

Level 2 Certificate in Business Administration



International
Qualifications from EDI

Annual Qualification Review

2008

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INTRODUCTION

The annual qualification review provides qualification-specific support and guidance to centres. This information is designed to help teachers preparing to teach the subject and to help candidates preparing to take the examination.

The reviews are published in September and take into account candidate performance, demonstrated in both on demand and series examinations, over the preceding 12 months. Global pass rates are published so you can measure the performance of your centre against these.

The review identifies candidate strengths and weaknesses by syllabus topic area and provides examples of good and poorer candidate responses. It should therefore be read in conjunction with details of the structure and learning objectives contained within the syllabus for this qualification found on the website.

The review also identifies any actual or proposed changes to the syllabus or question types together with their implications.

PASS RATE STATISTICS

The following statistics are based on the performance of candidates who took this qualification between 1 October 2007 and 30 September 2008.

Global pass rate 79.66%

Grade distributions

Pass 25.20%

Credit 34.12%

Distinction 20.34%

GENERAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Strengths

- Appropriate layout of answers
- Selection of appropriate information for inclusion in answers

Weaknesses

- Lack of planning when presenting information
- Copying of information given in questions rather than answering the questions
- Lack of ability re the use of English by many non-UK candidates

TEACHING POINTS BY SYLLABUS TOPIC

Syllabus Topic Area 1: The Office

See examples of candidate responses, page 10

Syllabus Topic Area 2: Equipment, Materials, Services and Supplies

DESK NOTE

I have been asked to report to the senior management team who are complaining about the rise in costs to the company, for specialist help with computers which are not working correctly. Please

(a) design a poster which lists the five main steps to be taken before requesting expert help when a computer is not working correctly.

(b) please also include on the poster a list of reminders for the correct handling of floppy disks.

Presentation (3 marks), (a) 10 marks, (b) 12 marks

MODEL ANSWER

Presentation (marks to reflect layout/content/general display of poster)	(3 marks)
(a) Points to check before sending for expert help	(10 marks)
(b) Reminders for correct handling of floppy disks.	(12 marks)
Total	(25 marks)

(a) Points to check before sending for expert help

- Is the main power switched on?
- Is the equipment switched on?
- If the screen is blank, has the brightness control been turned down?
- Are all the plugs inserted securely?
- Has the disk been inserted correctly?

(b) Reminders for correct handling of floppy disks

- Never touch any exposed magnetic areas.
- Always store the disks in a disk box and ensure the box is not overfilled.
- Write a label giving details of the contents of the disk and stick it on the disk in the space provided. Make sure the label is written before sticking it on the disk.
- Always store disks in protective packets when they are not being used.
- Never leave disks in direct sunlight or near direct heat.
- Never let disks come into contact with magnetic objects.

The above information should be displayed, preferably as bullet points, in the form of a poster. The information in answer to (a) and (b) should be displayed under an appropriate side heading.

Syllabus Topic Area 3: Work Environment and Controls

DESK NOTE

I have been asked to supply details of the advantages and disadvantages of open-plan offices as soon as possible. Apparently this information is needed by the senior management team in order that they can make a decision about the office layout in our new offices.

Please email me this information: jstevens@ahg.org.uk

Prepare email (1 mark), advantages of open-plan offices (12 marks), disadvantages of open-plan offices (12 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

MODEL ANSWER

Presentation of email	(1 mark)
Advantages of open-plan offices (6 points x 2 marks)	(12 marks)
Disadvantages of open plan offices (6 points x 2 marks)	(12 marks)
Total	(25 marks)

Advantages of open-plan offices

- All the staff can be seen so there is less concern about security.
- Staff can communicate easily – often without leaving their work area.
- It is easier to centralise services and share equipment.
- Decoration is much cheaper with fewer walls and doors.
- An open-plan office uses space much more cost-effectively.

Disadvantages of open-plan offices

- They can be noisy.
- Staff may be distracted very easily by those working around them.
- If there are several computer printers acoustic hoods will be needed to lessen the noise.
- Safety of staff is increased but security of confidential material is decreased.
- It is impossible to speak to another member of staff or a visitor about anything confidential.
- Staff will disagree about the temperature – some will want the windows open while others will complain of the cold.
- Ailments such as coughs and colds seem to spread much more easily especially if there is air conditioning.

Syllabus Topic Area 4: Procedures and Information

Email message

I have just been informed that some of our paper-based records have been found by a member of the public. As a matter of urgency please let me have details of 12 steps which can be taken to ensure the security of our paper-based records.

