

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2012

Level 3 Principal Learning
Information Technology
Unit 2 (IT302) Understanding Organisations

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General comments

The paper was based upon a fictional Company called Branchjobs, a company run originally as a sole trader, but with a sleeping partner introduced. The company was purchasing new premises to add to existing site and needed to update computer systems.

The performance of learners on this paper showed an improvement in the higher ability range in answering 'explain' and 'discuss' questions, but overall it was disappointing to see so many marks missed on more straightforward questions.

There was more evidence than in previous years that pre-release had been accessed in preparation for the examination, but the preparatory work appeared to be still very limited. Learners will always benefit from the study and discussion of the scenario in the pre-release.

Most learners attempted all questions and there was little evidence of learners running short of time.

Pre-release

The pre-release introduced a fictional organisation, Branchjobs, A DIY store which was expanding its premises.

Learners who had studied the pre-released material were evidenced by demonstrating a clearer understanding of the question paper, However, it was evident that some learners had not taken the opportunity to research topics in the pre-release particularly Computer Aided Learning and security of data transfer. This had a major impact on the marks achieved by learners.

The purpose of the pre-release is to give learners a chance to familiarise themselves with the type of organisation they will be answering questions upon in the exam and to highlight areas of study where research could provide useful additional information to support their answers.

It is strongly recommended that centres use the pre release material to prepare Learners for the examination.

Question 1

This question focused on the structure and management of Branchjobs and covered topics highlighted in the pre-release. It was pleasing to see that the majority of learners understood the structure of an organisation and the disadvantages to the company in adopting a particular organisational structure although some were less sure of the disadvantages of having a sleeping partner.

Question 2

This question was a SWOT analysis about which packages were best suited to complete tasks. e.g. spreadsheets, databases. Many learners appeared unsure of which program was best suited to a task.

Question 3

This first part of the question focused on legacy systems and problems of data transfer from a legacy system to a new system. This question was answered quite competently by the whole range of learners. The second part of the question was about roles and responsibilities with reference to a project manager. Learners seemed more aware of the role of a project manager than in previous examination sessions.

Questions 4

This question focused on a flow diagram to show an ordering process. Many learners failed to recognise that a part order could be sent and some learners simply described the diagram rather than the process it showed.

Questions 6

This question focused on profit, market economies and liquidity. (Risk factors in an organisation). It was disappointing to see so few learners able to calculate profit and return on investment, as these questions have appeared on a number of previous examination papers. For indicators of economic change, most learners gave the expected responses of inflation, high street turnover, unemployment or interest rates. Many gave change of government as an indicator. Responses concerning liquidity and need for good liquidity were disappointing in that only a minority managed excellent answers and many seemed to have little or no understanding of liquidity. This question has appeared on a number of occasions and responses were disappointing in that only a minority managed excellent answers and many seemed to have little or no idea of why good liquidity is imperative in the launch of a new product.

Question 5

The question focused on protocols, interfaces and data structures. Generally answered quite well and knowledge of compatibility and prevention of corrupting data in transfer was evidenced by the majority of learners.

Questions 6

This question focused on profit, market economies and liquidity. (Risk factors in the economic climate) It was disappointing to see so few learners able to calculate the percentage increase in sales needed to finance the computer system. For indicators of economic risks, most learners answered this competently and showed a clear knowledge of factors which could affect the business. Many learners still missed the fact that cash flow also relates to time constraints

Question 7

This question focused on customer satisfaction. Use of websites was included in the question together with Computer Aided Learning Packages. Most learners appeared to misunderstand the question and answered on generic features of a website rather than specific to an e-commerce site. Most learners effectively answered benefits to customer and business of an effective e-commerce site. The section on CAL was answered very well by stronger learners. Weaker learners were aware of some simple advantages of CAL.

Question 8

This question focused on data security when storing data and when transferring data. Data security was answered successfully with the majority of learners showing clear understanding and knowledge of passwords and logins. There was a good awareness of hacking, viruses and unlawful entry, but legislative issues were answered very briefly and in many cases not at all.

Conclusion

There was evidence that learners who had spent time in preparation using the pre-release materials demonstrated a clearer understanding of the requirements set by the examination paper. The more technical questions which involved security and protocols indicated sound knowledge of encryption, password protection and security clearances. Legislative issues continue to prove a weak area of learners' knowledge and understanding.

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