National
Qualifications
2025

2025 Administration and IT

Higher

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

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General marking principles for Higher Administration and IT

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

(a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.

(b) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.

(c) For **compare** questions, candidates must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the similarities and/or differences between things, features, methods or choices. This does not need to be a comparative sentence. Up to the total mark allocation for this question:

- award **1 mark** for each accurate point of comparison.

(d) For **discuss** questions, candidates must make accurate relevant points that are more than just naming. There has to be an element of discussion within each point. Award marks for development and examples of a point.

- award **1 mark** for each discussion point.
- award **1 mark** for further development of a relevant point, including exemplification when appropriate.

(e) For **describe** questions, candidates must make a number of relevant factual points, which may be characteristics and/or features, as appropriate to the question asked. These points may relate to a concept, process or situation. Candidates may provide a number of straightforward points or a smaller number of developed points, or a combination of these. Up to the total mark allocation for this question

- award **1 mark** for each relevant factual point
- award **1 mark** for any further development of a relevant point, including exemplification when appropriate.

(f) For **outline** questions, candidates must make a number of brief statements appropriate to the question asked. These may include facts, features or characteristics. Up to the total mark allocation for this question

- award **1 mark** for each accurate statement.

(g) For **justify** questions, candidates must give good reasons to support suggestions or explain the reason(s) for or against the issue raised in the question. A development point can be given.

- award **1 mark** for further development of an accurate justification.

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Marking instructions for each question

Section 1

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
1.			**Long wait times** • hire additional staff to cut waiting times • offer customers a call back service • a voicemail/text service could be set up so staff can respond to customers if they are cut off or waiting too long • reduce call volumes by having a FAQs page displayed on the company's website • set-up a chatbot system **Poor staff knowledge/conduct** • staff require further training on customer service/enhancing product knowledge • role play needs to be carried out amongst staff to practice customer service and how to respond • supervisors/managers can monitor more regularly through double/sample checks • have a buddy or mentoring system to support staff who are providing a poor service • discipline process implemented if repeatedly unhelpful **Chat facility issues** • chat agents should ensure they take personal details so customers can be contacted if they are disconnected • have a page on website which shows service outages eg high traffic have an advice page to help customers eg refresh page or clear cache/cookies	**5**	Award **1 mark** for each valid outline. No development marks are available. NB Each problem can only be solved once. Award a maximum of **1 mark** for "training…" Accept any other suitable response.

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Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
			Hard to access company contact details • contact details for the company should be displayed on their website/social media so customers can find them easily **Hidden costs** • customer service level agreements should be produced/checked carefully so customers know what to expect when they take out home cover **Poor complaint handling** • a formal complaints process needs to be implemented – all complaints must be logged and treated seriously • staff should be trained to be able to deal with complaints • staff must acknowledge the complaint and keep customer informed about what is happening • time limits must be set for complaints • results of customer complaints must be communicated to customers • appropriate compensation given, if required **Data breach** • order a review or audit of security procedures • encrypt data • password protect files • have usernames and passwords for all staff accessing the system • anti-virus software must be installed and regularly updated • regularly train staff in GDPR • implement a security policy and communicate with staff including process to report any concerns		

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Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance

2.			• social media is in the public domain so negative comments can be seen by others
			  ○ which could lead to more negative comments
			• can damage the reputation of the organisation
			  ○ resulting in a loss of sales/decreased profit/lower market share
			• the volume of tweets/online messages may mean that an organisation might miss a complaint
			  ○ which will delay their response
			• the volume of complaints on social media might require additional staff to be recruited to deal with them
			  ○ which makes it more costly for an organisation
			• social media lacks the privacy to deal with sensitive matters
			• unable to hear tone of voice/see facial expression/body language which means staff can't properly understand customer feelings
			• could lead to a breach in legislation if an employee is not properly trained and does not respond appropriately to complaints on social media
			• the restriction in characters on social media means that it often requires an additional communication method such as telephone to deal with complex matters
				3	Award **1 mark** for each valid description.
					
					Award **1 mark** for each valid development point.
					
					Must describe at least **2** problems correctly to gain all **3 marks**.
					
					Award a maximum of **1 mark** for loss of sales/loss of profit/loss of market share.
					
					Accept any other suitable response.

