



Level 1 Certificate in Business Administration (New 2012)

Examination Guidance for Candidates

For Syllabus Effective from: June 2012

Introduction

This document is designed to support students preparing for the Level 1 Certificate in Business Administration (New 2012) examination.

The document is presented in **five parts**:

A. Examination Format

B. Coverage of Topics in the Examination

C. Question and Answer Formats (this includes sample questions and answers)

D. Command Words and their meanings

E. Examination Techniques

This document should be read in conjunction with the syllabus for the qualification.

While the document is primarily intended for use by candidates, it is a very useful document for teachers to use in the delivery of the qualification and in preparing students for the examination.

A Examination Format

This qualification is assessed by a written examination. The format of the examination is as follows:

- There are four (4) questions, each carrying 25 marks. The paper has a total of 100 marks.
- All questions are compulsory; you must answer all 4 questions.
- The time allowed for the examination is 1 ½ hours.
- Question 1 is an 'in-tray' exercise which requires you to complete a series of tasks, including producing a particular type of written communication. This may be a letter, memo, email, Accident Report or a Telephone Message.
- Questions 2, 3 and 4 are short answer questions, each consisting of a number of parts.

B Coverage of Topics in the Examination

The questions in each examination paper will test all the topics in the syllabus. This means that you need to have a good understanding of all the syllabus topics. Each question will probably test more than one topic area.

The table below shows the approximate number of marks from each topic area that will be in every examination paper.

Topic Areas	Approximate number of marks in each examination paper
1. The Office Environment	15 marks
2. Working in an Administrative Role	10 marks
3. Verbal and Written Business Communications	25 marks
4. Office Equipment and Machinery	20 marks
5. Storage and Retrieval of Information	20 marks
6. Maintaining and Issuing Stationery Stock	10 marks

Question 1

Question 1 is always presented as a scenario of a 'real world' office environment where you are working as a member of the administrative staff. The scenario will give you information about the work environment – for example what your work involves, who you work with, dates of events, etc. You are then presented with a series of tasks to complete. The first of these tasks is to produce the written communication that is appropriate for the situation given in the scenario.

In producing the written communication you need to:

1. Read the question carefully to identify which type of written communication you should produce. This will be clearly stated in the question, and may either be a letter, memo, email, Accident Report or Telephone Message. If you are required to produce an Accident Report or Telephone Message, you will be provided with a form to use. As part of the question, you will be asked to give a reason why the requested written communication is suitable for the situation. One (1) mark is allocated for this.
2. If you are asked to produce a letter, email or memo, you need to think about how you should layout and format these. The layout of an email is different from that of a memo or letter, so you need to have a clear idea of how you are going to present these. In addition, make sure you are familiar with the layout of the Accident Report and Telephone Message forms. The Appendix in the syllabus shows the acceptable layout and format for all types of written communication. You also need to think about the tone and style of your writing. Your writing should be businesslike with appropriate paragraphing and formal language. The vocabulary used should relate to the purpose of the communication. Three (3) marks are allocated for layout, tone and vocabulary.
3. Select the relevant information from the scenario that you need to include in your communication. This information may be specific to the scenario (e.g. dates, names, events, locations, references, instructions, etc.) or it may be related to other syllabus topics. The scenario will sometimes indicate information related to other syllabus topics that you need to include in the communication. This will only apply to scenarios requiring memos and emails to be produced. In these cases, you need to carefully read the scenario to identify what information from other syllabus topics you should include. If you are asked to produce an Accident Report or Telephone Message, remove the form from the back of the examination paper and use it as a guide to select the relevant information from the scenario.
4. In producing your written communication, you need to present the selected information in a clear and logical way to demonstrate your understanding of the purpose of the communication, as well as your knowledge of any syllabus topic that is to be included. Two (2) marks are allocated in the question for selecting and including the relevant information. Where information relating to other syllabus topics is required in the communication, five (5) marks are allocated to presenting the correct information.
5. Check your work to ensure that you have included only the necessary information and have correctly spelt any names and technical terms used in the scenario. Two (2) marks are allocated for correctly spelling names and technical terms and for not including any irrelevant information.

Question 1 is the only question that will require you to produce any type of written communication. An example of Question 1 is given on page 5. Comments are provided to show how the points outlined above apply.

