

Executive Level Communication and People Skills (Pilot Paper)

Instructions to candidates

- (1) Time allowed: 3 hours
- (2) Total: 85 marks
- (3) Section I - Listening: 2 questions – **All questions are compulsory.**
Section II - Reading: 4 questions – **All questions are compulsory.**
Section III - Writing: 4 questions – **All questions are compulsory.**
- (4) Answers to Section III, Question 09 should be in the separate paper given to you. Use only 1 word per box.

Answers to questions in all other sections should be in the answer booklet given to you.
- (5) Begin each answer for questions in Section I, II and Section III on a separate page in the answer booklet.
- (6) First start the question 1 in Section I - Listening & proceed to question 2. Follow the instructions given in the recording.

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Section I - Listening

*All questions are compulsory.
Total marks for Section I is 15 marks.
Recommended time for this section is 20 minutes.*

Question 1

Listen to the recording giving instructions on buying an online air ticket and answer the following questions. The recording will be played twice. Select the most suitable answer from the choices given.

(Total 5 marks)

- i. What do you have to do first, when you buy an online air ticket?
 - a. Go to an airline office
 - b. You have to go to the internet
 - c. You have to meet a travel agent
 - d. You have to pay first

- ii. Why can searching for an airline ticket be overwhelming?
 - a. Because there are many search engines
 - b. Because there are many sites selling online tickets
 - c. Because it's very convenient & time saving
 - d. Because printing an e- ticket is a long process

- iii. What can you do on Sri Lankan airways website?
 - a. Make your reservations and purchase your ticket
 - b. Make your reservations and search for other airlines
 - c. Book a flight on any airline
 - d. Make your reservation for a connecting flight

- iv. What should you take to the airport when you purchase a ticket online?
 - a. Take your boarding pass
 - b. Take a copy of your passport
 - c. Take a print out of the e-ticket
 - d. Take a print out of your boarding pass

- v. What is the advantage in getting an e-ticket?
 - a. You can get a boarding pass
 - b. You don't have to wait in queues
 - c. You can arrive at the airport early
 - d. You can get a discount

Question 2

Listen to an introduction to a course in Finance taught at college level. Fill in the blanks with **no more than 3 words**. The recording will be played twice. (10 marks)

- i. Hasitha Munasinghe is a at the Finance Institute Sri Lanka. (1 mark)
- ii. The aim of this lecture is to introduce you to a course on (1 mark)
- iii. Finance is interesting because it of things. (1 mark)
- iv. Finance looks at how people and money. (1 mark)
- v. It is important for people and companies know how to spend money so that they can the assets they have and achieve for the assets. (2 marks)
- vi. How managers of companies make real investments, build capital, manage risks and return money with interest to investors are topics in (1 mark)
- vii. A question that finance grapples with is why economic have patterns. (2 marks)
- viii. Finance is not about theories. (1 mark)

Section II - Reading

*All questions are compulsory.
Total marks for Section II is 33 marks.
Recommended time for this section is 1 hour & 15 minutes.*

Question 3

Fill in the blanks with the given words. Each word should be used only once.
(1/2 x 10 = 5 marks)

accounted released fell percent arrivals tourists
single Maldives lower total

Tourist (i) to the Maldives fell 5.1 (ii)year – on year in the month of November, with (iii) arrivals from crisis-hit Russia and China, according to data (iv) by the Maldives Tourist Ministry. Russian (v), which accounted for 5.6 percent of the (vi) tourists to the Maldives year – to – date, (vii) 31.3 percent to 5,273. Total arrivals from Central and Eastern Europe accordingly fell 22 percent to 9261. Central and Eastern Europe (viii) for 9.1 percent of total tourist arrivals to the (ix) year to date. Arrivals from China in the month of November fell 4.9 percent, being the (x)largest source market.

Question 4

Read the text below about challenges of education online. In each line there is one wrong /missing word. Write the correct word for each line, in the space provided.
(1 x 10= 10 marks)

Eg: Online degree programmes have creates incredible opportunities. ____*created*____

- i. They have made it possible for people to starting or return to school that, only a few years ago, simply could not have done so.
- ii. Along with the great opportunity of distance educational students will face some challenges also.
- iii. For the Virtual Student, it is important to understand the challenging as well as the opportunity.
- iv. Perhaps the most common characteristic of Virtual Students is that they feeling somewhat isolated.
- v. To vary degrees, they feel that they are alone in their quest.
- vi. It is of course exactly true that studying at home, often lately at night, is a solitary activity.
- vii. Especially for those people who enjoying and are energized by social interaction, studying online can seem a lonely experience.
- viii. On the other hand, many Virtual Students report that the online experience has been responsible for their accumulate an entire new group of friends.
- ix. Their online classmates becoming their friends, just as class cohorts in a physical classroom can become friends.
- x. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that the online study experience usually takes place apart from personally, social contact.

