IFE Level 3 Diploma in Fire Safety and Fire Science

Unit 5 – Leadership and Management (Zone 1)

Examiner Report – March 2019

Introduction

49% of candidates attained a Pass.   Around half of the candidates that passed the examination secured a D grade with a pleasing number of candidates securing either a C or a B grade.

Candidates performed particularly well on questions 1, 2 and 4.   Candidates generally performed least well on question 3.

Question 1

Effective health and safety arrangements are an important aspect of the duty of care that fire and rescue services have with regard to their staff.

a) *Explain why a written policy on health and safety in the workplace is important. (6 marks)*

b) *With reference to implementing the policy, describe what you would expect the duties of employers to be. (9 marks)*

c) *With reference to following the policy, describe what you would expect the duties of employees to be. (5 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

This question was the most popular option for candidates and candidates often performed well when they responded to the question.

In response to part a), most candidates were able to identify why the policy was important citing points such as settling the direction for the organisation, demonstrating a commitment to health and safety and championing the minimisation of risk.

In response to part b), candidates were usually able to identify the duties of employers such as having a clear policy, identifying risks and hazards, and providing safe equipment and systems of work. Candidates generally performed best on this part of the question.

Part c) was the least well answered part of the question. Some candidates were able to identify the duties of employees such as protecting themselves and others and reporting defective equipment but other candidates did not appear to have an understanding about how employees should behave.

Candidates who scored fewer than eight marks for this question were usually on the right lines in the points that they made but failed to provide sufficient points in their responses to take advantage of the marks available.

Question 2

a)
i) Explain the purpose of a job description within the recruitment process. (2 marks)
ii) State four pieces of information (other than job title) normally found in a job description. (4 marks)

b) Explain the purpose of the person/employee specification within the recruitment process. (6 marks)

c) Explain two of the advantages and two of the disadvantages of interviews as a method of selection. (4 marks)

d) Explain how the effectiveness of recruitment and selection procedures can be assessed. (4 marks)

Examiner Feedback

This was a popular and generally well answered question.

In responding to part a) of the question, most candidates were able to identify that a job description enables potential applicants to understand what the job involves and how it fits within the organisation; most were able to secure at least half of the marks available for sub-section ii), referencing points such as information on location, rate of pay, responsibilities of the role and any special conditions.

In responding to part b) of the question, many candidates scored marks for identifying that an employee specification sets out the skills required for the work to be undertaken successfully and enables potential candidates to benchmark themselves against the requirements.

In responding to parts a) and b) some candidates described the documents but failed to link them back to the recruitment process as required by the question.

Part c) of the question was usually answered well. Many candidates were able to identify advantages of interviews such as the opportunity to meet job applicants face to face and to ask searching questions; candidates were also able to identify disadvantages such as the fact that a poorly organised interview can lead to poor choices being made and that some people are good at interviews but do not always perform well in the actual role.

Part d) was the least well answered part of the question with few candidates able to provide a considered view of the measures that can be used to determine whether or not the recruitment process was effective. Some candidates scored marks for recognising that the length of time that a new recruit stayed in post was a good measure as to the appropriateness of the appointment as was the appropriateness of the skillset/performance of the new recruit when in the role. However, few candidates looked at the process more widely to consider issues such as the number of suitable applicants who applied for the role or the time and cost of the process.

Question 3

Training within organisations can be provided in a number of different ways. Describe, using examples, how you as a manager could evaluate how effective a training programme provided to staff has been. (20 marks)

Examiner Feedback

This question was not a popular option for candidates. Those candidates that did respond to the question often provided irrelevant responses; for example, some candidates focussed on the process of delivering training and/or on the types of training that could be undertaken rather than on ways to evaluate how effective the completed training programmes had been.

Candidates who scored high marks were able to identify the ways in which the effectiveness of training could be evaluated. Examples of points that could have been covered include:

- whether the objectives of the training had been met
- whether the training had provided value for money
- the management of the programme
- the effect on individual performance including whether or not improvements in particular areas could be noted
- whether new procedures could be adapted
- tangible impacts such as reductions in errors
- feedback from course attendees and trainers

Question 4

a) *Describe the possible barriers to effective communication between individuals within an organisation. (10 marks)*

b) *Explain the steps that managers can take to overcome barriers to communication with colleagues at all levels. (10 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

There were many good responses to this question.

Candidates generally performed better on part a) than on part b) with some candidates achieving all of the marks available. Examples of points that could have been covered included lack of communication channels, lack of clarity in communications, information overload, incompatible viewpoints, lack of trust, cultural barriers, language barriers and too much jargon being used.

