



Moderators Assignment Feedback – Business Communications and Personal Skills

After each series, we ask our moderators to provide a report on each assignment-based unit to identify

- any questions which were usually answered particularly well, including main points and qualities that characterised good answers.
- any questions which were usually answered badly and main weaknesses in candidates' answers.
- common errors or misconceptions made by candidates.

We hope that this will be of assistance when completing your Business Communications and Personal skills assignment.

General feedback to candidates

All candidates had a really good attempt at this paper with the majority earning a Level 3 Pass. Although this paper can be awkward to answer as there are many sections, none of the candidates appeared to have an issue with this but a few answered in bullet points, leaving no opportunity to develop their answer and earn more marks. This is a shame as they appear to be more than capable.

Candidates could also have earned more marks by using the mark scheme, particularly in question 8 where only one candidate added a full SMART action plan. A lot of the answers displayed what candidates do in their daily work lives and more marks would have been added if they displayed wider knowledge and theory.

A few appendices are starting to be added to this paper, but in for this submission many candidates did not include examples to demonstrate the point they were making.

Feedback for each assignment question

This section of your assignment aims to demonstrate that you understand the principles of effective business communications and personal skills

Q1. Explain the benefits of understanding business communications and developing relevant skills

Q1 – A fairly well answered question overall. Avoid the bullet point answer here.

Q2. Evaluate the following forms of business communications, explaining the contexts in which the following should be used:

- a) Telephone communications.**
- b) Formal and informal written communications.**
- c) Formal and informal meetings.**
- d) Presentations.**

Q2 - Again, fairly well answered by most. Most candidates wrote about meeting and written communications but did not link in the difference between formal and informal. This time nearly all candidates included context, however some just wrote about context!

Q3. Explain good practice for the following forms of communication

- a) Business greetings**
- b) Telephone communications**
- c) Letter writing**
- d) Business emails**
- e) Business reports**
- f) Business meetings**

Q3 – All candidates had a good attempt at this question, many sticking to their own knowledge. Only one candidate picked up on the data protection requirement within the mark scheme.

Q4. Explain behaviours which build productive relations with colleagues, including advice on how to

- a) Create a good first impression**
- b) Build rapport, trust and credibility**
- c) Gain results through reciprocal relationships**
- d) Provide feedback in different situations**
- e) Resolve conflicts**
- f) Cope with difficult people**

Q4 – Parts b and c were answered well by nearly all candidates. Part d caused a few issues – the question has “in different situations” and this was not taken into account by all students.

Q5. a) Explain how to establish and maintain an effective team, including consideration of a team’s

- i) Mission**
- ii) Membership**
- iii) Roles**
- iv) Organisation**

b) Identification of reasons why teams struggle at different stages

Q5a - Some candidates had a good attempt at this question, but no one included their own mission statement. However a few candidates appeared confused by the difference sections, they need to recover this in their studies.

Q5b - Many candidates did not pick up that the question asked for teams struggling at different stages and answers reflected this.

Section B Policy

This section aims to demonstrate that you know how to communicate in your own business environment.

Q6. Explain your use of the following forms of communication. Include organisational practice or policy (if formalised) for:

- a) Business greetings**
- b) Telephone**
- c) Letter writing**
- d) Business emails**
- e) Record keeping**
- f) Business meetings**
- g) Business reports**

Q6 - Again a mixture of results on this question, with many candidates managing to incorporate some company policy (or at least say there is no policy) and personal experience into some of their answer. Candidates need to use the mark scheme to increase their score – very few showed an awareness of different perspectives and contexts.

Section C Practice

This section aims to demonstrate that you can evaluate your skills and apply effective business communication and personal skills in the workplace.

Q7. Assess own strengths and weaknesses in relation to the following business skills:

- a) Communications skills**
- b) Time management**
- c) Initiative**
- d) Commitment**
- e) Perseverance**
- f) Ability to embrace change and respond positively to new priorities**

Q7 - Candidates need to ensure that they read the mark scheme to score well on this question. Both strengths and weaknesses should be demonstrated. Sweeping statements to say they are good at something, without telling my why did not score good marks. Most candidates had a very good go at this question but assessments of weaknesses were lacking in a lot of answers.

Q8. Explain, with criteria for success, realistic short and long-term goals in relation to your business communications and personal skills

Q8 – Not a bad attempt, however there was only one candidate that included a full SMART action plan in their appendices. Some candidates struggled to give both short and long term goals, however there were some really good development ideas.

Q9. Explain your personal involvement in an issue which demonstrates

- a) Initiative**
- b) Commitment**
- c) Perseverance**
- d) Flexibility**
- e) Good time keeping**
- f) Appropriate communications skills**
- g) Effective conflict resolution**

Q9 – This question was answered fairly well. Many answers explained involvement but did not go so far as to match the requirements under Good Level 3 Pass. This was a shame as the examples were there, it is just that they were not used to support the answer. Make sure you refer to the mark scheme to see what you need to cover.

Q10 - Assess your performance and progress regarding communications and personal skills, while studying for this CICM unit. Include in your answer feedback from others and an explanation of:

a) Your response to setbacks

b) How self reflection has informed your actions

Q10 - There were a wide range of marks with this answer – candidates that scored less appear to have missed the point of the question and struggled to demonstrate a setback or self reflection. Those candidates who scored higher marks included not only good examples but feedback from colleagues and managers.