IFE Level 4 Certificate in Fire Safety and Fire Science

Unit 5 – Leadership and Management

Examiner Report – March 2019

Introduction

Candidates generally performed well with 57% of candidates attaining a Pass.

There were few very high scores and the majority of the candidates who passed the examination were awarded a D Grade.

Candidates generally performed well on questions 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7. The average mark attained for each of these questions was 8 or above. Candidates performed best on question 4. Candidates performed least well on questions 3 and 8.

Those candidates who were unsuccessful in the examination were usually unsuccessful either because they provided only a few brief points or because they failed to address all of the requirements of the question. At Level 4 candidates need to be able to explain why factors/issues are relevant and assess the impact of issues in different contexts; providing brief lists of points that are not fully linked back to the requirements of the question will not provide the depth of detail needed to attain high marks.

Question 1

a) *Explain, using examples, how organisations can use the output from a Management Information System (MIS) to help achieve objectives.(10 marks)*

b) *Describe how organisations can benefit from the development of knowledge management systems.   (10 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

Most candidates provided good responses to this question.

In responding to part a), most candidates identified that management information can aid decision making and enable improvements. Candidates were usually able to provide relevant examples of systems and their operation.

In responding to part b), candidates correctly identified that knowledge management systems can improve the capacity of the organisation by contributing to the achievement of organisational objectives, through sharing the accumulated knowledge, promoting learning and distributing expertise around the organisation.

Candidates who attained lower marks tended to have very little understanding of knowledge management systems or wrote about actual systems without linking the information to the question being asked.

Question 2

Describe the benefits to an organisation of encouraging innovation and creativity from their employees. (20 marks)

Examiner Feedback

Candidates who attained good marks for this question provided a careful assessment of the benefits and described examples such as:

- New ideas can aid competitiveness/improvements
- Helps staff to feel empowered.
- Creative staff can be an organisational strength and add dynamism
- Enables managers to give staff challenges and help them to develop to their full potential which in turn aids the organisation
- Can help an organisational to remain flexible and open to new ways of doing things
- Allows an organisation to tap into the knowledge of staff at all levels
- Helps staff feel respected which encourages them to go the extra mile and speak well of the organisation
- Can help develop effective teams where staff work together to come forward with solutions to problems.

Some candidates provided only brief responses and made only a few points without expanding them in any way. Candidates should be aware that the mark allocation shown on the question paper is an indication of the number of points required – candidates are awarded a mark per valid point.

Question 3

a) Explain the importance of strategic human resource planning to an organisation. (5 marks)

b) Describe the factors that organisations need to take into account as part of their human resource planning process. (15 marks)

Examiner Feedback

This was the least popular option for candidates and it was also the question which was answered least well.

In response to part a), some candidates were able to identify that human resource planning enables organisations to have enough people with the right skills to enable the achievement of organisational objectives.

In response to part b), candidates who scored high marks identified, and explained the relevance of, factors such as:

- The rate of staff turnover
- The overall employment situation in the area and competition for particular skills
- Planning for the introduction of new services which may need more staff and may bring a need for new types of skills and knowledge

- Succession planning arrangements to ensure that staff can be promoted to more senior posts as required
- Whether it will be necessary to reduce staff to improve efficiency due to reduced demand, new technology, or new methods of working
- Responding to changes in employment legislation (eg age)

Candidates who attained only a low mark often provided only a brief response to part b) and therefore missed the opportunity to attain higher marks.

Question 4

You have recently been appointed as the supervisor of a team of frontline staff. Describe the leadership skills that you will use and the actions you will take to maintain the motivation and effectiveness of the team. (20 marks)

Examiner Feedback

All of the candidates that sat the paper chose to attempt this question. Nearly all candidates provided good responses and the average mark attained was 11.

Good responses often included some, or all, of the following the following:

- Selecting the most appropriate leadership style for different situations
- Understanding that building a relationship can take time
- Being emotionally intelligent
- Ensuring that staff have clear policies to follow and clear targets to achieve
- Holding regular team briefings and using communication skills to keep staff engaged and well informed
- Encouraging staff to give feedback
- Setting performance challenges to energise and bond the team, preferably involving overlocking tasks so people work together
- Making team members feel that they have a worthwhile job which enables them to use their skills and feel satisfied in their work
- Allocating work fairly and effectively
- Dealing with any aspects of poor performance which could undermine the success of the team

Candidates who secured lower marks, tended to be on the right lines but provided insufficient information to achieve additional marks.

Question 5

a) *Explain why managers need to be aware of tensions developing within their teams. (10 marks)*

b) *Describe the actions managers could take to resolve tensions within their team. (10 marks)*

Examiner Feedback

This question was a popular option for candidates and the subject area seemed to be well understood. Candidates generally performed well and the average mark attained was 9.

In responding to part a), candidates were usually able to identify that continuing tensions can be detrimental to the success of an organisations because they can result in a number of problems such poor performance, loss of customers, loss of good employees and staff becoming less motivated.

Part b) was also answered well with candidates familiar with actions to reduce tensions such as not ignoring the signs, identifying the causes so they can be resolved, setting out clear standards of expected behaviour and undertaking team building exercises.

Question 6

Describe the different styles of learning and explain how knowledge of these can help a manager meet the training and development needs of their staff.   (20 marks)

Examiner Feedback

Candidates generally performed well.

Many candidates were able to describe the different learning styles which can be found amongst employees and explain how managers can use this information to provide preferred learning opportunities or to give support when staff are likely to find themselves outside their comfort zone. High scoring candidates supported their points with relevant examples of actions managers might take.

Some candidates limited their response to writing about learning styles or different types of training. This approach only partially answered the question and therefore it limited the marks that could be attained.

Question 7

a) Explain how risk management can be applied to all aspects of an organisation. (14 marks)

b) Explain why risk management is beneficial to organisations.   (6 marks)

Examiner Feedback

Candidates generally performed well. The average mark attained for this question was 9.

In responding to part a), some candidates assumed that risk applied only to health and safety. This approach limited the marks that could be attained as other risks such as environmental, capital (property, buildings, or other assets), financial, political and reputational, technological and operational (organisational interruption, liability) were largely ignored. Candidates who

explored the different risks in detail and explained the implications for an organisation were able to score high marks.

Part b) was not answered well as few candidates went beyond a reference to organisational survival. Candidates should be aware that risk management is a way to mitigate risks, to monitor them, to prevent escalations and to engage staff in taking responsibility for risks and thus ensuring that someone is working to prevent/mitigate situations that could be damaging to the organisation.

Question 8

Describe, using examples, the factors which organisations need to take into account when developing an effective organisational structure.   (20 marks)

Examiner Feedback

Some candidates wrote about organisation structure in general rather than relating structure to the success of an organisation. A few candidates used the opportunity to write about the structure within their own organisations. These types of responses did not score high marks as the question required an assessment of the issues affecting an effective structure and a straightforward description of different structures did not make the required link back to organisational performance and aspiration.

Candidates who scored high marks demonstrated understanding that organisations need to consider the impact of factors such as:

- The purpose of the organisation
- Delivery of strategic objectives
- Need to achieve effective coordination and prevent duplication
- The identification of how information will move around the organisation.
- Size of the organisation could influence the need for a geographical structure
- Need to group together staff with similar expertise in a product structure
- Grouping activities so that staff are focused on particular tasks which helps develop expertise amongst staff

Some candidates identified relevant factors but missed the opportunity to attain high marks as they did not expand their points sufficiently to cover explanations or examples.

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