



**Level 3 Certificate in Medical Administration/Diploma for
Medical Secretaries**

4419-332

Managing Communication in a Medical Environment

Version: Sample Assignment

This assignment contains assessors and candidate instructions

Sample

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Assessor's instructions

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Notes for guidance

This assignment comprises the assessment for the practical activities and underpinning knowledge requirements for Unit 332 Managing Communication in a Medical Environment.

The importance of safe working practices, the demands of the appropriate national and local Health and Safety legislation, associated regulations and Codes of Practice associated with the particular industry, must always be stressed. Candidates have responsibilities for maintaining the safety of others as well as their own. Anyone behaving in an unsafe fashion must be stopped and suitable warnings given. A candidate should never be allowed to continue working on an assignment if they have contravened these requirements. This may seem rather strict but, apart from the potentially unpleasant consequences, each candidate must acquire the habits required for the workplace.

The following notes for guidance are provided to assist assessors/tutors in planning the delivery of this assignment to candidates.

1. Location of assignment

- 1.1 Any suitable location in the workplace or learning environment.
- 1.2 This assignment must be taken under controlled conditions to ensure the time allowance is adhered to however it is not an examination.

2. Equipment/resources required for this assignment

- 2.1 Access to word processing and printer facilities is required to allow candidates to produce work more efficiently.

3. Evidence and recording

- 3.1 All work produced by the candidate should be kept together. The candidate is required to put their name, their City & Guilds registration number, task number and the date on all pieces of work, either handwritten or typed, however they will not be penalised for not doing so.
- 3.2 Candidates will need to be able to organise their information clearly and coherently with accurate spelling and grammar. Error tolerance for spelling, grammatical and significant punctuation errors eg missing full stop has been given per task. Assessors are advised to use professional judgement when identifying errors, to determine whether work produced is fit for purpose.

4. Time considerations

- 4.1 This assignment should take no longer than **four** hours to complete, excluding research activities. This may be carried out in 2 x 2 hour sessions. You should make the candidate aware of your programme's time frame and deadlines for completion of this assignment.
- 4.2 A recommended period of seven days must have elapsed before an unsuccessful candidate can retake a task within this assignment. Further training/feedback should be given to candidates before a task is retaken. Should a candidate be unsuccessful in more than one task, or a referred assignment, then a new assignment should be taken. *A Pass only can be achieved on a referred assignment.*

5. Additional information

- 5.1 Answers given in the marking and grading criteria are indicative of the type of answers candidates should give. They are **not** definitive.

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Outcomes

Task	Evidence	Outcome reference
1	Letter to potential course leaders	4.1, 4.2
2	Information sheet on obesity	2.1, 2.2, 2.3
3	Event evaluation sheet	3.1
4	Agenda and notes on meeting procedures	1.1, 1.2, 4.2
5	Memo on face-to-face communication	5.1, 5.2, 5.3
6	Notes on telephone techniques	6.1, 6.2, 6.3

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Candidate's instructions

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Version	Sample

Sample

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You are advised to read all instructions carefully before starting work. Check with your Assessor/Tutor, if necessary, to ensure that you have fully understood the process.

You must, at all times, observe all relevant Health and Safety requirements.

You have **four hours** to complete this assignment. You should follow your centre's timeframe for completion of this assignment.

Introduction

This assignment is broken down into six tasks:

Task 1 requires you to prepare a standard letter to potential course leaders

Task 2 requires you to summarise and prepare an information sheet

Task 3 requires you to design an evaluation sheet for the event

Task 4 requires you to prepare an agenda for the next team meeting and a note on meeting procedures

Task 5 requires you to respond to a memo about face-to-face communication

Task 6 requires you to prepare notes on telephone techniques

Notes:

- You will be allowed to use English and or mother tongue dictionaries to assist you in this assignment.
- When you have completed all the tasks, re-read the instructions again just before you proof read your work for the last time.
- Save your work with an appropriate file name and save it before the end of the time period.
- Ensure your name, your City & Guilds registration number, task number and date is on all documentation.
- Please remember to arrange your work in task order.
- Proof reading and printing must be done within the time period. No further amendments may be made after that.
- At the end of each session, you will be told to stop and hand all paperwork to your Assessor/Tutor.

