

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

**Cambridge International Diploma in Management
Professional Level**

Scheme of Work

4245
Managing Information
Core Module



UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

MODULE NUMBER (CORE) 4245: MANAGING INFORMATION

BRIEF INTRODUCTION AND MODULE OUTLINE

This core module is concerned with the management of information within a business environment and the importance and skill involved in gathering, evaluating and presenting information to aid decision making.

Candidates are required to identify the different sources and types of information available to them within a business setting and need to be able to critically evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of these for decision making i.e. are they fit for purpose. This requires an understanding of basic concepts such as sufficiency, accuracy, authenticity, reliability and validity which can have very specific meanings in the context of managing information. The difference between data and information must also be clarified.

A knowledge and understanding of statistical analysis is needed and an appreciation of the sensitivity of decision making to the way in which information is presented. Candidates must understand that the way in which information is analysed and presented is often more important than the data / information itself – creative use of analysis and presentation can result in different conclusions and decisions being based on the same set of raw data. A range of examples and exercises can be used to effectively demonstrate this.

The role of IT in the business environment is a key part of this module and it is obviously becoming increasingly important for managers to have a clear understanding of both the advantages and disadvantages, or limitations, of the use of IT.

Candidates could begin this part of the module by historically reviewing the impact which new technology has had on their role as a manager and then discussing the broader issue of how the introduction of IT communication systems has changed the nature of communication and relations at work.

Current legislation and ethical issues around information storage and retrieval should be covered and there is a wealth of material to support this including case studies, media articles, professional journals and case law.

The aim of the module is not for candidates to become experts in this field. However, as key providers and users of information that may be gathered, processed, analysed and retrieved or presented by using Information Technology they must be aware of the benefits and shortcomings associated with this sort of management information system.

The module provides candidates with the opportunity to develop and practise the skills involved in presenting information in a business environment. The range of communication skills and knowledge to be explored are detailed in the Unit outlines. Candidates are expected to apply these in leading, managing and contributing to meetings and also in the delivery of a formal presentation.

Candidates need to understand the purposes of meetings and how to prepare for managing, leading or contributing to a meeting to ensure that its objectives are achieved. Structural and process issues should be covered as well as a range of other skills e.g. leadership, facilitation, negotiation, recognising and handling conflict, encouraging contributions and dealing with difficult issues and participants.

Many of these will apply to preparing for and delivering presentations. However, additional support may be needed to help candidates with structure, preparation and presentation of visual aids, and personal presentation skills and techniques, including non-verbal behaviour and how to deal with nerves and questions.

It is suggested that these related skills are explored together and then candidates are given the opportunity to practise them in a safe learning environment by participating in a simulated or role play meeting and giving a presentation to peers. Providing candidates with feedback to enable them to evaluate their performance and action plan further development should be an integral part of this.

Assessment Objectives:

1. Demonstrate an awareness of different types of information and the range of sources
2. Obtain appropriate information to aid decision making
3. Analyse information to arrive at conclusions
4. Present information to others using a range of methods
5. Use Information Technology effectively within the working environment

RECOMMENDED PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

No prior knowledge is required, however, background reading about the changing use of IT within the business environment and the implications of this would help to promote understanding.

Candidates should also be encouraged to reflect upon any meetings and presentations in which they have been involved and to identify those skills which they would most benefit from practising, developing and receiving feedback on.

SUGGESTED TEACHING ORDER / SUMMARY SCHEME OF WORK

The module sits fairly comfortably at any point in the Programme and there are no requirements for prior knowledge. However, there is a lot of emphasis in the module on practising and receiving feedback regarding skills development and some candidates may be uncomfortable with this during the earlier part of the programme.

The Managing Information module is made up of 5 assessment objectives which follow a logical order.

Units 1 looks at the different types of information used in business decision making. Unit 2 looks at how information can be obtained cost-effectively, which then leads into Unit 3 which focuses on the analysis of information. Once information has been obtained and analysed effectively, it is considered to be suitable for communication to others. Unit 4 explores this with emphasis on meetings and formal presentations. Unit 5 supports the other units by focusing on the use of information technology in the management of information.

For teaching purposes it is suggested that the module is split in to two parts : units 1 and 5 , and units 2, 3, and 4.

Units 1 and 5 follow logically, although within each Unit suggestions are made as to which order particular competence criteria should be covered in and which, if any, could usefully be combined.

