

2000 HSC Notes from the Examination Centre Life Management Studies

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Life Management Studies

Introduction

In 2000, 3904 candidates presented for the 2/3 Unit Common Paper. A further 669 candidates attempted the 3 Unit Additional Paper. This represented an increase of 374 candidates on the Common Paper and a decrease of 8 in the number of 3 Unit candidates.

The 2/3 Unit Common course requires an understanding of four core concepts – Resource Management, Life Span Development, Interpersonal Relationships and Well-being, applied to practical situations related to the Content Strands of Families and Work. Candidates are also required to answer one question from an Option they have studied. The Options are Financial Management, Housing, Parenting and Work Roles and Workplace Environments.

The 3 Unit Additional course requires students to answer two questions, each from a different Option. The Options are Families and the Law, Leadership and Group Dynamics, Management Strategies for Specific Needs, Socialisation of Children and Work and Politics.

The core processes of management and research methodologies underpin the outcomes of the Life Management Studies course, and as a result questions set in both papers will reflect this focus.

General Comments

Questions in all sections of the 2/3 Common and 3 Unit Additional papers are designed to assess understanding of core concepts and the candidates' ability to apply, analyse, synthesise and evaluate the interrelationships among these concepts.

Several questions required candidates to demonstrate their familiarity with needs, goals, values, standards, resources, decision-making, evaluation – all concepts of management. There were some excellent scripts. Some other scripts appeared to indicate little serious study of the syllabus. Some students did not divide their time evenly among the questions. There were a small number of candidates who answered inappropriate combinations of questions or answered all the Options. A number of students appeared to answer Options based on general knowledge rather than on serious school study of that Option. A small number of candidates misread questions and therefore provided inappropriate answers. Once again a number of candidates are providing information that is out of date. It is important that students provide information that is current especially in regards to government departments and legislation.

Certain Options still remain the most popular in the 2/3 Unit Common Paper and the 3 Unit Additional paper.

2 Unit Options

Option	Question	Number of Candidates
Financial Management	8	99
	9	325
Housing	10	129
	11	515
Parenting	12	2212
	13	506
Work Roles and Workplace Environments	14	116
	15	26

3 Unit Options

Option	Question	Number of Candidates
Families and the Law	1	202
	2	315
Leadership and Group Dynamics	3	47
	4	41
Management Strategies for Specific Needs	5	58
	6	37
Socialisation of Children	7	219
	8	408
Work and Politics	9	3
	10	21

Marking Criteria

The following are indicative of the criteria used to judge the quality of responses relative to the objectives and outcomes of Life Management Studies. After assessing specific attributes of a question, markers refer to these guidelines in order to establish a global impression of the worth of the response.

Excellent responses:

- demonstrate extensive understanding of basic concepts
- have an organised and logical structure
- display a depth of understanding in discussion
- support argument with relevant research and up-to-date examples
- include accurate information
- strongly focus on all aspects of the question
- apply the management process to given situations.

Above average responses:

- generally focus on the question
- give an appropriate interpretation of the question
- refer to concepts central to the question
- contains mostly accurate information and are clearly expressed
- show understanding of some aspects of the management process
- are more perceptive and detailed than average responses.

Average responses:

- show limited understanding of issues or core concepts
- lack detail in discussion
- may include some inaccurate or irrelevant information
- fail to address specific parts of the question
- contain few references to relevant research or management concepts.

Below average responses:

- have limited interpretation of the question
- provide some relevant information
- fail to demonstrate understanding of core concepts
- lack evidence to substantiate an argument
- fail to follow the advice or structure of the question
- repeat the question and information.

Unsatisfactory responses:

- are limited to one or two facts
- lack understanding or argument
- contain significant errors of fact
- present general knowledge rather than specific to Life Management Studies
- are brief, with unsupported generalisations
- fail to answer the question.

2/3 Unit (Common)

Section I PART A

Question 1 assessed the candidates' ability to interpret data presented in a graph. 1(a) was generally well answered. Better candidates were able to explain each trend in terms of it having risen or fallen by a stated percentage and indicated that the trend referred to the number or percentage of people engaged in that form of full time employment. However, a reasonable proportion of candidates, including better ones, confused trends 2 and 3 indicating that they did not refer to the key provided with the graph. 1(b) required students to predict the impact of trend 3 (longer working hours) on interpersonal relationships. This question was generally not well answered. Better candidates were able to describe a range of causes and impacts. Few candidates were able to discuss aspects of interpersonal relationships other than communication, bonding and conflict. 1(c) tested the candidates, knowledge of research methodology. The question was not well answered. Most candidates named a research method but few could describe it. Better candidates described qualitative research but few

candidates used research terminology or demonstrated an in-depth understanding of interpersonal relationships.