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Scenario

You work as secretary to the Nutrition and Dietetic Research group based at Moorlands Hospital NHS Trust. The address is: Brookline Road, MOORLANDS MR5 1SB. The team leader for the research group, Ms Stephanie Bourne PhD SRD, has been involved with a series of local initiatives to combat obesity in young people. Her contact details are 01785 491511 and sbourne@lcmoorlands.nhs.uk.

The Child Health Improvement Programme, known as CHIP, is a weight management programme. It helps children lose weight (specifically body fat) and increases their physical activity levels. It works on confidence and self esteem as well as food, nutrition, exercise and leisure activity eg screen time and personal development. Children - aged 7-11 - show positive health improvements 12 months after starting the "CHIP Programme".

The team is now promoting the programme to the community and is hoping to interest potential course leaders. It offers training so groups can deliver health improvement programmes and it is not essential to be a specialist healthcare professional. There are specially-designed training and teaching aids to provide all the information that is needed. Training events for course leaders are held at the Learning Centre.

A typical first training day lasts 6 hours, starting at 9.30 am and with the usual (healthy) refreshment breaks. It follows a standard format. After the welcome and introductions, there is a presentation on the extent of the problem in the UK and an introduction to the programme and how it works. This is followed by afternoon workshops on the briefing packs and the approach to take when setting up a programme. Advice and guidance followed by questions concludes a typical session.

The next training day is scheduled for 2 October 2009.

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Task 1

Please prepare a standard letter to go to the people who have enquired about leading the programme. We need to invite them to a training day, offer an outline of the day and then give them a date to respond by. I'd like to see how the letter looks when it's ready to be merged with their details.

Thanks
Stephanie

(20 marks)

Task 2

Using the following extract, prepare an information sheet defining obesity and explaining its causes and the consequences in children.

The sheet will be in the delegate pack on the training day as a sample of support materials to help and encourage parents and families. Use an appropriate format and your own words to make it reader friendly and aim for 150-175 words in your answer.

(20 marks)

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Why weight matters

Over half of women and about two-thirds of men are either overweight or obese. The number of overweight and obese children in the UK has risen steadily over the past 20 years.

Obesity causes 9,000 premature deaths in England every year and on average reduces life expectancy by nine years. It is also linked to serious health problems including heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoarthritis and cancers of the breast, colon and prostate. Only a minority of people (fewer than one in 100) are obese because of medical conditions such as an under-active thyroid gland. Obese children are at increased risk from a number of health problems more usually seen in adulthood, including hardened and blocked arteries (coronary artery diseases), high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes. When they grow up, they are also more likely to be obese.

Most obese people can blame their excess weight on eating more calories than they burn. The two main options for those wishing to lose weight are therefore: eating less and doing more exercise. A combination of the two is best.

The speed at which calories are burned off from food and drink is known as the metabolic rate. This is often faster during growth spurts and puberty, but reaches a steady rate by adulthood. People who are active generally have a higher metabolic rate than those who are sedentary because they burn off calories faster through energetic activity. For example, a labourer on a building site may need as many as 4,000-5,000 calories a day to keep an even weight. In contrast, an office worker who drives to work, and does not exercise, may only need 1,500 calories a day. Physical activity has benefits not only for controlling body weight over the long term, but also in controlling appetite. It also helps prevent cardiovascular disease.

If the amount of calories provided by daily food intake is greater than the calories burned off, the body will store the extra energy as fat. According to WHO guidelines, anyone with a BMI of between 18.5 and 25 is a healthy weight. Anyone less than 18.5 is classed as underweight, between 25 and 30 is considered overweight and a figure of over 30 is obese.

It is easier than ever before for children to become overweight. High-calorie fast foods and confectionery are abundant, relatively cheap and promoted specifically at children. Research indicates that children are more likely to be obese if their parents are obese. It isn't known whether this is because of genetic factors which the child inherits, if it is because families tend to share eating and activity habits, or a combination of both.


Exercise is no longer a regular part of everyone's day - some children never walk or cycle to school, or play any kind of sport. Many will spend hours in front of a television or computer. According to the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (2000), 4 out of 10 boys and 6 out of 10 girls do not do the minimum one hour a day of physical activity recommended.