For Units 2,3 and 4 it is suggested that the knowledge and skills common to research and analysis are explored together (Units 2 and 3) and that following this candidates are given more specific guidance about the practical skills associated with communications, such as meetings and presentations (Unit 4). Candidates should also be given the opportunity to practise these skills in a safe learning environment by participating in a simulated or role play meeting and giving a presentation to peers.

The column headed **Explanation of competence criteria** is designed to give an indication of the main content to be covered and should help with this planning detail.

UNITS / ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES : SUGGESTED ORDER

Part 1	
1	Demonstrate an awareness of different types of information and the range of sources
5	Use Information Technology effectively within the working environment
These Units focus on the classification and use of management information in business decision making and the role of IT in this. A knowledge and understanding of the different types of information is needed and an appreciation of the range of information sources that are available. Candidates need to develop a clear understanding of the advantages and limitations of the use of IT in the working environment. Work practice, legislation and ethical issues are also important.	

Part 2	
2	Obtain appropriate information to aid decision making
3	Analyse information to arrive at conclusions
4	Present information to others using a range of methods
<p>These units provide candidates with the opportunity to develop and practise the skills involved in research, analysis and presentation of information in a business environment. The range of communication skills and knowledge to be explored are detailed in the Unit outlines. Candidates are expected to apply these in leading, managing and contributing to meetings and in the delivery of a formal presentation. They should receive feedback and support to help them to develop these further in their own work / business environment.</p>	

LIST OF RESOURCES

Units 1 and 5

Given the speed with which new technology and legislation is introduced, it would be unwise to recommend any specific resources for the IT element of this module. Professional journals, dedicated web sites and regularly updated employment handbooks are good sources of current information and suitable cases and scenarios can be found in the media and on management websites.

Government and associated websites (e.g. For the UK: ACAS and the DPI -Data Protection Registrar) will cover legislation, and sometimes work practice and ethical issues.

With regards to the classification and use of information, decision making etc, the Professional Level booklist makes a number of suggestions. Managing Information by David Wilson ISBN: 0750656212 (Institute of management) is also recommended, although even with these subject areas there can be issues with currency.

Readily accessible copies of published data, reports etc can be useful to give candidates practise at analysing information and experimenting with different ways of presenting it to meet different objectives and outcomes.

Units 2, 3 and 4

For these Units currency is less of an issue and there is a wealth of book based and other material available covering research and analysis skills, meetings and presentations.

Exercises containing scenarios and/or role briefs for simulated meetings are available but in the absence of these, case study material can be adapted for this purpose.

UNIT 1: Demonstrate an awareness of different types of information and the range of sources

UNIT 5: Use Information Technology effectively within the working environment

Recommended prior knowledge: No prior knowledge is required, however, background reading about the changing use of IT within the business environment and the implications of this would help to promote understanding.

Given the speed with which new technology and legislation is introduced, it would be unwise to recommend any specific resources for the IT element of this module. Professional journals, dedicated web sites and regularly updated employment handbooks are a good sources of current information and suitable cases and scenarios can be found in the media and on management web sites

Government and associated web sites (e.g. For the UK: ACAS and the DPI -Data Protection Registrar) will cover legislation, and sometimes work practice and ethical issues.

With regards to the classification and use of information, decision making etc, the Professional Level book list makes a number of suggestions. Managing Information by David Wilson (Institute of management) is also recommended, although even with these subject areas there can be issues with currency.

Outline: Units 1 and 5: These Units focus on the classification and use of management information in business decision making and the role of IT in this.

A knowledge and understanding of the different types of information is needed and an appreciation of how these contribute to effective decision making.

Candidates need to develop a clear understanding of the advantages and limitations of the use of IT in the working environment. Work practice, legislation and ethical issues are also important.