Part b) was less well answered with some candidates repeating points made in part a) without fully explaining how the barriers could be removed/addressed. Examples of points that could have been covered included: standardisation of information, preventing the development of 'silos', encouraging feedback and questions, providing information in an appropriate format for the target audience, providing information succinctly and highlighting key points.

Some candidates provided only brief responses and therefore did not provide enough points to secure marks. Some candidates wrote about methods of communication; unfortunately, this was not relevant to the specific question and therefore did not secure marks.

Question 5

Describe the main features of the following leadership styles and, for each style, give two examples of situations in which managers would find the style appropriate:

a) Autocratic (5 marks)

b) Transactional (5 marks)

c) Democratic (5 marks)

d) Transformational (5 marks)

Examiner Feedback

This question was the least popular option for candidates.

In order to score a high mark for this question, candidates needed to have specific understanding of each of the styles. Unfortunately, few candidates appeared to have this understanding.

A number of candidates confused transactional leadership with situational leadership. Others saw transactional as being concerned with selling. Some candidates saw democratic as being the manager making decisions based on team voting.

Where candidates did provide some information about a particular style, they often failed to provide all of the information required in the question; candidates were often unable to provide more than a basic statement about a particular style and often failed to provide examples of two situations where the style might be appropriate.

Question 6

a) Define the term 'delegation'.(2 marks)

b) Describe the factors that would influence your decision to delegate work to a subordinate. (8 marks)

c) Describe the main barriers to effective delegation. (10 marks)

Examiner Feedback

This question was a popular option.

In responding to part a), most of the candidates understood that delegation involves passing work over to a subordinate but unfortunately mainly failed to recognise that the final responsibility remains with the manager.

The focus of part b) was on the factors that a manager takes into account when deciding whether or not to delegate work. Candidates often identified issues such as the experience and skill of the staff to whom the task would be delegated, the resources (including staff) available for delegation purposes and the benefits in terms of staff development. However, candidates often failed to consider wider factors such as the risks associated with delegation, whether the manager had time to support the person who was taking on the delegated work and whether or not the work was appropriate for delegation due to the complexity/level of the task involved.

Responses to part c) were often quite brief with few candidates identifying sufficient points to secure high marks. Examples of points that could have been covered in responses included: tasks not being appropriate for delegation, staff not having capacity (in terms of workload) to take on the delegated task, staff not having appropriate skills/experience to complete the task, inadequate briefing of staff, manager being reluctant to lose control, organisation not committed to the use of delegation to support staff development and poor relationships between staff and managers which affected the commitment of those undertaking the tasks.

Question 7

a) *Explain why organisations need to identify their purpose. (2 marks)*

b) *Explain why organisations find it useful to have a Mission Statement.(2 marks)*

c) *Describe the factors which can cause an organisation to fail. (16 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

Part a) was often answered well with most candidates able to identify that a clear, stated purpose provides staff, stakeholders and customers with a clear understanding of what they can expect from the company and that it enables staff to see how they contribute to the overall purpose of the organisation.

Part b) was less well answered. Although many candidates articulated how the mission statement provides a vision that staff can buy into, few went on to explain that this provides a focus for plans and helps to prevent the organisation drifting away from its vision.

In responding to part c), candidates who scored high marks were able to identify factors such as poor leadership, poor organisational structure, poor/unmanaged performance, insufficient competent staff and not recognising the need for change. However, some candidates clearly focussed only on their personal situation and wrote about their own experience; these responses failed to address the requirement to focus at organisation level and therefore secured few, if any, marks.

Question 8

You have carried out an evaluation of a new piece of kit/equipment and have to provide information to your manager in a written report.

a) Explain the purpose of a report.   (2 marks)

b) Describe the factors that you would take into account when producing a report that will be made available to the senior management team. (14 marks)

c) Describe the final checks on the written report that you would make.   (4 marks)

Examiner Feedback

Part a) was usually answered well as many candidates correctly identified that a report both provides information and aids decision making.

There were many good responses to part b) with candidates taking into consideration the target audience for the report and their needs, including accessibility of the document. Points which secured marks included the need for: a clear introduction, a logical structure, avoidance of jargon, an explanation of the methodology, summary of outcomes of research, explanation of recommendations.

Part c) was generally answered well with candidates referencing checks such as: spelling checks, ensuring that information was referenced where relevant, ensuring that headings were correct, ensuring that presentation was fit for purpose (eg tables) and ensuring that all of the required information had been included.

Date issued: September 2019