Question 2 focused on management processes and required students to apply their knowledge. 2(a) tested the candidate's ability to describe the relationship between common management concepts and was well answered by the better candidates. 2(b) required candidates to demonstrate an understanding of the role of key management concepts to the process of management. A significant number of weaker responses defined terms and described the role of the concept as being important to successful management. 2(c) required candidates to apply the processes of management. The standard of responses was high. Most candidates could name and describe the steps in management and a high proportion applied the steps to a given situation by describing a range of activities that could occur in each step.

The core concepts that were examined in question 3 were Lifespan Development and Well-being. 3(a) required students to relate the impact of an environment upon a child's development. This question was well answered, candidates showed a good understanding of the various forms of development by explaining how the environment they described negatively or positively impacted on that developmental area. 3(b) tested the candidate's ability to recall indicators of well-being. The question was not well answered, as candidates were unable to name the indicators. Many described factors contributing to well-being rather than indicators.

Section I

PART B

Families and Work

Question 4 was well understood and well answered by many candidates. Better responses were able to explain in terms of internal and external changes and how stages of the family life cycle may influence changes experienced by the family. Management strategies linked directly to changes were discussed. Average scripts tended to list changes, with little reference to internal and external change and their impact on the family. Management strategies were limited and often repeated for each change discussed. Poor scripts listed basic changes e.g. death, divorce, loss of a job and limited strategies e.g. talking to members of the family. They also tended to rely on general knowledge.

Question 5 was generally poorly answered, with candidates having trouble interpreting the question. They relied heavily on general knowledge and provided little discussion of strategies to manage conflict and communication within and among families. Excellent scripts gave thorough explanations of management strategies for example, counselling, mediation, outside support networks or conflict resolution skills. Candidates had a clear understanding of the terms conflict and communication and how they varied in and among families. Average responses explained the terms conflict and communication with limited application of suitable management strategies.

To answer Question 6 candidates approached the question in two main ways. They either identified each stage of the lifespan and related the types of work suited to each and how it met the individual's needs or identified the different types of work and

related which stages of the lifespan were suited to each and how each met the individual's needs. Regardless of which way the candidates approached the question, they were required to 'assess', however only the better candidates were able to do this. An excellent response clearly identified and addressed all parts of the question. The nature of work relevant to each stage of the lifespan, and the implications for well-being, were discussed in detail. An average response tended to present a more general approach to the question. These candidates lacked detail in discussion and may have failed to address specific parts of the question.

In Question 7 the excellent responses demonstrated an extensive understanding of the chosen three factors upon worker well-being. These candidates clearly expressed their depth of understanding of the factor and then focused upon its impact on the worker positively and negatively. Average responses focused their discussion on the factors, and only mentioned a general impact on worker well-being.

Section II – OPTIONS

Financial Management, Housing, Parenting, Work Roles and Workplace Environments

Excellent responses for Question 8 had an extensive understanding of the basic concepts, strongly focused on the question and the candidates supported their argument with relevant and up to date examples. Average responses presented mostly relevant information, lacked detail in discussion or failed to address specific parts of the question. These scripts contained few references to relevant research or management concepts.

Excellent responses for Question 9 had an organised and logical structure. They displayed a good depth of understanding and clearly identified goals that were influenced by values. Above average candidates generally focused on and illustrated a clear interpretation of the question. Values were clearly stated and valid examples given. Average scripts had sources of income listed and very little explanation. Some candidates failed to link the values to the use of income.

For Question 10 better responses were able to identify and analyse the reasons for low income families moving away from capital cities. They were able to show the relationship between needs and the housing options available for low income families. They were able to assess and gave both positive and negative impacts of this move in relation to individual, family and community needs. Average responses discussed mostly negative impacts of low income families moving away from the city e.g. work opportunities, lack of support networks and transport. These related to individuals and families with no assessment of the effect on communities.

Excellent responses for Question 11 had a clear understanding of the expanding stage, management concepts and the needs relating to housing. They often made reference to factors that influenced housing choices e.g. social, economic, cultural and personal. Further to this they were able to demonstrate extensive understanding of the management process and link this to managing changing housing needs. Average responses contained mostly accurate information but lacked detail in their discussion. They generally had a good understanding of needs but couldn't relate this to managing changing housing needs.

In Question 12 the above average candidates were able to give a variety of reasons why women are delaying their first pregnancy and link this to the three areas for discussion. They were able to discuss positively and negatively, how the three areas effected family relationships. For example, when managing family finances implications could be- reduced income, increased expenses for baby's needs and changed budget allocation. The resulting family relationships may show stress and conflict if adequate preparation has not been done or could result in a more harmonious relationship due to greater financial stability because of the delayed pregnancy.

For Question 13 the above average student was able to accurately define a social parent and give correct examples. Candidates then defined well-being and identified and explained strategies and community services that support social parents. Candidates were able to show how these services and strategies improved well-being.