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		EXPLANATION OF COMPETENCE CRITERIA	SUGGESTED TEACHING ACTIVITIES
1.2	Identify the purpose of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is the purpose of information in the business environment? • what role does it play in helping the organisation to learn and develop? 	<p>Before tackling this module candidates should understand the difference between information and data; i.e. information is data which has been processed and organised to make sense and to enable decisions to be made.</p> <p>Candidates must appreciate that information must be managed and treated with the same regard as any other key business resource. This should be linked to a discussion about the use of knowledge for competitive success. Other concepts such as intellectual capital and the notion of the learning organisation should also be introduced.</p> <p>It is useful at this stage to review the various uses of information in the organisation.</p>
1.1	Identify appropriate data and information in order to support organisational decision making processes		
1.4	Manage information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how is information passed through the organisation? • how is information stored? • what legal and confidentiality issues apply? 	<p>Decision making needs breaking down into strategic, tactical and operational. These are important distinctions that can be difficult to understand. It can be helpful to give candidates a scenario/set of decisions to be made and ask them to identify the decisions that need to be made at each level e.g. a well known clothes retailer is considering opening a new store/branch in a local town - for this to happen, identify the decisions that will need to be made at each level. This exercise could be developed to include points raised later in the Unit e.g. the type and sources of information needed, presentation etc. This could be linked to the concept of the information flowline and issues associated with legislation, regulation and security.</p>
1.3	Identify appropriate types and sources and quality of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what sources and types of information are available to managers in the business environment? • how can the suitability and quality of this information be evaluated? 	<p>Candidates need to consider different sources and types of information, and the ways in which information can be classified e.g. by source, by nature, by level, by use.</p> <p>Internal and external sources and basic research techniques and skills should be covered e.g. primary, secondary, sampling.</p> <p>This may be an appropriate point to discuss confidentiality and anonymity and the dangers of bias and inaccuracy in research and recording.</p>

<p>5.1</p> <p>2.4</p>	<p>Identify the use of current technology within organizations</p> <p>Identify and assess communications within the organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how is IT used in the working environment? • how information is transmitted 	<p>The role of IT in the business environment is a key part of this module and it is obviously becoming increasingly important for managers to have a clear understanding of both the advantages and disadvantages, or limitations, of the use of IT.</p> <p>Candidates could begin this part of the module by historically reviewing the impact which new technology has had on their role as a manager and then discussing the broader issue of how the introduction of IT communication systems has changed the nature of communication and relations at work.</p> <p>Up to date case studies and articles from professional ICT and other relevant journals can help to develop an understanding of the use of electronic communications and their impact upon the role of the manager. Alternatively, an expert/guest speaker could be invited to talk to the group.</p> <p>This will also help to develop awareness of advantages, constraints and potential problems e.g. viruses, computer fraud.</p> <p>Legislation and ethical issues are an important part of this Unit</p>
<p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p>	<p>Identify the use of current electronic communication systems within the business environment</p> <p>Identify potential problems with IT communication systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is the role of electronic communication in the business environment? • what are the potential problems associated with IT communication systems? • legislative, security and ethical issues. 	<p>Issues associated with computer fraud, security systems and information overload are important here.</p>

UNIT 2: Obtain appropriate information to aid decision making

UNIT 3: Analyse information to arrive at conclusions

UNIT 4: Present information to others using a range of methods

Recommended prior knowledge: No prior knowledge is required, however candidates should be encouraged to reflect upon any meetings and presentations in which they have been involved and to identify those skills which they would most benefit from practising, developing and receiving feedback on.

There is a wealth of book based and other material available covering skills, meetings and presentations

Exercises containing scenarios and/or role briefs for simulated meetings are available but in the absence of these, case study material can be adapted for this purpose.

Outline: These units look at different types of information within organizations that are required for making decisions. The analysis of information to arrive at conclusions is also covered. These units provide candidates with the opportunity to develop and practise the skills involved in presenting information in a business environment. The range of communication skills and knowledge to be explored are detailed in the Unit outlines. Candidates are expected to apply these in leading, managing and contributing to meetings and in the delivery of a formal presentation. They should receive feedback and support to help them to develop these further in their own work / business environment.

Candidates need to understand the purposes of meetings and how to prepare for managing, leading or contributing to a meeting to ensure that its objectives are achieved. Structural and process issues should be covered as well as a range of other skills e.g. leadership, facilitation, negotiation, recognising and handling conflict, encouraging contributions and dealing with difficult issues and participants.

Many of these will apply to preparing for and delivering presentations. However, additional support may be needed to help candidates with structure, preparation and presentation of visual aids, and personal presentation skills and techniques, including non-verbal behaviour and how to deal with nerves and questions.