Question 1 will always be presented this way – different scenarios will be used but tasks (a) and (b) will always have similar requirements to the question in the example.

The other tasks in the question, (c) and (d), will require you to present information related to topics in the syllabus within the context of your job outlined in the scenario.

Part (a) will clearly state the written communication you should produce. In this case, it is an Accident Report. A form will be provided at the back of the examination paper for you to use.

Question 1

You work in the administrative team in the Legal Department of Bella Trading Ltd. Your team member Joanne Louboutin had an accident yesterday at 3pm. Kevin Panton, the team leader had asked her to, first, copy some documents and then trim the edges to reduce the size. While she was trimming the edges of one of the documents, the handle of the guillotine broke and caused a cut to her finger.

Mary Jones, the Legal Secretary, saw the accident occur and applied a pressure pad and plaster to the cut. Joanne went home immediately after the accident.

(a) Using the information provided above, produce the Accident Report on the form supplied. In producing the Accident Report you must:

(i) include all the relevant details (3 marks)

(ii) use the appropriate layout, tone and vocabulary to suit the purpose of the communication (3 marks)

(iii) check the accuracy of the communication. (2 marks)

REMEMBER TO DETACH THE COMPLETED FORM AND INSERT IT IN YOUR ANSWER BOOKLET

(b) Give **one** reason why a form is suitable for communicating information about the accident. (1 mark)

Your team leader has become concerned about the number of accidents involving office equipment and machinery. He plans to discuss this at the next team meeting and has asked you to prepare some notes.

Answer the questions below to form the notes for the team meeting:

(c) (i) Give **three** reasons why it is important to report accidents like the one described above. (3 marks)

(ii) Explain how following the manufacturer's instructions can help to reduce accidents when using machinery and equipment. (3 marks)

(d) (i) State **two** guidelines for using each of the following types of office equipment and machinery:
▪ laptops
▪ printers
▪ fax machines (6 marks)

(ii) Describe what **each** of the following items of office equipment and machinery are used for:
▪ laminator
▪ binding equipment (4 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

Some of the details to be included on the form will be clearly stated in the scenario; others will not be stated and you will need to interpret the information given to identify these. For example, the scenario does not explicitly state that Joanne works in the Legal Department or that Mary Jones is also the witness to the accident, but you are able to determine these by interpreting the information given. In this case, you would gain the 3 marks for giving the correct details for *Department, Date and time of accident and name and title of witness*.

You would gain 1 mark for layout if you sign and date (i.e. exam date) the report. You would gain the other 2 marks for using appropriate language and a formal tone to give the details of the accident, injury and treatment.

In this question, you would gain the 2 marks for correctly spelling *Joanne Louboutin* (it has to be in the right place on the form) and *guillotine*, and for including only the relevant details about the accident; i.e. not including details about the task given by Kevin Panton.

The answers to parts (b), (c) and (d) are separate from the written communication you have produced. Your answers to these questions should be in the form of short notes or bullet points, as appropriate.

The model answer for this question is given on the next page.

Question 1

Model Answer

ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

Name of person injured:Joanne Louboutin.....

Department:Legal Department.....

Job title:Administrator.....

Date and time of accident:Day before exam date at 3pm.....

Details of accident /injury:

Joanne was trimming the edges of a document on the guillotine when the handle broke resulting in a cut to her finger.

Details of any first-aid treatment given – include name of person who administered first-aid

Pressure pad and plaster were applied by Mary Jones

Was the injured person taken to hospital? Yes / No

If Yes, name and address of hospital:

..... Postcode

Name(s) and job title(s) of witnesses:

.....Mary Jones - Legal Secretary.....

Signature of person reporting accident*Candidate Signature*.....

Date.....Date of examination.....

(8 marks)

1(b)

A form is suitable for communicating information about the accident because it provides headings to guide completion therefore ensuring consistency in how accidents are recorded. (AC3.3.1)

(1 mark)

(c) (i) Three reasons why it is important to report accidents (AC4.1.6):

- So that the equipment/machines can be repaired quickly to avoid delays in getting work done
- To identify any fault with the equipment so that the equipment/machine can be repaired
- To prevent similar accidents happening in the future improving the organisation's reputation for health and safety
- To keep a record of the accident in order to comply with Health and Safety regulations
- To use as evidence in legal proceedings if the injured party wants to claim compensation at some future date.