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Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
3.			• both gather primary/first hand information • customer focus groups provide instant feedback on products and services whereas online surveys take time for the users to complete and staff to compile • during a focus group customers can be asked further questions or to elaborate on their opinions but in an online survey customer answers will be limited to the structure of the questions • online surveys are more likely to gather a high volume of responses whereas only a set number of people will be invited to a customer focus group • customer focus groups are expensive to run whereas an online survey is relatively cheap to produce and distribute • customers can complete an online survey in their own time whereas they have to attend a customer focus group on a set date/time • customer focus groups gather more qualitative data whereas online surveys are more quantitative data as it has more closed questions • customer focus groups may be dominated by one or two vocal participants whereas an online survey is completed independently so a fairer representation	**2**	Award **1 mark** for each valid comparison. Similarities and differences can be given. Accept any other suitable response.

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Section 2

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance

4.			• staff become stressed
			  ○ this could lead to illness and absence from work
			• staff might be unable to complete deadlines on time
			  ○ this could impact relations with customers and lead to an increase in complaints/compensation payments
			• it could impact working relationships between colleagues and management
			  ○ employee may harm future promotion prospects, loss of pay rise/bonuses
			• decrease in staff morale and job satisfaction of employees
			  ○ increase in staff turnover
			  ○ causing increased staff recruitment and training costs for the organisation
			• organisation may have lower productivity
			• poor customer experience
			• quality of work may decrease
				4	Award **1 mark** for each valid description.
					
					Award **1 mark** for each valid development point.
					
					Accept any other suitable response.

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Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance

5.			• team composition – having a mix of personalities, age and experience of team members
			• team development/time together – a group of employees who have had experience working together successfully before
			• the nature of the task – a well-structured task with clear objectives about which the team have good knowledge
			• shared goals/purpose – it is important that everyone in the team knows what they are working towards
			• a strong leader who can:
			  ○ motivate the team
			  ○ minimise conflict within a team
			  ○ delegate effectively
			  ○ be inclusive and ensure all members are heard
			  ○ manage resources well
			• the team's willingness to accept and take on calculated risks
			• shared knowledge/skills allowing team members to support each other
			  ○ and cover when a team member is absent
			• the correct size of team, around 4-6 members, for the task so that everyone has a role in the team
			  ○ too many team members may lead to sub-groups forming
			  ○ too small a team may lead to a lack of ideas and limited skills
			• strong and open communication between team members
			  ○ team members encouraged to express their opinions, suggest ideas and are prepared to compromise
				5	Award **1 mark** for each valid discussion point.
					
					Award **1 mark** for each valid development point.
					
					Award a maximum of **4 marks** for only discussing one factor. Must discuss at least **2** factors correctly to gain all **5 marks**.
					
					Maximum **1 mark** for describing a Belbin team **role** eg "The Plant generates ideas for the team".
					
					Accept any other suitable response.

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
6.	(a)		• it is easier for management to supervise employees • it can save office space • can reduce rental/mortgage costs • resources/equipment can be shared amongst staff • staff are less likely to feel isolated • new and junior staff can be easily supported • helps create new ideas more effectively • can help to encourage team working • it is easier to change the workspace to suit the organisation's requirements	**4**	Award **1 mark** for each valid justification. Award **1 mark** for each valid development point. Do not award (DNA) "Saves costs" – must specify cost saving. Accept any other suitable response.

	(b)		• this allows employees more flexibility in their work-life balance to manage other commitments
			• allows you to retain staff who otherwise might leave
			  ○ less need to recruit and re-train employees
			• likely to attract more job applicants with a wider range of skills
			  ○ or from a different geographical area
			• employees who may have mobility issues or long-term health conditions can work restricted hours to suit or at home
			• fewer employees in the office means saving on building rental and parking spaces
			• starting and finishing the working day at different times can allow staff to travel at quieter times, reducing:
			  ○ stress levels
			  ○ travel time
			  ○ late coming
			• higher morale/motivation
			  ○ can improve job satisfaction/wellbeing and may reduce staff absence
			  ○ and increase productivity
				4	Award **1 mark** for each valid discussion point.
					
					Award **1 mark** for each valid development point.
					
					Accept any other suitable response.

