Desk structures, and analyst skills.</p> <p>Part a) asked candidates to explain the differences between Service Desk, Service Level Management, and Relationship Management in terms of consumers supported and type of support provided. Strong responses correctly identified that the Service Desk provides operational support to users for day-to-day tasks, Service Level Management provides tactical support to customers through SLA negotiation and performance reporting, and Relationship Management provides strategic support to senior stakeholders ensuring services meet business objectives.</p> <p>Part b) required description of two Service Desk structures with benefits. Well-prepared candidates discussed structures such as Centralised (low cost, consistent tooling), Local (fast response, local language support), Virtual (physical contingency), or Follow-the-Sun (24-hour support without shift work).</p> <p>Part c) tested knowledge of Service Desk Analyst skills. Successful responses identified communication skills (documentation, guiding users), technical skills (service management toolsets), people skills (empathy, listening, questioning), and business awareness (understanding impact on users and business activities).</p>
B5	<p>37 candidates attempted this question with an average mark of 56%.</p> <p>This was the lowest-scoring question, indicating that Problem Management remains a challenging topic for many candidates.</p> <p>Part a) asked candidates to explain the difference between reactive and proactive Problem Management with examples. Strong responses explained that reactive PM responds to actual incidents through root cause analysis and workarounds (example: responding to a service outage), while proactive PM prevents incidents from occurring (example: disc mirroring or network triangulation). Many candidates could describe the concepts but failed to provide the required examples, limiting available marks.</p> <p>Part b) required explanation of the three Problem Management phases: Problem Identification, Problem Control, and Error Control. Successful candidates explained that Problem Identification gathers and analyses incident information to prioritise problems and find root causes, Problem Control identifies known errors and workarounds for incident teams, and</p>

Error Control identifies required changes and maintains workarounds until root causes are removed. Weaker responses confused these phases or provided generic descriptions without the specific activities associated with each phase.

Part c) asked candidates to describe how Problem Management and Incident Management support each other. Excellent responses addressed support in both directions: PM supports IM by identifying and removing root causes, helping identify service restoration steps, and taking proactive steps to prevent incidents; IM supports PM by providing timely and accurate incident information including symptoms, monitoring data, and resolver group actions.