(Any 3 x 1 mark)

(ii) How following the manufacturer's instructions helps to reduce accidents:

- They give a step by step guide to using the machinery/equipment so the user is less likely to use the machinery in the wrong way
- They make users aware of potential risks therefore helping them to avoid accidents
- They highlight the necessary safety clothing and accessories that should be worn /used to prevent accidents.

(3 x 1 mark)

(d) (i) Two guidelines for using each of the following types of office equipment and machinery (AC4.1.3):

Laptops

- Wherever possible, use a docking station with separate keyboard and mouse.
- Do not put the laptop on your lap for a long period of time.
- Avoid placing any objects or paper between the display screen and the keyboard.
- Turn off any attached devices and disconnect cables before moving the laptop.

(Any 2 x 1 mark)

Printers

- Check that the printer has sufficient paper before printing.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for loading paper, particularly special paper, e.g. letterheads
- Delete your print job from the queue if you change your mind about printing the document(s)
- Only print required pages rather than the whole document
- Print preview before sending documents to print.

(Any 2 x 1 mark)

Fax Machines

- Make sure the fax machine is connected to a working phone line.
- When sending a fax, always include a cover sheet so the recipient knows who the fax is from, how many pages to expect and what it relates to.
- Make sure the fax machine has sufficient paper and toner cartridge has sufficient ink.
- Use international dialling codes if sending faxes overseas.

(Any 2 x 1 mark)

(Maximum 6 marks)

(d) (ii) The purpose of each of the following items of office equipment and machinery (AC4.1.2):

- **Laminator** – a machine used to cover and seal a document in transparent plastic **(1)**, to protect it from dirt and liquid as well protecting it from tears and creases **(1)**.
- **Binding equipment** – a piece of equipment used to secure together pages of a multi-page document **(1)** to strengthen the document and improve its presentation **(1)**.

(2 x 2 marks)

(Total 25 marks)

The question on the next page shows an example of 'Question 1' where an email is to be produced.

Please note that it is not a full example of Question 1 – it only shows task (a).

This question requires information relating to Syllabus Topic 1 to be included in the email. You would gain 5 marks from the 8 marks in Part (a) (i) for presenting the correct information about the purpose and use of hot-desks.

This identifies the purpose of the communication. It also indicates the vocabulary to be used as well as information relating to the context that is to be included (i.e. the recent complaints). In this case, you would gain the other 3 marks from the 8 marks in Part (a) (i) for recognising the need to include the information about the purpose and use of hot-desks, for stating that staff members have complained, and for using the correct email address for Gianna.

Question 1

You are employed as the administrative assistant to Gianna Poole, the Office Manager at Executive Training Services Ltd. Many of the company's employees work from home. As a result, the company has recently introduced 'hot-desks' to facilitate these employees when they come into the office.

Gianna has recently received complaints from some of these employees that they do not get to use the hot-desks as they are often being used by office-based staff. On many occasions, materials and other paperwork are left on the desks.

Gianna has decided to send an email to all staff to make them aware of the complaints and to remind them of the purpose of hot-desks and how they should be used. The group email address for all staff is: allstaff@executivetraining.co.uk. Gianna uses a similar email address but starting with her full name.

- (a) Produce the email that Gianna will send to all staff. In producing the email you must:
- (i) include the relevant information indicated in the scenario (8 marks)
 - (ii) use the appropriate layout, tone and vocabulary to suit the purpose of the communication (3 marks)
 - (iii) check the accuracy of the communication. (2 marks)

You would gain these 3 marks for using the correct layout for an email (i.e. email addresses of sender and recipient; date; subject) and using appropriate vocabulary and tone suitable to the purpose of the communication. See model answer.

For this scenario, you would gain the 2 marks for correctly spelling 'Gianna Poole' and using the correct 'all staff' email address.

Question 1

Model Answers – *Other wording is acceptable as long as the information given is correct.*

Email Message

From: giannapoole@executivetraining.co.uk
To: allstaff@executivetraining.co.uk
Date: Examination date
Subject: Use of Hot-desks

Dear Staff

I have recently received complaints from some staff members about the way in which the hot-desks are being used. I would like to remind you of the purpose of hot-desks and how they should be used.

