©SQA

2013 Administration

Higher Paper 1

Finalised Marking Instructions

2013

Higher Administration – Paper 1

Solution and Marking Guidelines

ANNOTATION

Where you award a mark show it like this
(You may wish to bracket the relevant scoring point)

①

Put the total for the question in the first column on the right

2

Put the total for the whole question in the second column

18/20

0 = outline ⎫
A = additional comment ⎬ Describe
⎭

R = no mark awarded for repetition
No D = no discussion

1	Outline the ways in which a chairperson can ensure that meetings are effective.	4
	More than naming, but not a detailed description. Candidates will not be expected to develop their answers.	
	Chairperson must: liaise with the Secretary before the meeting be completely familiar with the organisation's Standing Orders start the meeting punctually ensure that the previous Minutes are a correct record work consistently through the Agenda try to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak try to ensure that discussion is kept to the point try to ensure that all who speak address the Chair decide when discussion has gone on long enough to sum up conclusions reached in an unbiased manner ensure that accurate Minutes are recorded	
	Notes Ensure that points made are not the duty of the Secretary, eg preparing equipment Accept inference of overseeing/delegating tasks to Admin Assistant	

2	Discuss the consequences of failing to plan and organise effectively for a meeting.	6
	If no attempt at discussion then only 50% of the marks available. If no discussion, please mark "No D".	
	If all those entitled to attend did not receive the Notice of Meeting and Agenda the quorum would not be reached - and the meeting would have to be postponed. If the Agenda was not carefully planned the meeting might not cover important topics. If the Agenda is not carefully planned the meeting might overrun. If the Chairperson was not well briefed, this would show during the discussion and - might lead to poor decisions being taken. If the venue booked was not suitable this could create problems the room might be too small, not set up as desired or it could even be double booked. Essential information might not be available at the meeting – this could lead to ill-informed decisions. If some people did not receive the Notice of Meeting, Agenda and/or additional papers which should have been distributed prior to the meeting it might not be possible to discuss certain items – discussion and decisions might have to be postponed to a future meeting. People attending the meeting could feel that their time had been wasted.	
	Notes Accept consequence followed by an implication – each would gain a mark. DNA repeat implications, eg reference to time, postponement, confusion.	

3	Describe 3 software applications that can be used by an Administrative Assistant.	6
	Award one mark for outline plus one for additional comment, illustration or example. No marks for simply naming the method.	
	Word Processing – keying in text/create text – is used to prepare Notice of Meeting/Agenda, Previous Minutes, letters, mail merge. **Spreadsheet** – this application allows calculations to be made - used to prepare costings for events, final accounts, charts **Database** – this application is used to store large amounts of information - which can then be sorted or searched at a later date – is used to search for information about staff, holding information about suppliers etc, holding names and addresses for Mail Merge **Email** – short messages and attachments sent via the internet – emails could be sent as a reminder of the date and time of the meeting – the same message can be sent to more than one person at the same time. **Electronic Diary** – an electronic version of a traditional diary – is used to check people's availability to attend meetings – reminders/alarms can be set, **Internet** – a worldwide database holding vast amounts of information – used to research information needed at the meeting – finding venue availability – finding accommodation for people attending the meeting. **Desk top publishing -** **Presentation software –**	
	Notes Description can be the core function/features/advantages Do not accept 2 examples. DNA general statements about MS Office – needs to be specific mention of application	

4	Justify the need for employees to have good time management skills.	2
	One mark for each justification	
	The best use is made of the time available Time-wasting activities are minimised More time is made available for important or urgent jobs Deadlines are met Reduces risk of stress Limits potential conflict between colleagues Increased productivity Increased motivation	
	Notes	

5	Compare Action Minutes and Formal Minutes.	2
	One mark is allocated for each complete statement of comparison	
	Both provide information on decisions taken at a meeting Both show attendees Both show where and when meeting took place Action minutes only contain who has to complete each task whereas Formal minutes will have some information about the discussion that took place. Formal minutes have a number of standard items eg Minutes of previous meetings and AOCB whereas Action Minutes only contain date of meeting, attendees and who has to do which tasks Formal minutes are laid out in paragraphs with headings whereas Action Minutes are displayed in columns	
	Notes	