Question 5

Read the following passage and answer the questions given below. (6 marks)

Sustainable business management involves anticipating potential issues that could arise in the future, and readying organizations to deal with these before they emerge. In a nutshell, sustainable business management is a process of holistic risk management. It is not about green initiatives or philanthropic projects, contrary to the common misconception on the subject in Sri Lanka.

Some of these issues which have been faced at home include the Rathupaswala incident, and more recently, the Piliyandala gas leak. Internationally, yet still close to home, issues have included the Bangladesh factory building collapse and fires which have had far reaching consequences both for the Bangladeshi garment manufacturing community

Whilst in some cases these incidents involved a breakdown in the management of a particular aspect of the business, in other instances the companies were operating in adherence to all requirements and standards, but was yet faced with a shutdown.

The fundamental onus of ensuring business continuity however lies with the management, and in order to foresee problems ahead of time, there have to be sufficiently robust systems and measures in place which can anticipate issues before they emerge.

The failure to recognize potential issues of a business operation will eventually result in the management having to react to situations, by which time it could well be too late to diffuse the crisis, and, depending on the **volatility** of the issue, this can very quickly get out of control, as we have seen for ourselves. Businesses need to understand this **vulnerability** and must come to terms with the fact that sometimes even mistaken beliefs from a minority can be a powerful force that could be unleashed against them, however high they may believe their reputations have been in the past.

Sustainable business management cannot be confined to a specific department, but must instead be considered across every function of an organisation if risks are to be realised and mitigated in time.

It is worth reflecting on Warren Buffett's words – 'it takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently' - which truly are prophetic, but possibly still only to those companies that have had to face up to the arduous task of rebuilding their lost reputations.

i. Briefly define sustainable business management? (2 mark)

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.....

ii. What is the common misconception about sustainable management? (1 mark)

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.....

iii. Who is responsible for ensuring business continuity? (1 mark)

.....

iv. Why should an organization have proper systems and measures in place? (1 mark)

.....

v. Explain the meaning of the following words (in bold and underlined) according to the passage. (1 mark)

- a) **Volatility** -
- b) **Vulnerability** -

Question 6

Read and answer the questions based on the following passage. (12 marks)

Although defining the term ‘organization’ is relatively simple, the concept of management is a bit more elusive. It is perhaps best understood from a resource-based perspective. All organizations use four basic kinds of resources from their environment: human, financial, physical and information. Human resources include managerial talent and labour. Financial resources are the capital used by the organization to finance both ongoing and long-term operations. Physical resources include raw materials, office and production facilities, and equipment. Information resources are usable data needed to make effective decisions.

Managers are responsible for combining and coordinating these various resources to achieve the organization’s goals. A manager at Royal Dutch/Shell Group, for example, uses the talents of executives and drilling platform workers, profits earmarked for reinvestment,

existing refineries and office facilities, and sales forecasts to make decisions regarding the amount of petroleum to be refined and distributed during the next quarter. Similarly the mayor (manager) of New York City might use police officers, a government grant, existing police stations, and detailed crime statistics to launch a major crime prevention programme in the city.

How do these and other managers combine and coordinate the various kinds of resources? They do so by carrying out four basic managerial functions or activities: planning and decision making, organizing, leading and controlling. Management then can be defined as a set of activities (including planning and decision making, organizing , leading and controlling) directed at an organization’s resources (human, financial, physical and information), with the aim of achieving organizational goals in an efficient and effective manner.

The last phrase in our definition is especially important because it highlights the basic purpose of management – to ensure that an organization’s goals are achieved in an efficient and effective manner. By efficient we mean using resources wisely and in a **cost-effective way**. For example, a firm like Toyota Motor Corporation, which produces high quality products at relatively low costs, is efficient. By effective, we mean making the right decisions and successfully implementing them.