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
7.			**Slide Master:** • allows for consistent formatting across the presentation **Speaker Notes:** • provide the presenter with a summary of key points and information for each slide **Hyperlink:** • can link to a webpage/another slide/video/document	**3**	Award **1 mark** for each valid outline. No development marks are available. Accept examples of how the features would be used. Accept any other suitable response.

8.			• tidy/clean the room and collect any unused papers
			  ○ to ensure no confidential information is left behind
			• create a draft version of the minutes to be passed to the Chairperson to check
			  ○ then make any changes as advised and issue to everyone
			• put the date of the next meeting in the e-diary of everyone who is due to attend/send invitations
			• contact staff to follow up on any action arising during the meeting to check the progress
			• send out any letters/emails as discussed at the meeting
			• issue an evaluation form, if necessary, to all who attended the meeting
			• create a notice of meeting and agenda for the next meeting
			• ensure all expense forms are processed
			• inform reception that the meeting is over
			• take down any signs
			• return equipment
				5	Award **1 mark** for each valid description.
					
					Award **1 mark** for each valid development point.
					
					Award a maximum of **1 mark** for sending out documents eg notice of meeting and agenda, minutes etc
					
					Accept any other suitable response.

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Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
9.			• it is illegal to access computer systems without permission, for example hacking • it is illegal to access computer systems with the intention of committing a criminal offence eg spreading a computer virus, fraud or blackmail • it is illegal to access computer systems to alter or delete any data without permission • it is illegal to make, supply or obtain anything that can be used in computer misuse offences	**2**	Award **1 mark** for each valid outline. No development marks are available. Accept specific examples for each offence. Accept any other suitable response.
10.	(a)		• permanent source of reference for employees/organisation ○ can be stored on organisation's intranet • allows employees to look at the information at any time to check or refresh knowledge • can include images or diagrams to help explain more clearly than just spoken word • can hold a large amount of information/details • it is usually in a structured format so information can be found quickly • can be emailed as an attachment to all employees • serves as proof in the event of a query/dispute	**3**	Award **1 mark** for each valid justification. Award **1 mark** for each valid development point. Accept any other suitable response.

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Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
	(b)		**Employee:** • could lead to disciplinary action such as a verbal or written warning • could lead to instant dismissal of the employee if it was a serious breach • the employee could be investigated by the police ○ this could lead to a civil or criminal prosecution • may impact on the employee's future promotion prospects • may result in demotion for the employee • may result in injury or death **Organisation:** • this could result in a loss of customers if they have lost confidence in the organisation • customers may go to competitors which will reduce the organisation's market share/sales/profits • legal fines can be imposed • compensation payments to those who are injured • any high-profile court cases could lead to negative publicity for the organisation • may be served with an improvement notice • shut down operations either temporarily or even permanently for more severe breaches • criminal charges for directors depending on severity • difficulty in recruiting	**5**	Award **1 mark** for each valid description. Award **1 mark** for each valid development point. Award a maximum of **4 marks** for only describing consequences either to the employee or organisation. Must describe both to gain all **5 marks**. Accept any other suitable response.

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Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance

11.			• it allows employees to be involved in meetings regardless of their location
			  ○ saves the organisation money on travel and accommodation costs
			• saves on employees' time as they do not need to travel/commute to work for meetings
			  ○ this can make them more productive
			• can maximise the number of people able to attend the meeting
			• can save on photocopying costs and documents can be shared on screen/emailed in advance
			• meetings can be recorded and referred to later or for anyone who missed the meeting
			• employees can join the meeting using a computer, tablet or mobile phone
			• the success of the meeting is reliant on everyone having strong/reliable internet connection
			• different times zones make it difficult to schedule a meeting/working outwith typical hours
			• can be difficult to encourage everyone to join discussion/engage fully in meeting
			  ○ harder to build relationships than in person
			• could be higher security risks of an online meeting due to hacking which could comprise the confidentiality of information
			• allows real time collaboration on documents
			• the chat function can allow employees to raise points without interrupting the discussion
			• can result in costs in training employees to participate in remote meetings
				5	Award **1 mark** for each valid discussion point.
					
					Award **1 mark** for each valid development point.
					
					DNA "No Costs/Free"
					
					DNA "Comfort of your own home"
					
					Award a maximum of **4 marks** for only discussing either advantages or disadvantages. Must discuss both to gain all **5 marks**.
					
					Accept any other suitable response.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]

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