COMPETENCE CRITERIA		EXPLANATION OF COMPETENCE CRITERIA	SUGGESTED TEACHING ACTIVITIES
3.1	Identification of where information and or data are required to support the decision making processes at sub-organisational level (section, department)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the information you need to carry out your role as a manager and the format this should take identify the different types of decisions and the information that is relevant to these 	<p>Candidates need to be encouraged to critically review the quality of the information which they provide for others and receive.</p> <p>It can be helpful to ask candidate to review the pieces of information which they regularly receive, to rate them (e.g. out of 10) against the criteria such as those given below and then to determine how they can improve the quality of the information.</p>
2.1	Types of data/information needed to support a range of decision making processes		<p>Managers are often end users in a Management Information System and they have a responsibility to liaise with the providers of information to tell them what their requirements are e.g. content , detail, format - and, any information which is no longer needed.</p>
2.2	Identify the types of data/information needed to support the range of decision making processes		<p>Useful – does it contribute something?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevant – does it deal with the matter in hand? appropriate – is to the correct level, detail and format? complete and accurate timeliness reliable valid comprehensible – is it user friendly? presentation cost effective – do the benefits outweigh the costs?
2.3	Identify the costs of such information and the potential benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cost consideration of obtaining and using information in relation to the level of decision is it in a suitable format? 	
3.2	Critical assessment of the availability, access and format of this data/information		
3.3	Appraisal of the quality of this information to support the decision making processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-explanatory 	<p>This may be an appropriate point to introduce statistical analysis as this can help to check the sufficiency, reliability and validity of information. This should be linked to discussion about the presentation of information and the sensitivity of decision making to how information is analysed and presented i.e. that creative use of analysis and presentation can result in different conclusions and decisions being based on the same set of raw data. A range of examples and exercises can be used to effectively demonstrate this.</p>
3.4	Techniques of analysis that support the decision making processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, statistical, break even analysis; computer modeling and graphical 	

3.5	Arriving at and communicating decisions	<p>techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the information to best effect and deciding how best to pass this on to others 	<p>Candidates should be asked to analyse data to introduce them to basic analytical concepts and techniques e.g. range, classification, frequency distribution, averages (mean, median, mode), range and dispersion, correlation and trends. An understanding of how to calculate and use standard deviation is also important .</p> <p>Having analysed this data candidates should explore the different ways in which data can be presented. Useful links can be made to presenting data for meetings and presentations.</p> <p>Working in small groups, candidates can be asked to present the same set of data/information in different formats and then to discuss the appropriateness, advantages and disadvantages of each method.</p> <p>e.g. one group presents the data using pie charts, another using bar charts, graphs...</p> <p>This should help candidates to appreciate the importance of presentation and the need to think in advance about the use which the information is to be put to. i.e. why is the information needed?</p>
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4.1	Understand the purpose and function of meetings to gather and provide information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish between formal and informal meetings • identify the different purposes, functions and objectives of meetings • e.g. information giving, consultation, decision making 	<p>The competence criteria for this unit will be most effectively addressed together through the planning, preparation, carrying out and evaluation of a simulated or role play meeting.</p> <p>If this is not possible candidates may be able to observe a real time meeting or a video recording of a meeting. Although this will not allow them to practise their skills it will help them to appreciate process and to identify the different skills and behaviours typically demonstrated in meetings.</p> <p>The prior knowledge, experience and skills of the group will obviously determine the amount of time to be spent giving formal input on the subject and many of the skills may have been covered elsewhere.</p> <p>Prior to the meetings activity candidates need to spend some time thinking about the purpose of meetings and some of the structural and procedural aspects of meetings.</p> <p>It can be helpful to ask candidates to list, classify and evaluate the meetings that they have been involved in over, say, the last month. A table could be produced to help this review and analysis.</p> <p>For example, for each meeting :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • was it formal or informal? • what was its purpose? • was this clearly communicated in advance? • did you have enough information to enable you to contribute effectively? • did it achieve its objectives? • what helped / hindered this? (too many people, poor chair, insufficient information etc) <p>Working in small groups, candidates could draw on this to produce a list of purposes and functions of meetings to identify the features of effective meetings etc.</p>
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			<p>Candidates need to appreciate the importance of planning a meeting. Drawing up agendas, circulating information in advance, meeting protocol and internal politics etc.</p> <p>It can be helpful to show candidates examples of good and poor agendas and minutes so that they can learn from best practice.</p> <p>It can also be valuable to spend time focussing in more detail on group process and behaviours in meetings, this may overlap with some of the skills covered in Unit 3.</p> <p>Observing a meeting can help candidates to identify task and maintenance roles and different behaviours e.g. supporting, building, blocking, signing, bringing in. This can help them to understand how to use their skills to good effect.</p> <p>A discussion about how to handle ineffective meetings and deal with difficult behaviour could follow.</p> <p>Candidates should practise their skills by participating in a meeting and there are many different ways in which this can be approached. One option which works well is to ask half the group to participate while the rest observe and evaluate the process of the meeting and the behaviours and skills of the participants. The groups then change over. A popular scenario is for candidates to represent different teams or departments in an organisation who are competing for scarce resources. It can be helpful to choose scenarios which require one or more of the participants to work together (from the same department) as they share a common interest which conflicts with that of another party/ies. This allows candidates to practise planning and presenting their case and to build on each others ideas. It can also develop conflict handling and shutting out/blocking skills by participants and the chair.</p> <p>Only a few candidates will be able to practise chairing a meeting. However, this should not be an issue as the skills required for contributing to a meeting are very similar although they are likely to be used in different ways and at different times.</p>
			<p>If candidates are observing peers they may need reminding of the</p>