(Source: Griffin, R.W. (2013) *Management*, South-Western: USA)

- i. What is the best perspective to understand the concept of management? (1 mark)
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- ii. What are the four basic kinds of resources organizations use from their environment? (2 marks)
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- iii. What do human resources include? (2 marks)
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- iv. What is the main responsibility of a manager? (1 mark)
.....

v. Give one example of a manager combining and coordinating various resources to achieve the organization's goals mentioned in the passage. (1 mark)

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vi. Write the basic managerial functions. (2 marks)

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.....

vii. What is meant by 'efficient' according to the passage? (2 mark)

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.....

viii. The highlighted phrase '**cost-effective**' is closest in meaning to: (1 mark)

- a. Worthless
- b. Profitable
- c. Efficient
- d. Cheap

Section III - Writing

All questions are compulsory.

Total marks for Section III is 37 marks.

Recommended time for this section is 1 hour & 25 minutes.

Question 7

Find below the earnings of Company X and Company Y from year 2000 to 2013. Using this information explain the most salient points in the graph in your own words. Your answer should not be in more than 150 words. (8 marks)



Question 8

Write a paragraph on **one** of the following topics using not more than 140-150 words (7 marks)

- a. Importance of Internet in Accounting
- b. Qualities of a Successful Finance Manager

Question 9

Write a summary of not more than 100 words of the following extract and give a suitable title to your summary. Use the space given below to write your answer. Use only one word per box. (10 marks)

It is often claimed, not without basis, that development has corruption as its mistress. This is often interpreted as an additional cost-generating factor, whilst adhering to ethical practices are considered a tried – and – tested value addition to a business. Let us quote the words of Charles Baudelaire (1887): ‘For the merchant, even honesty is a financial speculation.’ The corporate sector in Sri Lanka needs to understand and recognise the importance of ethical practices rather than focus solely on mere profit-generation to the exclusion of all else. It may be prudent, in the above context, for the government to extend its invitation to many noted Sri Lankan investors, now living abroad (even those who do not have Dual Citizenship) to consider Sri Lanka for investment with particular focus on attracting key inventors and entrepreneurs, especially those who have ‘lost’ Sri Lankan citizenship on obtaining citizenship in their new country of domicile. It’s imperative that the Sri Lankan Government encourage them to ‘come home’ in spirit at least to help the motherland in its hour of need. Sustainable development requires the country to have the whole-hearted support if its ‘professionals’ in the field of investment and logistics, currently living abroad, to come and strengthen the local development process. The Government should offer attractive business and investment opportunities to Sri Lankan professional resident abroad to participate in the country’s future development.

The visit made by the Prime Minister of Japan and the President of the Republic of China in September this year, clearly demonstrates Sri Lanka’s importance in terms of modern global trends in international trade. With the ‘resurrection’ of the age-old maritime Silk Route, Sri Lanka is ideally placed to take advantage of newly-emerging opportunities for trade. In this context, there is, unquestionably, a pronounced demand in the country for experienced and qualified professional in the newly-opening field of logistics. (Word count 308)

(*Daily News, December 2014*)

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Question 10

Imagine that you have been asked by your company to conduct a survey to investigate the market trends that may impact the profit of the company. Taking this information into account, write a report in about 200 words including the following points. (12 marks)

- Background of your survey
- The sample of your survey & the method of data collection
- The main findings
- Conclusions and recommendations to be made

Section IV - Speaking

All questions are compulsory.

Total marks for Section IV is 15 marks.

Recommended time for this section is 15 minutes.

Question 01

(3 marks)

Should be able to answer the questions given.

What is your name?

What is the English course that you followed at Executive Level?

Can you explain the benefits that you have gained from this course?

What are your interests/ hobbies?

Question 02

Speak 1 minute on a topic selected

(8 marks)

- a) The importance of English in finding employment
- b) Challenges of a Chartered Accountant in year 2020
- c) The role of the Central Bank in the country

Question 03

(4 marks)

Should be able to answer the questions related to the topic selected

a) The importance of English in finding employment

What skills in English are essential for employment?

What can you do as an individual to develop your English language skills?

b) Challenges of a Chartered Accountant in year 2020

What would be the job scope of a Chartered Accountant in 2020?

What skills does he need to perform better in the business environment?

c) The role of the Central Bank in the country

What are the key areas that the Central Bank focuses on?

How should they educate the public on economic matters?