

# IFE Level 3 Diploma in Fire Safety and Fire Science

## Unit 5 – Leadership and Management (Zone 2)

### Examiner Report – March 2018

#### Introduction

In this examination session 70% of candidates achieved a Pass. Around half of the candidates that achieved a pass attained a C, B or A grade.

Candidates performed well on questions 1, 2, 3, 5 and 8 with particularly good marks being attained for questions 1 and 2. Candidates performed least well on question 7.

As in previous years, there were a number of scripts where it was obvious that candidates had failed to read the question and that some candidates had chosen to write about what they knew irrespective of whether the information was relevant to the question.

#### 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.

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) *Explain why an effective grievance procedure is important to an organisation. (8 marks)*
- b) *Describe the different stages that are usually found in a grievance procedure. (6 marks)*
- c) *Describe the actions a manager should take if they receive a grievance from one of their staff. (6 marks)*

## **Examiner Feedback**

In responding to part a), some candidates were unable to identify the benefits of a grievance procedure to an organisation. Examples of benefits that could have been covered included: allowing employees to raise issues of concern with the management of an organisation and to explain what they would like to happen; providing a route for the solving of problems about which staff feel strongly; letting staff know that they can involve higher levels of management if needed and improving working relationships.

Most candidates were able to describe the three stages found in a grievance procedure. Some candidates listed stages without providing additional descriptions. This limited the marks that could be attained.

In responding to part c), some candidates were unable to provide more than a few brief statements. A common error was suggesting that the manager's only role was to refer issues to the Human Resources Department or to their own line manager. Points that could have been covered included:

- making a record that a grievance has been received.
- listening to the facts being presented.
- asking questions to obtain clarification.
- considering the action that could be taken and the likely consequences.

## **Question 3**

- a) *Explain why a manager has to carry out a number of roles in relation to the training and development of their staff. (15 marks)*
- b) *Provide examples of five different types of learning opportunities which could be included in a personal development plan. (5 marks)*

## **Examiner Feedback**

Responses to part a) were sometimes brief with candidates identifying only one or two roles (usually carrying out a training needs analysis and developing staff) and then failing to explain why the roles were needed. Roles that could have been explored included the roles of influencer (through being a role model), administrator (maintaining training records and organising training) and decision maker (by identifying who needs training and how it should be provided).

Most candidates were able to score a high mark for part b). Examples of learning opportunities that could have been covered in responses included training courses, attending lectures and experiential learning.

## **Question 4**

*Explain why it is important for an organisation to:*

- a) establish clear lines of communication within the organisation. (12 marks)*
- b) ensure that staff understand their responsibilities and the work they are expected to undertake. (8 marks)*

## **Examiner Feedback**

Part a) was usually answered well. However, some candidates provided only brief responses that touched on only a limited number of points and therefore attained only a few of the marks available. Some candidates provided irrelevant information as they wrote about communication generally (sometimes going into detail about downwards and upwards communication); however, as they did not apply this knowledge to the question, no marks were awarded.

Responses to part b) were often less well developed as candidates often provided only one or two points. Some candidates wrote at length about the need for staff to meet health and safety requirements. Better responses identified points such as staff being clear about what their job involves on a day to day basis, staff understanding the contribution they can make to the organisation's success and how this will benefit them, making sure that staff do not slip into picking and choosing the more popular tasks etc.

### **Question 5**

- a) *Explain the term “organisational culture” and its significance for an organisation. (4 marks)*
- b) *Describe the characteristics of a high performance culture. (10 marks)*
- c) *Describe the actions that managers can take to ensure that their teams contribute to the achievement of organisational objectives. (6 marks)*

### **Examiner Feedback**

In response to part a), many candidates were unable to explain the significance of organisational culture. Candidates should be aware that organisational culture can be positive (eg where staff are valued) or negative (eg if ‘blame culture’ is the norm).

There were many good responses to part b) and some candidates attained high marks for their response. Points that could have been covered included:

- commitment to quality goods and services
- identification of quality standards
- development of staff throughout the organisation
- effective performance management processes.

Part c) was also answered well with candidates describing actions such as emphasising the role of the team, holding regular team briefings and providing the team with the resources they need.

Some candidates provided quite short answers to parts b) and c) and did not demonstrate the breadth of understanding required at this level.

### **Question 6**

- a) *Draw a diagram to illustrate the Performance Management Framework/Cycle. (3 marks)*
- b) *Explain why many organisations feel it important to use a Performance Management Framework. (17 marks)*

### **Examiner Feedback**

This question was the least popular option for candidates.

The diagram required by part a) was often presented well and many candidates were able to attain full marks for this. However, some candidates missed out elements of the diagram.

There were 17 marks available for part b) but candidates often provided only brief responses. Many candidates had an understanding of the overarching purpose of performance

management but were unable to explore in detail how performance management adds value. Candidates who attained high marks were able to identify the benefits of performance management in terms of taking forward the strategic plan, setting clear and measurable targets, identifying the resources needed, empowering staff, improving motivation, identifying and solving problems and ensuring staff have the right skills.

### **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 between equals and therefore a different approach was needed to that 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 and the need to work together to find solutions to the problems identified without expressing personal opinions, or being critical.

### **Question 8**

*Debriefing after incidents or exercises can make a valuable contribution to the sum of organisational knowledge.*

- a) *Explain the differences between a hot debrief and a cold debrief. (4 marks)*
- b) *Describe the skills needed by the person running a debriefing session to ensure that the outcomes add to organisational knowledge. (16 marks)*

## **Examiner Feedback**

This was a popular question and there were many good responses.

Most candidates were well aware of the difference between a hot debrief and a cold debrief and were able to attain all four of the marks available.

In responding to part b), some candidates focussed on the content and purpose of the debrief rather than focussing on the skills of the person running the de-briefing session. This meant that some responses included significant amounts of irrelevant information. Candidates that attained high marks understood that the person running a debrief needed to take into account the views of all of those involved, encourage people to share their views, be sensitive to emotions, and record information effectively so that it can be shared within the organisation and with other organisations/partners.