



National
Qualifications
2026

2026 Administration and IT

Higher

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

These marking instructions have been prepared by examination teams for use by Qualifications Scotland appointed markers when marking external course assessments.

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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.

Section 1

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
1.			Staff unsure of where to assemble during fire alarm • carry out regular fire drills so employees are aware/reminded of assembly points • new staff should be informed of fire assembly points during induction training • put up signs for assembly/muster points Staff unsure of where to exit the building during fire alarm • have posters/maps around the office clearly showing the fire exits/alternative routes • ensure emergency exit door signs are visible/well lit Blocked fire exits • e-mail staff to remind them that boxes and other items should not be left in front of fire doors • create/allocate an area to safely hold new deliveries of office supplies • regularly check that all fire exits are clear • move the boxes to a suitable location Attempting to repair machinery • email staff that they should not be attempting to repair machinery • remind staff that all faults should be reported to the maintenance department • put an out of order notice on the machine • put notices near/on equipment reminding staff that they should not attempt repairs • contact a qualified person to repair the machine	5	Award 1 mark for each valid description. Award 1 mark for each valid development point. Must describe at least 2 issues to be awarded all 5 marks. Accept any other suitable response.

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
			Unable to locate first aid box • create a list of where first aid boxes are kept and distribute it to staff or store on the intranet so they know where to find them Lack of First Aiders • train more staff in first aid so there is always a first aider available Missing contents in first aid box: regularly check and/or restock first aid boxes		
2.			• used to record areas of strengths and areas for development • used to identify training that might be needed • can set targets to work towards • used to track progress/targets/goals • can encourage positive feedback on performance between a senior admin assistant and their line manager/the senior admin assistant and a junior admin assistant	2	Award 1 mark for each valid justification. Award 1 mark for each valid development point. Accept any other suitable response.

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
3.			• verbal communication allows for immediate feedback eg in a meeting whereas with written communication there is usually a delayed/slower response eg an e-mail • written communication allows for a permanent record to be kept and referred back to whereas verbal communication provides instant information with no lasting record/forgotten • both verbal and written communication is used to pass on information and exchange ideas • both written and verbal communication can convey large amounts of information • both can be shared with multiple people at the one time • with verbal communication there could be more distractions/interruptions whereas written communication can be referred to at a more suitable time when there is less distractions • written communication uses text whilst verbal communication uses speech	3	Award 1 mark for each valid comparison. Similarities and differences can be given. Do not award just examples of methods. Accept any other suitable response which compares the same point.

Section 2

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
4.	(a)		Forming - team members are introduced - roles and responsibilities are unclear - people are polite, cautious, and figuring out how they fit in - leadership is crucial to provide direction Storming - conflicts and competition emerge - members challenge boundaries, roles and authority - strong leadership helps navigate disagreements Norming - team starts to gel - roles become clearer, norms are established - trust and collaboration increase - members begin to support each other and resolve conflicts constructively Performing - the team operates efficiently toward shared goals - high degree of trust and productivity amongst team members - members are motivated and competent - leadership becomes more participative or even shared Adjourning - the team may disband after achieving its objectives - members reflect on accomplishments and may feel a sense of loss - important for closure and celebrating success	4	Award 1 mark for each valid outline. NB Maximum 1 mark per stage. Accept any other suitable response. Acceptable alternatives: Mourning rather than adjourning

Question		Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
	(b)	A good leader should have the following skills: Motivation • encouraging team members to do their best • provide advice and help to members • keep morale high by recognising achievements Communication • good written and verbal instructions mean that everyone in the team will know what their role/task is • listening carefully to all team members will make them feel valued and included ○ encourages team members to approach leader to resolve conflicts or to seek help Prioritisation • ensures that urgent and important tasks are completed first • may use planning aids such as Gantt Charts or Action Plans to help keep the team in track Delegation • ability to allocate tasks effectively to team members by recognising their skills, experience and development needs ○ allows the team leader to focus on more important tasks ○ improves relationships with team members ○ improves quality of work	5	Award 1 mark for each valid discussion point. Award 1 mark for each valid development point. Must describe at least 2 skills/qualities to be awarded all 5 marks. Accept any other suitable response.

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
			Problem solving • ability to come up with creative solutions to any issues hampering goals/targets • resolve any conflict between team members Organisation • ensuring all the necessary resources are in place to complete tasks ○ eg equipment and staff with the correct skill set • planning by using task management aids such as Gantt Charts and Action Plans Persuasion • ability to convince team members of the correct way forward/believe in goals People/Interpersonal Skills • be sensitive and fair when dealing with issues in the team • show empathy and have self-awareness		

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
5.	(a)		Agenda • shows what is to be discussed • allows attendees to prepare for discussions at the meeting • gives the attendees the opportunity to see if the meeting is relevant to them/decide whether to attend • helps to keep the meeting on track (if it contains timings for each agenda item) • required by law for some organisations eg an AGM in a Public Limited Company • gives the meeting a structure to ensure important points are discussed first • alerts attendees of a possible vote at the meeting • enables attendees to gauge how long the meeting will last • gives the attendees the opportunity to alert the Chairperson of any additional items to be added to the agenda	2	Award 1 mark for each valid justification. Award 1 mark for each valid development point. Accept any other suitable response.
	(b)		Minutes • provide a record of what has been discussed and agreed at a meeting • states actions to be completed • can be referred to later if there are any disputes • provides a record of any motions which have been proposed and seconded • provides a record any votes and decisions taken at meetings • useful for anyone who could not attend the meeting to understand what was said and agreed	2	Award 1 mark for each valid justification. Award 1 mark for each valid development point. Accept any other suitable response.