Hot-desks are designed to be used only for short periods of time and should not be treated like permanent desks. Any materials and paperwork that are used at these desks must be cleared away and personal items should not be left on the desks or in the drawers. A hot-desk can be booked in advance to ensure that it will be available when needed.

All staff members are welcome to use these desks but please ensure that the desks are ready for the next member of staff to use.

If you have any queries, please do email me.

Kind regards
Gianna Poole

Questions 2, 3 & 4

Questions 2, 3 and 4 are short answer questions consisting of a number of parts. A brief background to provide the context for the questions and answers is given first. This is then followed by the questions; there will be no more than four (4) part questions – (a), (b), (c) & (d). Each part-question will show the number of marks allocated to it.

An example of this type of question is shown below:

Question 2

You have recently started to work as a member of the administrative team at Star Enterprises Ltd. A key part of your role is to maintain and monitor the stock of office stationery items. This involves dealing with suppliers over the telephone.

- (a) Describe how **each** of the following documents could be used for monitoring the stock of stationery items:
- Bin/stock cards
 - Stock taking sheet
 - Stock Requisition Form
- (6 marks)
- (b) Explain why it is important for the business not to have:
- (i) too much stock
 - (ii) too little stock
- (4 marks)
- (c) (i) Explain **two** reasons why it is important for you to present a positive image of your organisation when dealing with suppliers over the telephone.
- (4 marks)
- (ii) State **three** guidelines that you could use when making telephone calls to suppliers.
- (3 marks)
- (d) (i) Explain why it is important for you to be able to work as part of a team.
- (4 marks)
- (ii) Describe **two** ways in which you could show your ability to work effectively within your team.
- (4 marks)
- (25 marks)**

This is the background information for the question. Your answers need to be relevant to the background, where appropriate. You need to read this carefully to identify the key points.

Every part-question will begin with a command word – these are underlined in the example question. Command words tell you the level of detail you need to give in your answer. For example, you would need to give greater details for your answer to part (a) than you would for part (c) (ii). A list of command words and their meanings is given on page 13.

Part-questions will highlight in bold the 'number of things' you need to give. You will see this in each question. The number of marks for each part-question is based on this – e.g. part (a) requires you to describe 3 features for 6 marks; this tells you that each description is worth 2 marks.

The model answer for this question is given on the next page.

QUESTION 2 – Mark scheme

Syllabus Topics: 2 – Working in an Administrative Role (2.1.6; 2.1.7); 3 – Verbal and Written Communication (3.2.5; 3.2.8); 6 – Maintaining and Issuing Stationery Stock (6.1.3; 6.1.7)

(a) Describe how each of the following documents could be used for monitoring the stock of stationery items:

- **Bin/Stock cards** – these are used to record the receipt and issue of a particular item of stock and shows the running balance of the number of items that should be in stock **(1)**. This would help to identify when to reorder stationery items so they are always available. It will also help to identify if stationery items are going missing **(1)**.
- **Stock taking sheet** – this is used to record the quantities of each item of stock during physical stock taking **(1)**. This would help to identify any discrepancies between the stationery items that should be in stock and what is actually in stock; this will help to identify any theft or poor practice in managing the stationery items **(1)**.
- **Stock Requisition Form** - this is used by staff members to request stock items from the store **(1)**. This would record the stationery items used by staff so that usage levels can be established and stock records can be updated **(1)**.

(3 x 2 marks)

(b) (i) Why it is important for a business not to have too much stock:

- Some stationery items may become unsuitable for use and need to be disposed of, e.g. correcting fluid may dry out and become hard. **(1)** This would be a waste of resources. **(1)**
- A bigger storage area will be needed **(1)** which is more costly for the business **(1)**
- May result in wastage if there are business changes, e.g. if the business has a large stock of letter headed paper and it changes its name or logo **(1)** then this will result in a significant waste **(1)**.

(Any 1 x 2 marks)

(b) (i) Why it is important for a business not to have too little stock:

- Possibility of running out of stock **(1)** which could delay work **(1)**
- Could negatively impact on the reputation of the business **(1)** if work is not done on time or carried out inefficiently because of a lack of stationery **(1)**

(1 x 2 marks)

QUESTION 2 – Mark scheme – Contd.

