THE BRITISH COMPUTER SOCIETY

THE BCS PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS
BCS Level 6 Professional Graduate Diploma in IT

COMPUTER SERVICES MANAGEMENT

2nd May 2008, 2.30 p.m.-5.30 p.m.
Answer THREE questions out of FIVE. All questions carry equal marks.
Time: THREE hours

*The marks given in brackets are **indicative** of the weight given to each part of the question.*

Calculators are **NOT** allowed in this examination.

1. The company you work for obtains most of its computing services from two external contractors. One contractor provides the physical IT infrastructure, including networks, servers and desktop systems. The other contractor delivers and maintains the software environment that supports the business.

   Over the last few months several losses of service have occurred which has resulted in significant lost business. Meetings have been held with the contractors in an attempt to resolve the problems. However each contractor has blamed the other for causing the disruption.

   a) Discuss a framework that could be introduced to the existing business relationship which could be used to prevent a recurrence of this situation.

      (12 marks)

   b) Write a report to the senior management of your company describing how all future IT service arrangements should be negotiated. You should give a balanced view of the costs and benefits of the approach you discuss.

      (13 marks)

2. You have recently been recruited as a Technical Support Manager in the Computer Services Department of a large organisation that has a history of failed systems. The CEO has stated that the main reason for the failures is the high number of post-implementation system errors experienced during live operation. The CEO believes these errors are the result of inadequate testing, particularly user testing, and has asked for further information and advice.

   Prepare a memorandum for the CEO to:

   a) Describe a sequence of testing stages necessary to identify system errors before the system is made available for testing by the end users.

      (10 marks)

b) Explain and justify the involvement of the Computer Services Department in the testing process.

(8 marks)

c) Propose and describe a user testing service which should significantly reduce the number of post-implementation errors.

(7 marks)

3. Your role is the IT Operations Manager for an organisation which employs several thousand people, all of whom are located on a single site within a major city. In association with colleagues from other parts of the business you have developed a significant business continuity plan for the organisation. You have now proposed a full scale test of the plan under realistic conditions. The test would take place during a non-working day and would however simulate a normal working day.

Members of the Board of the company are concerned that the cost of the test will be substantial, and may have some knock on effect with normal business operations. They have therefore refused to approve the test event.

a) Suggest a disaster scenario which you believe is likely to occur and write a report to the Board highlighting why you think the test should go ahead. You should base your argument on the business needs of the organisation.

(15 marks)

b) Having read your report, the Board members have asked for more information regarding how the success of the test will be measured. Write a supplementary report describing how you intend to capture good quality information regarding the success, or otherwise, of the test event.

(10 marks)

4. The cost of a university's computing facilities is apportioned between the various departments according to the number of students in each department. This method has worked satisfactorily in the past but has the drawback of benefiting high users of computing resources at the expense of low users. The issue has been put in sharp focus by a proposal to close the Music Department to all new students, as it is perceived to be too costly. The head of the Music Department argues that the current system of computer charging is grossly unfair, as the Music Department uses few computing resources compared to the Engineering Department, even though the number of students is similar.

The Vice-Chancellor has asked you, the Computer Services Manager, to propose a charging method that fairly reflects the resources used by each department. Write a report to the Vice-Chancellor to:

a) List all the elements of a computing service.

(7 marks)

b) Describe and justify ONE approach by which the elements could be charged fairly to each department according to their usage.

(10 marks)

c) Discuss how the implementation of revised charges could impact on the demand for computer services, both in the short term and the long term.

(8 marks)

5. You are the Head of IT Services for a public sector organisation which employs five hundred people. Most of these employees are significant users of IT services and in most cases cannot carry out their work tasks without their networked desktop computer system being available.

Despite having a well qualified and professional support staff in place and a good service record you are aware that the service provided is not highly regarded by its customers.

a) Describe THREE activities you would undertake in order to determine the fundamental problems behind this dissatisfaction.

(15 marks)

b) For ONE of these activities, provide a report to your manager which clearly identifies how the evidence you have collected will be used to develop the service further.

(10 marks)