

IFE Level 3 Diploma in Fire Safety and Fire Science

Unit 5 – Leadership and Management (Zone 1)

Examiner Report – March 2018

Introduction

Only 35% of candidates attained a Pass for this question paper.

Candidates performed particularly well on question 1 but performance on question 6 was also good. Candidates performed least well on question 7.

Candidates often misunderstood the content of the question which resulted in them providing irrelevant information in their answers which did not attract marks.

Question 1

- a) *Describe the factors which can lead to the development of work-related stress. (6 marks)*
- b) *Describe the actions that managers can take to reduce work-related stress. (4 marks)*
- c) *Describe the actions a manager can take to support an employee who is suffering from work-related stress. (10 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

This question was the most popular option for candidates and nearly all candidates chose to answer it. There were many good responses to this question.

In response to part a), nearly all candidates were able to identify a range of factors which could cause stress such as job insecurity, unclear job role, poor physical working environment, poor relationship with a manager and/or colleagues, unchecked bullying and harassment etc. Candidates who attained lower marks for this part of the question often identified only one or two distinct points. Candidates sometimes wrote at length about only a few points.

In response to part b), candidates were usually able to identify factors such as ensuring that workloads are sensible, that employees have some control over their job, that training is provided and that job requirements are clear. Some candidates missed the requirement to consider how stress could be reduced in the workplace and wrote instead about how to support someone suffering with stress.

Part c) was usually answered well. Candidates referenced steps such as not ignoring the problem, discussing the causes with the employee and finding ways forward through reviewing the workload, providing training, giving clear targets and dealing with bullying and harassment.

Question 2

A successful selection interview will help to ensure that the right person for the organisation is appointed.

- a) Describe the actions to be taken by an organisation when planning for an interview to take place. (6 marks)*
- b) Explain the actions to be taken by the interview panel when carrying out the interview. (14 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

Few candidates attained high marks for their response to this question as responses often lacked sufficient and relevant information.

In responding to part a) of the question, some candidates failed to appreciate that the focus was on “planning” for an interview. Good responses considered planning issues such as identifying members of the interview panel, developing the questions to be asked at the interview, booking an appropriate room for the interviews, ensuring that all candidates have equal amount of time and not too many candidates are seen on the same day, advising candidates of the arrangements etc. Some candidates misunderstood the question and included irrelevant information within their response as they did not focus on the planning aspect. Instead candidates went further back in the recruitment process and presented issues such as analysing whether or not the job role was actually needed and whether the job description was up to date.

There were some good responses to part b) with candidates who appreciated that the focus of the question was “actions by the interview panel when carrying out the interview” demonstrating understanding of the issues to be taken into account. Some candidates failed to address the specific context and wrote about recruitment issues in general whilst others repeated points made in response to part a).

Question 3

- a) Explain why it is important to undertake continuing professional development (CPD). (10 marks)*
- b) Explain why it is important to have a written personal development plan (PDP). (10 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

This question was not a popular option for candidates. In responding to both part a) and part b), candidates presented only a few overarching points without exploring the points in sufficient detail to explain the underpinning factors and secure additional marks. For example, candidates often referred to CPD as a mechanism for keeping up to date with changes but did not expand this to reflect on how this enhances appreciation of sector developments (expanding perspectives), supports career development both inside and outside of their current employment and enables contribution to the organisational performance.

Question 4

a) Explain why it is important for managers to ensure that their methods of communication are effective. (10 marks)

b) Explain how managers can evaluate if they are communicating successfully. (10 marks)

Examiner Feedback

This was a straightforward question but few candidates attained high marks. Candidates often performed better on part a) than on part b).

There were 10 marks available for part a) but many candidates provided only brief responses and identified only a few points. Candidates could have explored issues in relation to communication with their team members (eg ensuring team members are clear on job requirements, ensuring team members know how to complete tasks, ensuring team members are engaged and motivated, ensuring that team members are able to feedback relevant information), communication with other departments (eg to ensure co-operation and efficient working across teams) as well as communication with senior managers (eg to ensure clarity on objectives, policies etc).

Few candidates provided good responses to part b). Candidates often referenced the fact that work was completed as specified but they did not consider wider issues like how individuals were reacting when the information was conveyed or whether individuals were asking relevant questions.

Question 5

Money is not believed to be a major source of motivation. Describe the actions, other than financial incentives, that managers can take to retain the interest and commitment of their staff. (20 marks)

Examiner Feedback

There were many points that could have been made in relation to staff motivation such as: developing efficient teams that work together and not in conflict, achieving a balance between task, team and individual needs, recognising the need for a work/life balance and encouraging individuals to become involved in setting their own objectives and empowering

them to make relevant decisions. Unfortunately, few candidates provided detailed responses and there were therefore few candidates who attained high marks.

Some candidates discussed leisure activities and family activities as being a way to motivate staff. However, this type of activity is outside of the workplace and does not directly affect interest in the job so marks were not awarded for responses of this type.

Question 6

Conflict within the workplace can occur for many reasons. When disputes arise they can easily become unmanageable. Mediation can be used in some cases to resolve these differences.

- a) Describe why conflict can develop in the workplace. (6 marks)*
- b) Describe the circumstances under which mediation can be valuable in resolving conflict. (4 marks)*
- c) Describe the processes involved in mediation. (4 marks)*
- d) Describe the benefits of effective mediation to an organisation. (6 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

Part a) was often answered well and many candidates secured all of the marks available for this part of the question. Most candidates secured the majority of their marks for this question via their answer to part a).

Many candidates did not appear to be familiar with the process of mediation and this limited the marks that could be attained for parts b), c) and d). It often appeared that candidates were guessing when presenting responses to these parts of the question. Candidates should be aware that mediation is a process where the mediator (an independent third party or a professional mediator) tries to help people involved in the dispute to reach agreement.

Question 7

Organisations are more effective when there is cooperation between staff.

- a) Explain the importance of regarding colleagues as customers and suppliers. (5 marks)*
- b) Describe the factors you would take into account before and during a meeting to give constructive face-to-face feedback about his or her performance to a colleague in a similar role to yourself. (15 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

This question was not a popular option for candidates and responses to this question were generally poor.

In responding to part a), some candidates failed to appreciate that the question was focussed on relationships with internal colleagues and they wrote about external relationships. Those candidates that attained high marks demonstrated that they understood the importance of recognising and respecting the perspectives of colleagues in other departments and that they understood the importance of communication, timelines and setting/meeting expectations.

Part b) was also focussed on relationship management. Few candidates attained high marks for their response to this question. Most candidates recognised the need to set a convenient time and location for the meeting but few started from the point that the meeting was one of equals and therefore a different approach was needed to the approach taken when having a meeting about performance with a subordinate. Candidates who attained high marks identified the need to concentrate on the objectives of the organisation whilst working together to find solutions to the problems identified without expressing personal opinions, or being critical.

Question 8

- a) *Draw a diagram to illustrate how individual objectives contribute to strategic objectives. (4 marks)*
- b) *Explain how managers use team work plans in enabling the achievement of strategic objectives. (16 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

This question was the least popular option for candidates. Few candidates attained high marks for their responses.

In response to part a), candidates often presented appropriate diagrams and were able to attain all (or most) of the marks available.

Part b) was often answered poorly with few candidates providing detailed and considered responses. Most candidates made an initial link between planning and aligning activities with strategic objectives but few went into sufficient detail and explored different types of plans (teams and individuals), drawing on plans for establishing and securing resources, using plans to assist in allocating work, communication of team goals/targets or using plans as motivation tools.