1	a	Outline 4 support systems that could be implemented to improve staff welfare.	4
		More than naming, but not a detailed description. Candidates will not be expected to develop their answers.	
		Counselling Organisations support staff by offering counselling services on a range of issues such as stress, health and careers. All matters are treated in strictest confidence. **Grievance procedures** These aim to help resolve any difficulties between employer and employee in the workplace. **Return to work interviews** Most organisations will have policies on absence and illness and it is common for employees to receive advice and counselling upon returning to work after a prolonged absence. **Flexible working** Increasingly, employers are responding to their employees' demand for a more realistic work-life balance. This has led to an increasing demand for more flexible work patterns **Employee well-being initiatives** …. **Training/re-training** …. **Appraisal ……..**	
		Notes Max one statement on flexible working Max one statement on employee well-being initiatives	

	b	Describe 3 working practices that could be introduced to reduce staff turnover.	6
		Award one mark for outline plus one for additional comment, illustration or example. No marks for simply naming the method.	
		Part-time One person working less hours than a full time post – part-time workers cannot be treated less favourably than their full-time colleagues. **Job share** Two or more people sharing one full time position – with salary, holidays and other benefits shared on a pro rata basis according to the number of hours worked. **Flexi-time** Where start and finish times can vary to suit individual needs – employees must be in the office during core time **Homeworking/Teleworking** Where the employee can work, with the aid of IT, at home – at a time which suits their personal circumstances **Career break** The aim of a career break is to retain a valued and competent employee and allow them to have an agreed period of time off – this can range from 6 months to 5 years – some people take a career break to bring up children, others to travel the world some do it to recharge their batteries – depending on the length of the absence some retraining may be offered before a return to work **Shift work …..** **Term time hours ….**	
		Notes Must relate to staff turnover DNA hot-desking unless linked to one of the other practices Be aware of repetition in the additional point	

	c	Organisations interview applicants as part of the selection process. Discuss additional methods of selection that may be used to help choose the best candidate.	8
		Candidates need to discuss a minimum of 2 different methods. Maximum 7 on any one method. If no attempt at discussion then only 50% of the marks available. If no discussion, please mark "No D".	
		Tests (no mark for just naming the type of test – must be outlined) Employers often use selection tests to provide useful additional information about the candidate. **Skills tests** are used to ascertain existing skill levels and to find out if the candidate has the ability to do the job. **Personality/Psychometric tests** are used to explore a candidate's personality traits – obtain a profile of their personality. Only properly qualified staff should analyse personality tests to avoid misleading results. **Aptitude tests** are designed to measure an individual's level of verbal, numerical and diagrammatic reasoning. **Medical tests** are used by some professions to ensure candidates are physically able to carry out the activities required in the post. A problem associated with testing is that tests can make people feel quite nervous and as a result candidates may not perform well. **Reference/Employment checks** These should confirm that information already received form the candidate is accurate **Assessment Centres** Some employers use assessment centres to undertake the process of initial selection on their behalf. Assessment Centres narrow down the potential leet of candidates thus saving the organisation time and money. **The Application Form/CV** Information about the candidate is in standardised format.	

		It enables candidates to give full information about themselves. Organisation can match each completed application form with the person specification and job description to ascertain the candidate's suitability for the job. **Probationary period** Organisations employ new workers on a trial period – if successful, a contract is issued.	
		Notes	

	d	Justify the need for staff details to be held in a relational database.	2
		One mark for each justification	
		Details in some tables can be kept secure Avoids the need for repetitive information Can be used with new tables as they are developed Users need only look at relevant information Amendments in one table will affect all tables Data integrity can be maintained	
		Notes Justifications must relate to relational database	