Psychological distress is a further issue. Teasing about their appearance affects a child's confidence and self-esteem, and can lead to isolation and depression.

Fast foods, high-calorie snacks and large portions mean we take in more energy than we need. Obesity has now become one of the most serious medical problems of the western world, costing the NHS in England alone £1bn per year.

575 words

For this sample assignment, **content has been adapted from material provided by NHS Direct**

 **and previous examination text.**

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Task 3

We need an evaluation sheet to use with delegates at the end of the training day and I'd like you to design something suitable. We need 5 key questions and I'd like a rating system so we know how we score. Please ensure questions cover the organisation of the event, its content and the overall usefulness of the day. I think that our delegates may also want to make their own general comments too.

Many thanks
Stephanie

(10 marks)

Task 4

- a) The next team meeting is scheduled for a fortnight's time. Meetings are held late afternoon in the Learning Centre itself. Prepare an agenda to notify the staff.

Your manager wants the following topics to be included: your progress with the preparation; delegate packs and final timings for the next training day.

(15 marks)

- b) Prepare brief notes explaining how the first three items of an agenda are used at the start of a meeting.

(5 marks)

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Task 5

Your manager has sent you the following memo. Please respond using memo format.

Memorandum

To Medical Secretary
From Stephanie Bourne
Date 2 October 2009
Ref SB/

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

We are developing a training manual to ensure new staff have the communication skills to deal confidently with the people and situations we encounter working for CHIP.

I'd like your input on 2 areas:

- Face-to-face communication with parents/carers of children involved in CHIP
- Communication at team meetings

Can you get back to me please with some points for inclusion – the basics of good practice and any tips you can offer.

Many thanks

(15 marks [Content: parents 8 marks; team meetings 4 marks])

Task 6

A new member of the CHIP team asks for advice on dealing with angry telephone callers.

Prepare some notes for your colleague describing:

- what to say and do *([8 marks])*
- what to avoid *(4 marks)*
- confidentiality on the telephone *(2 marks)*

(15 marks)

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Marking & grading criteria

(Not to be shown to candidates until grading is complete)

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Candidate name:	
Enrolment no:	
Signature:	
Date:	Pass / Merit / Distinction / Re-sit

Assessor name:	
Signature:	Date:

Internal Quality sampled by:	
Signature:	Date:

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Tone	Positive, encouraging tone Final courtesy (1)	3
Language	Suitable business language and sentence structure: Business vocabulary (1) eg no abbreviations like don't; formal language Variety for the reader; different sentence openings, sentence length and structure. Fluent writing that avoids repetition (2)	3
Accuracy	Award marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar according to the following scale: Error free 3 marks No more than 2 different errors 2 marks No more than 4 different errors 1 mark	Up to 3 marks
Total		20

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Task 2 Information sheet on obesity in young people

		Marks
Suitable title	Conveys document purpose (through title, subtitle or introduction)	1
	Own title to create interest (not Why Weight Matters)	1
Format	Paragraphed logically	1
	Suitable use of headings	1
	Bullets or numbering to give clarity and structure	1
Content editing	Focus/emphasis on key areas and message correct:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Causes of obesity in children – diet and inactivity 	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining obesity through BMI 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metabolic rate explained 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents – heredity and habit 	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consequences acknowledged – either medical (adulthood) or isolation 	1
	Own words –avoiding “lifting”	1
	Required word length – within range	1
Awareness of reader	Avoiding excessive background/detail	3
	Occasional use of statistics and technical terms as examples – without overloading the reader	
	Avoidance of strong scare tactics – factual rather than emotive – but not under-selling the importance of the information	
Accuracy	Award marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar according to the following scale:	3
	Error free 3 marks	
	No more than 2 different errors 2 marks	
	No more than 4 different errors 1 mark	
	Total	20

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Task 3 Evaluation sheet

		Marks
Title and Introduction/Tone	Document purpose; training event	1 Heading
	Explains document and why feedback is required; reader friendly in terms of asking for or acknowledging their help eg thanking them for their feedback and that it will help them improve future events	1
Recording	Rating system with suitable number of choices eg 1-5 number rating system with poor- excellent Word options eg poor, satisfactory	1
Questions	5 suitable questions; focus on organisation (efficient administration or prompt communication in advance or on the day) content (eg speakers, presentations, delegate packs/materials, discussion) and overall usefulness of the event; Each question must be phrased so it fits the rating system	4 1
General comments	Space and suitable request/heading for comments	1
Guidance for reader	How to complete/where to return Suitable help and tone at at least one of these points	1
Total		10