4.2	Lead and manage meetings in order that the aim, objectives and expectations of those involved are met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning and managing content, structure and process • working to an agenda and time • keeping meetings goal and outcome orientated • understanding and managing the contributions and behaviours of others • facilitating discussion and decision making. Problem solving • closing and evaluating meetings 	<p>importance of giving constructive feedback and it may also be necessary to establish some ground rules regarding confidentiality, safe environments etc. Using standard written feedback sheets helps to improve the quality and value of the feedback.</p> <p>If the resources are available the meetings could be video recorded – and candidates can use the tape to carry out a more thorough self evaluation.</p>
4.3	Prepare formal presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning and preparing to carry out formal presentations 	<p>The competence criteria for this unit will be most effectively addressed together through the planning, preparation, carrying out and evaluation of a formal presentation.</p> <p>Presentations is one area where there is typically variation in the knowledge, experience and skills of a learning group, and this will obviously determine the amount of time to be spent giving formal input on the subject. Information gathering, planning and communication skills, should be recapped on and non verbal communication in particular may need covering in detail. IT applications e.g. power point, should be dealt with as an aid to preparation but it is not the intention that they will be taught as part of this module.</p> <p>It is useful to begin with a discussion about what is meant by presenting within a formal business setting. Candidates could share ideas about the expectations within their own organisations.</p> <p>To help candidates to focus on the skills needed to carry out an effective presentation ask them to think about a good and a poor presentation which they have attended – and to identify the reasons why they were good/poor. Produce a list of these features and discuss to ensure that candidates understand the requirements of an effective formal</p>

4.4	Give formal presentations		<p>presentation. Alternatively, rather than drawing on the candidates experiences a commercial training video or a video clip of a formal presentation shown on television could be analysed.</p> <p>Once candidates have established what the requirements are they will need to begin to develop their skills. Although candidates are likely to vary in terms of the amount of support they need to plan, prepare and present, a teaching session based on the Presentation Process usually works well.</p> <p>Candidates can be taken through the Process once, and then work through in practice when preparing their own presentations.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE PRESENTATION PROCESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting your objectives • Researching your audience • Planning the content • Planning the structure • Planning methods and styles of delivery • Preparing visual aids • Preparing your script • Rehearsing your presentation • Delivering your presentation • Handling questions • Evaluating your presentation <p>Asking candidates to give presentations and receive feedback on their performance in a safe learning environment is the most effective way to address this criterion.</p> <p>If candidates are expected to present as a team in the workplace it can be useful to make these small team presentations, however, take care to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be involved in both the</p>
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			<p>planning and the presentation and that this is practicable e.g. candidates are able to get together to work on their presentations.</p> <p>Although the focus of the activity is on presentations the subject of the presentation is not specified and this may be an ideal opportunity to look at another aspect of the module in more detail, or, to ask candidates to apply an aspect of their learning to their own organisation. However, as the intended audience is the rest of the teaching group the subject should be of interest and relevance to them.</p> <p>It is likely that some candidates may be anxious about the presentations and if this is the case presentations should be limited to 15 – 20 minutes for individual presentations, 20 – 30 for teams, including questions. Candidates should be allowed to run through their presentations without interruptions and then receive feedback at the end from the audience (tutor and peers).</p> <p>Using standard written feedback sheets helps to improve the quality and value of the feedback. If these are passed to the presenter they can also be used to help candidates to evaluate their own performance, again a prepared evaluation sheet works well (and could be useful for the candidates management file).</p> <p>If the resources are available presentations could be video recorded – and candidates can use the tape to carry out a more thorough self evaluation</p>
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