2	a	Outline the benefits of dealing with customers face to face	4
		More than naming, but not a detailed description. Candidates will not be expected to develop their answers.	
		Opportunity for immediate feedback Can identify uncertainties and clarify immediately Allows for interaction between interviewer and interviewee Allows for more subtle questioning More likely that relationships will be formed between customer and organisation Demonstrations can be given if required May be appropriate if the discussion is confidential Allows body language to be read Promotes a good reputation that would ensure customer loyalty Can make the customer feel valued May help to defuse the situation if face to face as more personal Up-selling can be used in order to increase sales	
		Notes	

	b	Describe the following methods of research used by Customer Services: • Mystery shopper • Loyalty cards • Customer focus group	6
		Award one mark for outline plus one for additional comment, illustration or example. No marks for simply naming the method.	
		Mystery shopper Mystery shoppers are employed to act as a normal customer – and report back on the service they received - this information can then be fed back to staff – either to praise or reinforce good practice - or highlight bad customer service. **Loyalty cards** These were introduced by organisations to 'reward' customers for loyalty to the company's service or product – frequent travel air miles, discounted petrol and money off vouchers are common loyalty awards – all these rewards are aimed at retaining customers by showing that the organisations value and care for them. The card can be swiped/stamped at each transaction and the company hold personal details on each card holder. Information can be collated by the company on the type of products purchased, frequency of purchases, etc - this can help improve customer service. **Customer focus groups** Face-to-face meetings with small groups of customers – these provide the organisation with feedback on their products/services or opinions regarding proposed new products/services – customers feel they are being listened to and taken account of – which will encourage brand loyalty.	
		Notes	

	c	Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using the internet as a source of business information.	8
		Max 7 on one side If no attempt at discussion then only 50% of the marks available. If no discussion, please mark "No D".	
		Advantages It saves time as you do not have to leave your desk to find the information It operates 24/7 There is a lot of information to choose from It can be accessed anywhere Finding information is quicker than using paper based sources Finding information is relatively inexpensive You can print/save the information Facebook/Blogs – where thoughts/ opinions/information on products and services are displayed Wikis – a collection of articles that users can add to and there are a variety of opinions Discussion Groups – allowing for posting of messages which can be read and answered **Disadvantages** Do not always know the accuracy/ reliability of the source of information Information is not always well organised and therefore it may take some time to find the correct information It is easy to get distracted May be equipment or software problems Some information may be subject to copyright and cannot be used/may have to pay tor use Danger of malware entering computer system	
		Notes	

	d	Justify the importance of customer satisfaction to an organisation.	2
		One mark for each justification	
		It costs a business far more to attract a new customer than to retain an existing one In a competitive market customers can go elsewhere Can cut the number of complaints Repeat custom/loyalty Staff less stressed if customer satisfaction is high Higher sales turnover Increased market share Could gain a poor reputation Can find it difficult to attract quality staff	
		Notes Accept negative veiwpoint	

3	a	Outline 4 ways a team leader may monitor the progress of a project.	4
		More than naming, but not a detailed description. Candidates will not be expected to develop their answers.	
		Hold regular meetings with key staff Insist on regular updates on progress Arrange for update costs of the progress to be made available Set targets and milestones to check against progress of project Break projects into tasks Several systems could be used eg red, amber, green to code progress Use a Gantt chart to show progress compared to planned Use an action plan to check tasks completed compared to target dates Sampling of work to check standards and completion compared to targets	
		Notes	

	b	Describe 3 factors that would influence the methods of communication used by a team leader.	6
		Award one mark for outline plus one for additional comment, illustration or example. No marks for simply naming the method.	

If the recipient needs to have a record for future reference

for legal reasons

complexity of the information

need for a permanent record

instant communication – text/email

Written

It is instant communication

it allows for discussion

can be motivational

body language can be read

Oral

to make comparisons between sets of data

graphs can be produced from it

Numerical

Images are often easier to remember than words

graphs can be useful when showing comparisons between different sets of data

Graphs and pictures

Location of recipient
Accessibility of recipient
Resources available to communicator and recipient
Cost of communication method
Size of team