I will collect this information when I am in the office tomorrow.

Presentation (1 mark), steps to be taken to ensure security of paper-based records (24 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

MODEL ANSWER

Presentation	(1 mark)
12 steps to be taken to ensure security of paper-based records	(24 marks)
Total	(25 marks)

- Material should be filed immediately – should not be left lying around.
- Filing cabinets should be kept locked.
- Office doors and desk drawers should be locked when staff leave the office.
- Original copies should be removed from the glass plate in the photocopier on completion of copying.
- During the induction process staff should be made aware that it is not acceptable to discuss organisational business with other members of staff, clients, customers, friends or relatives.
- Information/files should be released only to authorised members of staff and a signature obtained.
- Confidential information being sent by mail either externally or internally should always be put in a sealed envelope and marked 'Private and Confidential'.
- Some information may be so confidential that to ensure its security it may be delivered by a member of staff to the addressee.
- When faxing confidential information ensure the receiving equipment has secrecy facilities – if not, telephone the addressee prior to faxing so that he or she is waiting at the fax machine to collect the document.
- Visitors should be escorted to the member of staff whom they are meeting.
- Individual passwords should be given to each member of staff for the purpose of accessing email messages.
- Confidential documents should be shredded when they are no longer needed.
- Documents should be stored in fireproof cabinets.
- Confidential documents should always be carried in a file when being transported between offices in case any sheets are dropped.

Note: The main problem which has been evident when marking the above type of question is that candidates confuse paper-based records and records held on the computer. They need to ensure that the question is carefully read and appropriate information included in the answer.

Syllabus Topic Area 5: Communication, Personal Effectiveness and Supporting Others

MEMORANDUM

To Office Administrator

From John Stevens

Ref TS/3

Date

I would like to include in the Induction Pack for new staff a note of

- (a) the advantages of working as an effective team, and
- (b) the qualities of an effective team leader.

Please let me have this information in the form of a memo.

Presentation of memo (3 marks), (a) Explain the advantages of working as an effective team (10 marks), (b) Itemise five of the most important qualities needed to lead a team (12 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

MODEL ANSWER

Presentation	(3 marks)
(a) Explain the advantages of working as an effective team	(10 marks)
(b) Itemise 5 of the most important qualities needed to lead a team	(12 marks)
Total	(25 marks)

MEMORANDUM

To John Stevens, Senior Administrator

From Office Administrator (or name of candidate)

Ref OA/ or candidate's initials /

Date Today's

Here is the information you requested about the advantages of working as an effective team and the five most important qualities needed to lead a team.

(a) Advantages of working as an effective team

- When members of staff work as an effective team there is greater achievement than if they work as individuals.
- Staff working in teams encourage each other.
- Staff working in teams support each other.
- Each member of the team will have different skills and abilities; this means there is a vast range of ability available.

(b) Qualities of an effective team leader

- Build up a good working relationship with each team member.
- Treat all members of the team fairly.
- Be available to discuss any concerns individual team members may have.
- Ensure team members have the necessary resources and equipment to work towards their target.
- Resolve with management any concerns of the team.
- Motivate and support team members.
- Ensure that all team members put in a similar amount of effort towards reaching targets.
- Praise and encourage team members.
- Ensure that all team members feel their contribution is valued.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES BY SYLLABUS TOPIC

Syllabus Topic Area 1: The Office

This is a popular question for candidates to answer.

Specific recommendations for teaching points are that candidates:

- need to be aware of the difference between the qualities and skills of administrative staff.
- make certain that the content of their answer gives full details, not just one or two words. For example a candidate should give details of dealing with incoming calls and the procedures they adopt, not just 'answering the telephone'.
- answer a question regarding centralised services by demonstrating their knowledge of the functions carried out in the different sections – print room, stationery stores, central filing and reception areas.
- answer a question about the functions of an office, by including examples of the functions, not just the functions given in one or two words.

Syllabus Topic Area 2: Equipment, Materials, Services and Supplies

This is a fairly popular area with candidates.

Specific recommendations for teaching points are that candidates:

- are fully aware that if they are answering a question which asks for information about mobile phones, the information given in the answer reflects the use of this equipment in the business environment.
- answering questions which ask for details of how to choose a supplier are aware of the different types of discount which may be available.
- are aware of how to store stock correctly, eg using FIFO. Many candidates answer this type of question by giving details of issuing stock and/or where the stock room should be positioned in relation to the offices.
- are aware of the steps to take to use machinery safely. Some questions ask for the information to be displayed as a poster. If this is the case, candidates need to be made aware of good display techniques and how to order the information in a logical sequence.