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4b)		Notes explaining procedures from declaring the meeting open:	
		Apologies for absence – chair calls for information on absentees. 3 possible answers for 2 nd mark: some may have apologised in advance; others sent in messages on the day. Names will be recorded.	1 1
		Minutes of the last meeting – these need to have been circulated, read, checked and agreed (any of these for 1 mark) Members have the right to query wording but not change decisions (In some contexts, the chair will sign the minutes – accept this as an alternative answer for 1 mark)	1 1
		Matters arising – out of the minutes and not to be confused with AOB or tabled items eg Matters arising is the point at which progress with actions is discussed – like a “follow up”. These actions/issues will have been recorded be in the minutes of the previous meeting. For the purposes of this question, candidates just need to comment on the items – they have already been tested on their correct order.	1
		Total	5

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Task 5 Memo format; face-to-face communication

Face-to-face communication with parents	<p>eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear well-paced speech, suitable volume to ensure discretion • Positive tone of voice with natural warmth • Eye contact sustained to show interest • Open positive body posture (eg no arms crossed) • Active listening through checking information, repeating details, • Clarifying and summarising more complex points to confirm understanding/feelings • Show unconditional positive regard and respect • Personal prejudices acknowledged eg • obesity could be a barrier to regard and understanding; non-judgemental • Empathy – show natural warmth and understanding • Allow for nerves/uncertain/difficult manner as in unfamiliar/healthcare environment • Avoid patronising but don't use technical language • Avoid over-familiarity in the desire to make people feel comfortable 	8 marks (any 8 points)
Team meetings Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use eye contact to take in whole meeting • Use name as no confidentiality issues • Avoid distracting mannerisms eg pen tapping • Full concentration • Sit forward to speak • Lean back to listen • Follow agenda/protocol – keep relevant • Speak through chair in formal situations; don't talk across people • Stay professional – avoid chatter • Avoid sub-groups 	4 (any 4 points)
Document presentation	<p>Accuracy - no more than 3 errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar</p> <p>Structure to include courteous response to request</p> <p>Logical paragraphing/use of bullets to structure (clear, not over-used)</p>	1 1 1
Total		15

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Task 6 Telephone techniques – notes

Aspect	Detail	Marks
Things to say and do	<p>eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check basic information eg name, patient details even if the caller presumes you know this • Collect information with careful sensitive questioning; the more you understand the situation the more you will be able to calm the caller • Take notes (for reasons of efficiency/and or to protect yourself) • Listen seriously and attentively • Stay calm/use breathing techniques • Focus on the problem and its resolution • Identify specific causes of anger • Agree action and keep promises • Stay polite, non-committal • Use inner dialogue to convince yourself you can handle the anger • Know your boundaries – when you need to refer the problem to a manager • Show respect through tone/ the caller's name • Emphasise that although you were not the cause, you are trying to help • Empathise: Acknowledge feelings – eg “I can see why you might think that” • Acknowledge context – eg concern about loved one, fatigue • Stand up as it may help you to be assertive when under pressure 	<p>8</p> <p>Any 8 points</p>
Things to avoid	<p>eg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • don't tell them that they should not be angry – they may have a right to be so • don't argue/deny/agree • don't joke • don't take it personally • don't shout • don't use sarcasm • don't let tone get harsh/strident • don't blame another department or individual • don't tell them off (eg for swearing) 	<p>4</p> <p>Any 4 things to avoid</p>

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Confidentiality	Principles on checking identity of caller tactfully; eg check name, patient's name and DOB to verify details(1) disclosure of information may be an issue as caller may not be entitled to information at all (1)	2
Accuracy	Notes should be professional – no more than 3 errors of spelling	1
Total		15

Total marks achieved _____/100 (Pass / Merit / Distinction)

Candidate name:

Enrolment no:

Assessor name:

Date:

Assessor signature:

Grading criteria:

Overall grade:

Pass – 50%

Merit – 65%

Distinction - 75%