Syllabus Topics: 2 – Working in an Administrative Role (2.1.6; 2.1.7); 3 – Verbal and Written Communication (3.2.5; 3.2.8); 6 – Maintaining and Issuing Stationery Stock (6.1.3; 6.1.7)

(c) (i) Two reasons why it is important to present a positive image of your organisation when dealing with suppliers over the telephone:

- To strengthen the good reputation of the organisation **(1)** which may result in discounts or longer payment periods **(1)**
- To develop good relationships with suppliers **(1)** which may result in becoming a priority/favourite customer **(1)**

(2 x 2 marks)

(c) (ii) Four guidelines that you could use when making telephone calls to suppliers:

- Locate the name and telephone number of the supplier
- Write down the main points to be covered in the telephone call
- Locate the information/documents needed for reference during the call
- Have pen and paper ready to make notes
- Dial the number and give your name and reason for calling
- Ask for the person you need and identify who you are and your company name.

(Any 4 x 1 mark)

(d) (i) Why it is important to be able to work as part of a team:

- Many administrative roles require team work to get work done.
- Helps to develop a positive working relationship between colleagues
- May need to work with colleagues from other departments
- May need to support colleagues when they are busier than you are

(4 x 1 mark)

(d) (ii) Two ways you could show your ability to work effectively in a team:

- Completing own tasks on time and according to instructions **(1)** to avoid delaying the work of the team **(1)**
- Sharing solutions, suggestions and ideas **(1)** to improve how the team works and its efficiency **(1)**
- Taking responsibility for any errors made **(1)** and not trying to blame others **(1)**
- Helping team members with tasks when able to do so **(1)** in order to achieve team goals **(1)**
- Acting on feedback given **(1)** to improve own performance **(1)**
- Empathising with team members if there is a problem **(1)** to improve relationships with colleagues **(1)**

(Any 2 x 2 marks)

(25 marks)

D

Command Words and their meanings

Below is a list of command words that are likely to be used in examination questions. It is important that you understand how to respond to different command words as this can affect your success in the examination.

Command words provide guidance on what the examiner is asking you to do. They also guide you on the approach you need to take when answering the questions.

This list has been provided to help you to understand how to answer questions where the command words are used.

Apply	To put something to practical use.
Compare	To explain the similarities and differences between different items.
Contrast	To distinguish between items being compared by focusing on differences.
Define	To give the specific meaning of words, terms, etc. It may be the definition from a textbook or your own words.
Demonstrate	To show or prove especially by reasoning, evidence etc.
Describe	To imagine and give information that paints a complete picture.
List	To remember items and write them in the form of a list – no need to go into details.
Explain	To make the meaning of something clear, often by making comparison or giving examples. Explanations often require about two or more sentences.
Give	To outline your points briefly.
Identify	This requires selective use of your knowledge; you need to apply bits of your knowledge to the situation identified in the question.
Illustrate	To clarify or explain by use of examples. If appropriate, you could also draw a diagram as a way of illustrating.
Outline	To give the main features or general idea of something.
Show	To explain or make clear; to prove.
Suggest/Recommend	To put forward (a plan, idea etc.) for consideration.
State	To write what you are asked about in a clear, simple and ‘to the point’ way; no need to explain.

E Examination Techniques

- 1** Revise all topics within the syllabus.
- 2** Make sure you are familiar with the examination format.
- 3** Read and follow the instructions on the front page of the examination paper.
- 4** Decide on a time allowance that suits you - 30 minutes for Question 1 and 20 minutes for each of Question 2, 3 & 4 is reasonable. Your time allowance should include time to check your answers.
- 5** Read all questions carefully before answering, paying attention to the number of marks allocated for each part. Quickly write down ideas for answers as they come to you so you don't forget them later.
- 6** Underline the key facts in the scenario/background information and the command words in the questions. This will help you to focus on what you are required to do.
- 7** Produce your answers in the format and level of detail required, referring back to the key facts and command words. Make sure Question 1 is produced using the acceptable layout and format - the Appendix in the syllabus provides guidance on the layout and format of different forms of written communication.
- 8** Check each answer as soon as you have completed it. Have you given the answer required? Have you answered all parts of the question?
- 9** If you produced an Accident Report or Telephone Message, make sure that you attach the completed form in your answer book.

For further guidance on preparing for and sitting examinations, please see 'Your guide to examination success'. This can be downloaded from the 'Student' pages of the LCCI website, www.lcci.org.uk.

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