

IFE Level 4 Certificate in Fire Safety and Fire Science

Unit 5 – Leadership and Management

Examiner Report – March 2015

Introduction

Candidates generally performed well with 60% of the candidates who entered for this paper securing a Pass. However, the majority of candidates who passed the examination secured a D Grade Pass and few candidates scored very high marks – no candidates achieved an A Grade and only 5 candidates achieved a B Grade.

Many candidates appeared to struggle in demonstrating understanding across the range of questions; even those candidates who achieved Pass level, often secured their Pass by performing well on a few questions rather than consistently well across all questions. Some responses lacked the depth and breadth of answer required at Level 4 with candidates providing partial responses rather going on to explore and assess issues in depth.

Question 1

You have been asked to plan and implement a knowledge management system for your organisation.

- a) Explain how you would manage this task to ensure a successful outcome for the project. (16 marks)*
- b) Identify two problems that could arise during the project and explain how you would address these problems. (4 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

Successful candidates understood that this was a question about project management and recognised the need to address all aspects of the process including engaging senior management, scoping the project, identifying outcomes, developing a project plan etc. Less successful candidates focussed on only one aspect of the project (particularly the scoping aspect). Some candidates wrote about knowledge management systems generally and failed to appreciate that the question was about project management.

Part b) was often answered well with candidates identifying a range of relevant problems such as overspending, team members not delivering as required etc.

Question 2

“A good leader will use different aspects from a range of leadership styles to achieve the objectives of the organisation.” Explain, using examples, why this is a valid statement. (20 Marks)

Examiner Feedback

Candidates who performed well identified that a management style may have to be varied depending on circumstance and gave good examples drawing on a range of management styles and situations. These candidates demonstrated ability to assess the value of different styles and to write about leadership issues.

Less successful candidates provided basic descriptions of one or two management styles without linking their descriptions to the question and without demonstrating ability to assess styles. These responses were not appropriate at level 4 and the candidates who only described/listed styles achieved few, if any, marks.

Question 3

Explain the contribution that Human Resource policies make to shaping corporate culture and positive industrial relations. (20 marks)

Examiner Feedback

Successful candidates understood that Human Resource policies underpin an organisation's approach to staff management, giving guidance to managers, forming the basis of procedures, ensuring compliance with legislation and helping to promote good employee relations. Some candidates gave examples of policies and contexts to illustrate their answers.

Less successful candidates provided generic responses about developing policies and/or the role of HR whilst others focussed on one aspect only such as equality and diversity.

Question 4

Identify sources of information that a manager can use when evaluating the performance of a team member and explain why and how the manager would use them. (20 marks)

Examiner Feedback

Successful candidates recognised the variety of sources and referenced options such as job descriptions, responses to team briefings, outcomes from special tasks, general attitude within the workplace, training, feedback from other managers etc. They also assessed the value of the sources and explained how the source could be used in assessing progress, attitude etc.

Unsuccessful candidates failed to appreciate the range of information sources available and wrote about a small number of sources such as appraisal and/or failed to assess the breadth of usefulness of resources.

Question 5

a) Explain the concept of continuing professional development and its importance to an individual's career. (10 marks)

b) Explain the purpose and process of personal development planning. (10 marks)

Examiner Feedback

This question was generally answered well. Most candidates understood the concept of CPD and recognised that it involves life-long learning, systematic maintenance of skills and knowledge, taking responsibility for own learning and can be part of appraisal within an organisation as well as identifying development needs. In part b) candidates generally understood the purpose and process of personal development learning.

Some candidates wrote brief lists and some provided only a few points rather than exploring the concepts in depth and explaining (as required by the question) their responses. Candidates should be aware that the number of marks available for responses provides a guide to the length and depth of response required.

Question 6

- a) Define the term "organisational risk" (2 marks)*
- b) Identify and explain seven types of organisational risks. (14 marks)*
- c) Describe the purpose of a risk register. (4 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

This question was generally answered well. In part a) most candidates identified that risk has the potential to prevent the achievement of objectives.

In response to part b), some candidates merely listed risks without explaining what they were and how they could affect an organisation. At Level 4, candidates need to demonstrate in-depth understanding and ability to assess the impact of risk rather than submitting short lists.

In response to part c), some candidates were not able to link the purpose of a risk register back to strategic plans or to explain the purpose of a risk register in providing a structure for information, informing decision-making processes, rating risks and allocating risks to relevant managers.

Question 7

Describe how team briefings contribute to both team and overall organisational effectiveness. (20 marks)

Examiner Feedback

Many candidates were able to achieve good marks for this question. Candidates understood the team briefing process and were able to demonstrate how teams briefings can help to maintain focus, increase commitment, improve working relationships, allow provision of standardised information, allow staff to put forward suggestions, prevent misunderstanding, clarify roles and responsibilities, assist in helping staff accept change and improve morale.

Some candidates focussed on one or two items only such as downward communication and meeting objectives. Some candidates wrote at length about team briefings generally and did not link their response back to the requirement to describe the contribution to organisational effectiveness.

Question 8

- a) Describe the benefits of regarding internal colleagues as customers and/or suppliers. (3 marks)*
- b) Explain why it is important to develop positive relationships with other internal managers in the organisation. (3 marks)*
- c) Describe the factors you would take into account to ensure constructive discussions with an internal managerial colleague whose team's performance is preventing your team from achieving its goals. (14 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

Many candidates performed well on parts a) and b). In response to part a), candidates understood the difference between a customer and a supplier, the importance of developing harmonious working relationships and the value of having clear responsibilities. In part b) candidates identified the interconnectedness of organisations and the importance of meeting of corporate objectives, prevention of silos and tensions and providing good role models

Part c) was less well answered. Some candidates failed to recognise that in this situation the manager is speaking to an equal and answered the question in terms of dealing with the poor performance of a subordinate. Some of the points that were expected, but which were often omitted in responses, included recognising that the relationship is one of equals, understanding challenges faced by colleagues, linking of problem to organisational objectives and identifying a way forward.