

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FACULTY OF COMMERCE

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION 2006

TITLE OF PAPER: MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS I

DEGREE AND YEAR: DCOM III IDE

COURSE NUMBER: BA 311-1

TIME ALLOWED: TWO (2) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:1. THIS PAPER CONSISTS OF SECTIONS (A) AND (B)

2. THE CASE STUDY SECTION (A) IS COMPULSORY

3. ANSWER ANY TWO QUESTIONS FROM SECTION B.

Note MARKS WILL BE AWARDED FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH AND FOR ORDERLY PRESENTATION OF WORK

THIS EXAMINATION PAPER SHOULD NOT BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE INVIGILATOR.

SECTION A

Cassady and Associates is a management consulting firm located in a large city. The firm consists of seven consultants and three associate consultants. The three associate consultants are new members of the firm and are assigned to assist consultants on projects. Each consultant has a secretary, and the three associate consultants share one secretary. Each secretary provides the full range of administrative support and document processing support for the consultant or consultants, including answering the telephone, receiving visitors, preparing expense reports, project reports, and budgets, making copies, maintaining calendars and schedules, making travel arrangements, maintaining files, scheduling and otherwise managing meetings, ordering and maintaining office supplies, and handling the incoming mail for the assigned consultant. The secretaries use Pentium 1 computers for all their work and share two desktop copiers with a top speed of one copy every three seconds.

The company bookkeeper makes all entries in a manual bookkeeping system, processes all client invoices and payments; prepares weekly salary cheques and payroll forms for all employees, associate consultants, and consultants and processes all vendor invoices and payments. The company pays an accounting firm to prepare monthly statements and to perform other end of the month and end of the year accounting tasks, including preparation of tax forms for the firm. The firm feels that the current organization of the administrative support personnel is not efficient. There are too many times when secretaries are away from their phones copying or delivering documents or materials to others, which forces other secretaries to take their calls. This usually results in callback because the secretary who knows the consultants activities is not there to direct or otherwise process the call. To avoid this problem, five of the secretaries have each been given a clerk to assist them in copying, delivering materials, typing, answering the telephone, and otherwise to provide backup to these secretaries. Many of the consultant reports contain fairly constant information pertaining to the firm and the consultant's experiences. This information is constantly being retyped and duplicated in nearly every consultant report. Furthermore, the firm wishes to add several more associate consultants and does not wish to continue the practice of adding secretaries on nearly a one on one basis as the firm grows.

- a) How might you reorganise the administrative support, document processing support, and data processing support tasks and personnel to improve the productivity of this firm? Be specific! Identify each member of the administrative support personnel by job title and provide a list of tasks to be performed by that person. Also construct an organisation chart showing who reports to whom in the organisation. Provide a rationale for the organisation that will justify your recommendations. 20 marks
- b) How might you improve the productivity of this office through office automation? Be specific. Identify the types of equipment and software you would recommend for each function you wish to automate. Provide a rationale for your recommendations. 20 marks
- c) Discuss briefly the difference between open and closed loop control. 10 marks

SECTION B

Answer any two

QUESTION 1

Anthony Valencia has been Director of Data Processing for Perry Products for the last ten years. During that time, Valencia has directed the development of many information systems for the various departments and personnel in the company, including the purchasing department, payroll office, accounting department, production, engineering, personnel, and others. He recently attended a seminar on database management systems, and would like to explore the possibility of using database management systems at Perry Products. For that reason, he has asked you to prepare a short report on database management systems. In preparation for this task, you decide to list and briefly describe:

- a) The major advantages of database management systems. 12 marks
- b) The major problems that database management systems can incur. 8 marks
- c) What is normalization? 5 marks

QUESTION 2

- a) One advantage of the database approach is that it controls redundancy in a database. What are the negative factors associated with controlled redundancy? 5 marks
- b) It is said that the traditional file oriented approach to information systems exhibits lack of data integration
 - i What does this mean. 5 marks
 - ii Give an example to explain your answer. 5 marks
- c) Many of the newly hired programmer analysts at Mhlume are having problems on the job. Although they have good technical skills, they are not succeeding on the job because of poor communications skills, particularly writing ability. This is causing the Personnel Department to think seriously about requiring a pre-screening test in basic writing skills, including grammar, punctuation and spelling. The Personnel Department has also contacted several local universities to express their concern about the problem of communication skills.

Diagnose this problem from a systems standpoint and suggest some possible solutions.
10 marks

QUESTION 3

- a) What are the principal functions of all telecommunications systems? 7 marks

- b) Alvira Dlamini is an office manager at NATEX. The office that Dlamini manages contains a number of micro computers made by different companies. Many of these workstations are used for word processing. Dlamini wants to install a LAN, purchase a copy of a desktop publishing software program, and acquire a laser printer so that several workers can develop customer newsletters and other attractive publications. What problems is Dlamini likely to encounter with her plan? 10 marks

- c) What is E.D.I? 3marks

- d) What are the essential functions and facilities of the data dictionary system which supports a database? 5 marks