Excellent responses for Question 14 had an organised and logical structure. These candidates discussed the three parts of the question in equal depth and understanding. They gave well-defined explanations of the management styles as well as positive and negative aspects of each style. These scripts demonstrated a clear explanation of basic concepts like 'workplace culture' and included accurate and up to date information. The included the Occupational Health and Safety Act and policies and the consequences of these policies being followed or not followed. These scripts included many examples of Staff Development strategies like team building, incentives, multi-skilling, and learning new and updated skills. Clear explanations were given of the benefits of each and how they contributed to positive workplace culture.

For Question 15 the excellent candidate demonstrated an extensive understanding of the basic concepts. They understood 'planned and unplanned' and 'transitions' and gave clear examples of each. Technological change was discussed with current examples given. These scripts strongly focused on the question and utilised the management process as a strategy.

3 Unit (Additional)

Families and the Law

For both of these questions, excellent candidates stated the name/title and date of the appropriate legislation, supported this with a concise explanation of the legislation and an overview of the intention/purpose of the legislation. They were also able to either critically discuss or evaluate the laws by indicating the impact of the legislation on well-being, describing the impact as either positive and/or negative.

For Question 1, excellent candidates were able to correctly identify a number of laws related to family dissolution. Appropriate laws included – Family Law Act 1975, Family Law Reform Act 1996, Child Support Scheme/ Child Support Assessment Act 1989, Property (Relationships) Act 1984 (previously known as the De facto Relationships Act 1984), Family Provisions Act 1982. They were also able to critically discuss the laws by indicating the impact of the legislation on well-being, describing the impact as either positive and/or negative.

These candidates were able to assess the role of voluntary and government organisations, making reference to specific examples for welfare, counselling and resources used by families experiencing dissolution.

For Question 2 excellent candidates were able to correctly identify a number of laws that provide protection for individuals and families relating to child abuse, family/domestic violence, adoption and rights to privacy. They were also able to evaluate the laws by indicating the impact of the legislation on well-being, describing the impact as either positive and /or negative.

Leadership and Group Dynamics

Better responses for Question 3 were able to link assumed or negotiated leadership roles and tasks with organisational climate, decision and productivity and performance. They were able to assess the impact of the assumed or negotiated leader in these three situations- both positively and negatively. Leadership styles were often a focus for the better responses. Average responses showed a good understanding of the terms used in the question but found difficulty in linking or assessing them as required by the question. Most of these responses centred around leadership and decision making rather than addressing assumed or negotiated leadership roles and tasks. Organisational climate and productivity and performance were briefly assessed in terms of leadership styles.

For Question 4 better responses recognised conflict as one component for group dynamics. They were able to critically appraise those strategies that work and those that don't work in given situations in two groups they had studied. They linked management strategies to leadership styles, levels of conflict and the importance of good interpersonal skills and communication. Most candidates gave reasons for conflict in groups. Average responses were able to identify many conflict resolution strategies and could discuss how each can be used in two groups studied. They did not, however, appraise these strategies in terms of their effectiveness in resolving conflict.

Management Strategies for Specific Needs

For Question 5 better responses were able to identify and analyse scarce resources and the skills required to access them, to meet the needs of women and single parents. They were able to link resources, skills and needs and relate them to both women and single parents. Living skills, education and training, budgeting and management skills featured in better responses. The common needs of women and single parents were expressed in terms of financial, social, emotional, career and health issues. Community resources were analysed well. Average responses identified time, energy and money as scarce resources for both women and single parents and they were able to discuss management skills to overcome this problem. The discussion of the question was not an analytical one. Their response was based on financial and health issues.

For Question 6 better responses could identify and assess the internal and external changes in relation to two specific groups. They were able to take a critical approach when examining the positive and negative impacts of the changes on the two groups. Better responses were able to link the impact of the internal and external changes on each other. Average responses were able to identify the internal and external changes on the two groups, however their discussion lacked assessment in terms of positive and negative impact. Average responses focused on the changes in relation to needs.

Socialisation of Children

Excellent responses to Question 7 gave a very good definition of 'socialisation'. They analysed the role played by the family and gave specific examples of responsibilities. They assess very clearly the role played by government, non-government and voluntary groups, giving accurate information that focused on the question. These candidates displayed excellent depth of understanding of socialisation carried out by these groups.

More candidates chose Question 8, and even though they had ample information, many did not answer the question well. Excellent responses gave a clear definition of affection, guidance and play. Many relevant examples were given of how they improve development. The essays were logical and well organised. Stereotyping was well defined by these candidates, and excellent examples given of how they effect development needs.

Work and Politics

Only 3 candidates answered Question 9.

For Question 10 better responses gave detailed and relevant explanations and examples of technological advances and their impact on the workplace. In their assessment they identified both positive and negative impacts not only on the employer but on the employee in his/her working and personal lives. Management strategies went beyond the management process into detailed strategies for effective use of space, facilities and equipment. Average responses listed good examples of technological advances, but did not adequately assess the impact upon the workplace. Management strategies were limited to the management process with some reference to the use of space, facilities, and equipment. Often OHS issues were discussed.