Question	Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
6.	• using the scheduling assistant e-diaries can search for a suitable date to hold a meeting for all participants • reminder can be set for attendees ○ it can provide both a visual and audible reminder • can send invitations to all eligible members ○ members can then accept or decline the invitation ○ this ensures that there is a quorum for the meeting where required ○ saves resources being wasted on meetings which do not meet the quorum • it is possible to send documentation such as meeting agendas with these invites • could use it to send a meeting link • e-diaries can have a task/to-do facility which allows the admin assistant to list and prioritise tasks ○ these tasks can have files such as minutes and agendas attached ○ tasks can be flagged and ticked once completed. ○ it is also possible to set reminders for these tasks • if a meeting is a regular occurrence then an e-diary allows the admin assistant to enter a recurring appointment ○ this means that time is saved as it need only be entered once into the diary • some e-diaries allow the admin assistant to enter resources such as a room/location ○ it will highlight any instances where this room is already in use • alerts users to a double booking	6	Award 1 mark for each valid discussion point. Award 1 mark for each valid development point. Maximum 1 mark for reminders. Response must be from the point of view from the person organising or planning the meeting. Accept any other suitable response.

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
7.			• specific – the target should state exactly what needs to be achieved • measurable – targets must be quantifiable to assess if they have been met • agreed – target must be discussed and agreed with the team leader/line manager • realistic – target should be challenging but achievable • timed – completion dates/deadlines should be identified	3	Award 1 mark for each valid outline. No development marks available. Accept any other suitable response. <u>Accept:</u> Attainable/achievable - target must be realistic and within the employee's skill set. Relevant - target must be in line with the project or business goals.

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
8.			Noise level • sound absorbing walls/flooring/plants can reduce noise in the office ◦ this reduces distraction and promotes productivity • placing noisy equipment in a separate room or using sound absorbing dividers can also reduce background noise Lighting • blinds can reduce glare on monitors • natural lighting can prevent headaches from artificial lights Furniture • adjustable furniture such as height adjustable desks and chairs minimises the risk of back pain Protective equipment/workstation • laptop users should be provided with an adjustable monitor to reduce neck pain • anti-glare screen to reduce eyestrain/headaches • wrist rests and ergonomic mice/keyboards can prevent wrist/arm/shoulder injuries Wall colours • colours can help minimise glare, improve mood, encourage creativity Social areas • break out areas or touch down areas provide staff with a space away from their desk to socialise Ventilation • access to fresh air through windows and/or effective air conditioning system to avoid illness/fatigue Temperature • should be adjustable to avoid fatigue/headaches/distraction	4	Award 1 mark for each valid description. Award 1 mark for each valid development point. Maximum 1 mark for impact on feelings. Maximum 1 mark for distractions. Accept any other suitable response. Must describe at least 2 aspects to gain all 4 marks.

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
9.			- the complaints procedure should be easily available for staff and customers to see - all complaints must be logged and acknowledged by someone in the organisation - customers should receive details outlining the process of the investigation and the timelines - the customer should be kept informed of the progress and the results of the complaint - compensation might be offered to try to leave the customer more satisfied - the appeal process should be outlined eg details of how to contact the Ombudsman - employees should be trained on how to deal with complaints and should know the steps involved in the process - the same member of staff who deals with a complaint from start to finish - complaints should be reviewed regularly by a senior member of management to identify any patterns or particular problems	4	Award 1 mark for each valid description. Award 1 mark for each valid development point. Do not award any references to customer service or FAQs. Must describe at least 2 features to gain all 4 marks. Accept any other suitable response.

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
10.			• a mission statement allows an organisation to outline its aims and objectives ○ will help with employee motivation ○ encourages employees to work towards a common goal • it can attract customers to the organisation • it can contain values which might help the organisation to improve its image ○ such as being more environmentally friendly • it might demonstrate how the organisation supports the local community or charities • customers know what to expect • staff have a consistent approach	2	Award 1 mark for each valid justification. Award 1 mark for each valid development point. Accept any other suitable response.
11.			• confidential data could be leaked • this could lead to the organisation breaching GDPR legislation ○ could face large fines if they are prosecuted • it could damage their reputation/trust ○ they may lose customers/sales/profits • any disruption to the network could slow down productivity in the business • if information regarding new products/services was leaked then competitors could gain ideas • system could be hacked/could have unauthorised access ○ may be subject to ransomware demands • cost of hiring an external agency to investigate data loss and resolve any issues • cost of upgrading security system	4	Award 1 mark for each valid description. Award 1 mark for each valid development point. Must describe at least 2 consequences to gain all 4 marks. Accept any other suitable response.

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
12.			• gives individuals the right to request access to information held by public sector organisations • some information is excluded from being accessed by the public eg information related to national security/police/defence • public organisations must be aware that information they hold could potentially be viewed by the public • when a request is made by an individual, the organisation must inform them of any charges that must be paid • applicants may have to pay for photocopying or postage costs • if the organisation holds data relating to the applicant's request then they must inform them • the organisation must let the applicant know how long it will take for them to be able to access the information • the organisation must respond within 20 days • public organisations have a duty to publish information regarding their activities eg minutes of council meetings	4	Award 1 mark for each valid outline. Do not award references to GDPR/personal data. No development marks available. Accept any other suitable response.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]