Syllabus Topic Area 3: Work Environment and Controls

This is not an area which is particularly popular with candidates. Those who do attempt to answer a question asking for health and safety requirements of working areas/equipment seem to have little knowledge of this information.

Specific recommendations for teaching points are that candidates:

- need to be aware of the requirements for office chairs and desks.
- are aware of the types of expenditure for which petty cash is used.
- are aware of how to produce an expense claim form, neatly and containing all the relevant information.
- are able to neatly produce booking forms using all the relevant information which is contained in the question.

Syllabus Topic Area 4: Procedures and Information

Questions based on this topic area are popular with candidates and are very well attempted by the majority. There are certain areas where specific areas for teaching are evident:

- The knowledge of candidates in the area of standard business documentation seems fairly superficial. Candidates seem to be unsure of the order in which these documents are used.
- Candidates seem very competent in giving information of how information can be distributed/routed through an organisation. However, they seem unsure how to display a circulation slip or what information should be included.

Syllabus Topic Area 5: Communication, Personal Effectiveness and Supporting Others

Candidates seem knowledgeable about the selection of suitable communication methods. However, they confuse 'teleconferencing' and 'videoconferencing' and this is a teaching point to be addressed.

Candidates are also very aware of the basic venue and equipment requirements when arranging a meeting.

The composition of simple written communications, from given information, needs emphasis as some candidates overlook some of the points which have been given in the question. The layout of memos, messages and short letters is good.

A particular teaching point for the candidate relates to staff appraisal. Many candidates answer a question about this by giving a list of steps which are used in their organisation when arranging and conducting appraisal. They do not demonstrate an understanding of why this process takes place.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

The How to Pass Business Administration, Second Level book should be consulted by teachers and potential candidates.

EXAMPLES OF CANDIDATE RESPONSES

The following example was taken from the Series 3 2008 question paper. The question paper stated that the candidate was working for Jackie Carlyle. The question appeared as follows:

MEMORANDUM

To Office Administrator
From Jackie Carlyle
Ref JC
Date 5 June 2008

Please draft a suitable advertisement for a receptionist to work in our busy reception area. Include **five** main duties carried out in the reception area. State that applicants must have an excellent telephone manner and good communication skills. They must be able to work under pressure.

Application forms are available from the Human Resources Department on 0118 624913.

Candidates were asked to produce a suitable advertisement.

The following answers were written by three candidates in response to this question.

Answer (a) shows a pass response.

Answer (b) shows a credit response.

Answer (c) shows a distinction response.

Answer (a) shows a pass response

Our Athena House Group Company is looking for a receptionist to work in our busy reception area.

To be good in reception area you must be:

1. Should have an excellent telephone manner
2. Have good communication skills
3. Have a good memory and tact when speaking to customers.

Application forms are available from the Human Resources Department on 0118 624913.

This candidate included only the most basic of information given in the question. There were sufficient points included to gain approximately half the available marks.

Answer (b) shows a credit response

Receptionist to work in our reception area

Duties carried out in the reception area

1. Watering the flowers
2. Dealing with the incoming and outgoing telephone call
3. Filing the business cards left by visitors
4. Ordering taxi for the visitor
5. Record time and day when customer visits

Excellent telephone manner and good communication skills

1. Answer telephone as quickly as possible
2. Speak clearly when dealing with customers
3. Have pen and paper near the telephone to write message
4. Repeat any message
5. Don't sound hurried or use slang
6. Don't eat food or drink when answering telephone call
7. Calmness
8. Good memory.

Human Resources Department
0118624913

This candidate included a great deal of information which was not relevant to the question. However, she managed to include sufficient points to gain approximately 60% of the marks available.

Answer (c) shows a distinction response

Human Resources Department

Our company is looking for a receptionist to work in our busy reception area.

Requirements

- Diploma in administration or equal qualification
- Have an excellent telephone manner
- Good communication skills
- Familiar with reception duties
- Minimum of 1 year work experience

The main duties in the reception are

1. Dealing with telephone calls.
2. Dealing with visitors.
3. Taking messages from visitors.
4. Ensuring the security procedures are followed.
5. Issuing visitors' badges to visitors.

Call our Human Resources Department on 0118 624913 for an application form.

The candidate presented her answer showing the information clearly. There was a prominent title and underlined side headings were given. The amount of major points, given in the question, which were included, resulted in 75% of the total marks available.

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