Notes

	c	Discuss reasons why a team may be ineffective.	8
		If no attempt at discussion then only 50% of the marks available. If no discussion, please mark "No D".	
		Team composition Factors such as personality, interests, age and backgrounds may not have been considered Team members may be too similar It is important to have people who have different skills and personalities The longer the team is together the more effective it is likely to be. Size of team. **Leadership** Poor leadership will lead to demotivation – and lack of direction **Nature of task** Team members may not have a clear idea of what they are there to achieve – they will not have clear goals **Team maintenance** May be lack of opportunities for the team to come together informally. Need to be given time to allow relationships to develop through team-building events, social gatherings etc	
		Notes	

	d	Justify the importance of a mission statement to the organisation.	2
		One mark for each justification	
		It sets out the aims/objectives/targets/goals of the organisation It explains how an organisation will achieve its aims/objectives/targets/goals It contains the values of the organisation A mission statement will attract custom A mission statement will provide direction for the organisation A mission statement will help with employee motivation It helps the image of the organisation Customer promise regarding what customers can expect	
		Notes	

4	a	Outline 4 features of effective targets.	4
		More than naming, but not a detailed description. Candidates will not be expected to develop their answers.	
		Specific – they must state exactly what has to be done Measureable – they must state how much/what size, so you can reach them Agreed – they must be agreed with the line manager Realistic – they should be achievable – but still challenging Timed – it is important that key dates identify when the work will be completed Incentives Monitored Motivational Recorded Understood by those completing them	
		Notes	

	b	Describe the implications of a manager failing to delegate effectively.	6
		Award one mark for outline plus one for additional comment, illustration or example. No marks for simply naming the method.	
		Managers doing inappropriate level of tasks to detriment of more important ones – resulting in loss of business. Lack of development of staff leading to – staff not ready for promotion. Managers becoming stressed leading to – illness and/or absenteeism. Staff becoming demotivated leading to – staff leaving the organisation. Targets and deadlines may not be met – resulting in loss of business. Staff are given tasks for which they are not suited – can lead to stress/lack of motivation. There is a lack of resources to carry out the task – negative effect on staff.	
		Notes Can be either not delegating at all or delegating ineffectively. DNA award for repetition	

	c	Discuss how effective data management can be ensured within an organisation.	8
		If no attempt at discussion then only 50% of the marks available. If no discussion, please mark "No D".	
		Physical security of: Hardware – it is not only the threat of theft of hardware that managers have to think about, it is the theft of the data stored on it Organisations may choose to do such things as mark their equipment Physical security also includes safe storage of disks/CDs to prevent accident or loss. **Back-up procedures** To ensure a back up copy of data is taken in case of accident or damage to the original. **Access rights** It is important that organisations ensure that all who need access have it, but also that people who should not have access do not. Even authorised users do not normally have the right to see all data held on company databases and rights could be set at different levels including read only, read/write or no access at all. Access could also be limited to particular terminals or to particular times in the day Security of access could include; • Log-in procedures to ensure only those authorised have access to data • Password protection – most organisations require staff to change passwords on a regular basis. **File management** Housekeeping - this will include archiving old data, regular back-up procedures and general disk clean up.	

		User policies **Staff training** **Data entry** **Firewalls** **IT technicians** **Centralised location for file storage** **Encryption of data if being sent out with organisation** **Use of personal storage devices**	
		Notes Accept references to paper-based data	

	d	Justify the introduction of a centralised IT department.	2
		One mark for each justification	
		Procedures and processes can be standardised Trained IT staff can ensure effective data management Hardware and software can be shared Department has an overview of organisational data requirements It is easier to prioritise the purchase of new hardware and software across the company and budget accordingly It is easier and cheaper to train and support users if they are working with similar systems Security systems are more efficient if controlled centrally Auditing systems can be put in place to track usage/files accessed No need to outsource IT work/cost savings Staff can focus on their core tasks rather than troubleshooting IT problems	
		Notes	

5	a	Outline 2 features of the following legislation:
		
		    i. The Data Protection Act
		
		    ii. The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act
			4

		More than naming, but not a detailed description. Candidates will not be expected to develop their answers.	

