



**Higher Specialist Diploma**

**Leadership and Management**

**Examination – September 2023**

**Short-answer questions**

60 minutes

**Attempt all four questions**

Instructions to candidates

1. Record your candidate number and HSD discipline on the front sheet of the answer booklet.
2. Record your candidate number, the question number and the page number in the spaces provided on the answer sheets.
3. Begin each new answer on a new page.
4. Each question is worth 25 marks.

1. Your department has a clear need for a new piece of equipment which over its lifespan will have a contract cost over £200k. Discuss some key points you would include in making a case for this including any patient related issues. What are the legal implications of this level of cost and what sort of acquisition pathway would you have to follow? Are there any alternatives?
  
2. Your departmental quality lead informs you that this month all EQA results, other than any not scored are significantly incorrect. How would you go about looking into the root causes for these results and what would you do in terms of results that have been going out to GPs, wards and clinics?
  
3. There is some construction work going on outside the Pathology block. At the height of a busy working day there is a sudden complete loss of power including to IT equipment. The building is old and only blood refrigerators and platelet incubators are on a separate protected circuit. In order of priority, what would be your immediate actions and why?
  
4. Your Pathology training lead and the Training Committee propose to improve staff recruitment and retention by approaching students via local colleges. Their plan is to attract students and to develop into a staff training pipeline in house. They also propose advertising laboratory support posts to an audience with qualifications no higher than GCSE (or the equivalent). What is your reaction to their proposals, discussing your reasons for your thoughts?



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**Essay Paper**

120 minutes

**Attempt 2 out of 5 questions**

Instructions to candidates

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3. Begin each new answer on a new page.
4. Each question is worth 100 marks.

1. ISO 15189 requires the demonstration of management competence: Critically discuss what elements do you consider need to be included in a management competence framework and explain why. How can these be assessed effectively and used to add value to continuing personal and professional development.
  
2. Your Human Resources metrics are monitored monthly and published to you and senior Pathology management plus the Director of the division where Pathology is placed. Sickness levels are higher than expected for your team and attracting questions and criticism. Discuss potential factors and what sort of actions you would take.
  
3. Is demand management the only avenue to reduce expenditure in a laboratory or are there viable alternatives to cost improvement? Discuss the rationale for any items you would include in a cost improvement programme
  
4. Describe how you would prepare for the appraisal of a staff member who has been the subject of disciplinary procedures over recent months and discuss your approach to setting appropriate objectives.
  
5. Critically evaluate the pros and cons of purchasing equipment outright, as a managed service contract or via reagent rental. Justify a case for your favoured option.



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Case Studies

120 minutes

**Attempt all case studies**

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1. Record your candidate number and HSD discipline on the front sheet of the answer booklet.
2. Record your candidate number, the question number and the page number in the spaces provided on the answer sheets.
3. Begin each new answer on a new page.
4. Each question is worth 100 marks.
5. For these case study questions you are strongly advised to answer the questions as they arise during the case study to avoid later information impacting adversely on your answers to the earlier questions by presuming an “outcome”.

### Seen Case Study

1.

Out of the blue, just after financial year end you receive a huge invoice from a laboratory you sent some complex referred tests to. This invoice covers work over the last two years. You are sure you have been receiving and paying invoices during this time. This would mean an extremely large inroad into your budget for the current financial year.

- a. What would you do first? (20%)
  
- b. You are advised that the year before last invoice will not need to be paid however the most recent year invoice still represents a very large amount of money. What do you do now? (15%)
  
- c. You discover that you have regularly received and approved invoices over the last year and that the sums of money involved have been high. What could you do now? (15%)
  
- d. Your contact at the other organisation states that they believe their recent invoice to be genuine and wishes to see the evidence that you have made payments throughout the year. How would you respond? (15%)
  
- e. You meet to review invoices and payments. You are able to evidence that you have received invoices regularly and approved them for payment with only a few outstanding. However, the other organisation cannot find any evidence of monies received. What would you do next? (20%)
  
- f. It transpires that due to the combination of a coding error in the payments system and a lack of staff understanding of all the measures they should take to finalise taking of payments, the invoices have not actually been paid. How would you round up this episode? (15%)

### Unseen Case Studies

2.

Your local healthcare region has a particularly long backlog of cases since the pandemic and has never got back to pre-pandemic waiting list levels. This is across all areas including surgery, cancer waits and medical cases. This is leading to cases being more advanced when diagnosed meaning more impact on hospital services.

The region has been granted some one-off funding to try and reduce, if not clear these waiting lists via extended working in outpatient areas and theatres including weekends. The initiative is intended to last for 6-8 months.

- a. What do you see as the overarching implications of this initiative for Pathology? (10%)

Your line manager advises you of the scope of the plans in your own hospital and asks you to prepare a document stating how you would approach being able to ensure you provide adequate support.

- b. What specific elements would you need to consider within this document? (15%)

- c. What questions would you have for your manager? (10%)

The plan is announced via all - Trust email before you have had time to speak to your team and there are many questions coming to you. This may be due to pressure on senior teams which manifests in some poor behaviours.

- d. How might these behaviours manifest in style? Which leadership behavioural style / behaviour would be preferable? (10%)

- e. What would you do to gain staff engagement and buy in? (15%)

While some staff are excited and positive about the plans, some are very negative and say they are not willing to change work patterns to cover the patient work. This includes anxiety about extended working becoming permanent.

- f. What reasons might there be for such a refusal and how would you seek to mitigate these? (10%)

You receive a few letters of resignation including some key staff.

- g. What are the implications of this and how would you address them? (15%)

- h. Once the new work patterns are embedded, how would you maintain morale for the time period? (15%)

3.

An instrument which has always been reliable and is being used in a very standard way begins to produce internal quality control results which are consistently above normal levels although still within acceptable parameters.

- a. What would you do as a first step? (25%)
  
- b. Despite your actions, the instrument continues to give unexpected outcomes. What might you do next? (10%)

With all actions taken to ensure the instrument is operating correctly IQC reverts to normal levels. However after two days things again revert to the unexpected IQC results. You discuss this with the section leader who has been on leave for the last two days. They tell you that they read an article on the instrument and as a result made some changes to the settings as an improvement.

- c. What would you do? (25%)
  
- d. How would you finalise your work on this event? (20%)
  
- e. What would you do to ensure no other similar event happens? (20%)