		Data Protection Act
		
		The Act protects information held on individuals
		
		Data must be:
		
		  • Fairly and lawfully obtained
		  • Accurate and up-to-date
		  • Held securely
		  • Adequate, relevant and not excessive to needs
		  • Available to the Data Subject
		
		Data must not be:
		
		  • retained for longer than necessary
		  • passed on without agreement
		  • transferred outwith the EU
		
		Copyright, Designs and Patents Act
		
		Covers music, books, films, software, designs, trademarks, etc
		
		Gives the authors/creators rights about how their work/ideas can be used.
		
		Ensures that no unauthorised copying takes place
		
		If you would like to use someone's work, you may be able to get permission to do so from the author, but there is usually a fee involved.
		
		Copyrighted material is marked with the copyright sysmbol©
		Accept reference to TM	

		Notes	

	b	Describe the benefits of induction training.	6
		Award one mark for outline plus one for additional comment, illustration or example. No marks for simply naming the method.	
		Allows initial training to be carried out - for example on specific software packages the employee will use Allows time to meet fellow workers - and this should ensure that they settle in quickly Allows time to introduce employee to organisation's Health and Safety Policy – therefore they will know how to react in an emergency situation Allows time for the organisation to introduce new employees to the company objectives – in order that they understand where they fit in Allows the organisation to inform the employees of expectations – so that all tasks are completed to a high standard To identify strengths and weaknesses – this can help identify future training needs.	
		Notes	

	c	Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of primary and secondary information.	8
		Max 7 for primary only or secondary only	
		If no attempt at discussion then only 50% of the marks available. If no discussion, please mark "No D".	

Primary – Strengths

- It is likely to be up to date
- The source is known
- It should be correct and relevant for the purpose for which it was gathered

Primary – Weaknesses

- It may be expensive to collect – especially if an external organisation is used
- It may be difficult to collect
- It may be flawed – the sample targeted might be too small, or the questions may be leading
- The respondents may have lied
- The researcher may be biased

Secondary – Strengths

- There is a wide range of potential sources
- Relatively cheap to access

Secondary – Weaknesses

- It could be out of date
- Your competitors also have access to it
- It might not be relevant to your purpose

Notes

	d	Justify the need for a complaints policy	2
		One mark for each justification	
		All complaints will be handled in the same way Will support good customer service Will encourage customer loyalty Customer knows who to complain to Customer knows what to expect Staff can refer to the policy if in doubt as to how to process a complaint Can provide information on areas/products that need to be improved Positive reputation for the organisation	
		Notes	

EXEMPLARS

CASE STUDY
Microsoft word could be used as can be used for letters, documents and target settings. It is a versatile software that could be used to its simplest form to most complex depending on task needed. Spreadsheet can be used to show and calculate data of financial tasks. This could be used from a daily basis to weekly depending on the tasks that need doing. It allows for easy comparison simple calculations and easy input if something in organisation changes. Powerpoint can also be used. This need be for a meeting to show clearly a point being made. These may need to be done quickly so a basic hard knowledge allows for easier use.

QUESTION 3

Depending on how many people are in a team this may influence the leaders method of communication – whether they speak face to face or whether a group email is sent as if the team contain a large number.

Location of team members is a factor influencing communication. If a member lives in a remote area communication via telephone or email may have to be the only option. The hours worked by staff may be an influence of method of communication as some staff may work part-time whereas others work full-time. Part-time staff may have to be contacted via technology, whereas full-time staff could be spoken to face to face.

QUESTION 2

Mystery shopper – where the organisation hires someone to act like a normal customer and to then give feedback on how they feel they were treated.

Loyalty card – this is a reward which a customer receives when being loyal to one of the organisation's products or just the organisation as a whole for being a regular customer. This helps to keep existing customers and attract new ones.

Customer focus groups – where groups of customers meet face to face with some people from the organisation and the organisation get feedback from customers about existing products and also about products they are thinking of bringing out.

A mystery shopper is a person which the organisation or company who disguises themselves and goes into a shop to ensure that all staff are dealing with all customers correctly and adequately.

Loyalty cards are used to reward customers for staying loyal to the company. Customers may receive points which can be exchanged for money or goods.

A customer focus group is a group of people from the company who ask customers questions about their experience with the company. Anything which leads to focus they will ensure it is dealt with.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]