

Designation: - Core Module - **Strategic Management** (4262) - Research, Analysis and Academic Reading

Grade	Research, Analysis and Academic Reading
<b>DISTINCTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The candidate's research, analysis and academic reading focus in depth on the identification of the need for change at both strategic and operational levels – this should include internal and external pressures for change</li><li>• The research and analysis should be at different organisation levels and include the sector specific environment</li><li>• Analysis should involve the political, economic, technological and societal environments germane to the organisation and its environment</li><li>• Options for organisational change should be a focus of the research. In so doing, analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats will be necessary. This will also include reference to organisational cultures and values</li><li>• The nature of strategic options available to the organisation should be included</li><li>• The process of selecting appropriate '<i>planning horizons</i>' should relate to the organisation's operational environment</li><li>• Research should also include issues associated with sequencing and planning changes</li><li>• In analysing the organisation, in respect of strategic change, it is necessary to consider limitations such as finance, culture, training at various levels, as well as other aspects of HRM</li><li>• Some notion of time limitations in this phase of the module will be necessary. The research should be appropriately selective and focussed</li></ul>

Grade	Research, Analysis and Academic Reading
<b>PASS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The candidate's research, analysis and academic reading focus on the identification of the need for change at both strategic and operational levels – this should include internal and external pressures for change</li> <li>• The research and analysis should be at different organisational levels and may make reference to the sector specific environment</li> <li>• Analysis should involve a reasonable attempt at political, economic, technological and societal environments germane to the organisation and its environment</li> <li>• Options for organisational change should be analysed, although there may be some omissions and a lack of depth. An attempt to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats should be included</li> <li>• Some analysis of organisational cultures and values as it relates to strategic management should be made</li> <li>• An assessment of strategic options available to the organisation should be undertaken</li> <li>• <i>Planning horizons</i> should be considered as part of the research</li> <li>• The analysis should include reference to sequencing and planning changes</li> <li>• An attempt should be made to link the research to other related modules at Diploma level, for example HRM and Financial Management</li> <li>• Some notion of time limitations and the components still to be researched is likely to be included</li> </ul>

Grade	Research, Analysis and Academic Reading
<b>FAIL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research, analysis and academic reading fails to focus in sufficient depth on the identification of the needs for strategic and operational change and fails to explore in detail the internal and external pressures for change</li> <li>• Research and analysis is undertaken at an inappropriate organisation level but fails to adequately focus on the sector specific environment.</li> <li>• The political, economic, technological and societal environments relating to the organisation are analysed only briefly and superficially</li> <li>• There is a lack of detailed analysis when options for organisational change are analysed and/or there are major omissions</li> <li>• Organisational strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities are either omitted or analysed ineffectively</li> <li>• Cultures/values, as they relate to strategic management, are omitted or inappropriately addressed</li> <li>• There is a lack of assessment of strategic options available to the organisation</li> <li>• <i>Planning horizons</i> are inappropriate for the commercial/industrial sector/s in which the organisation 'trades'</li> <li>• Sequencing and planning changes are addressed superficially and without serious intent</li> <li>• An attempt may be made to link research to other Diploma modules but this lacks a sound analysis</li> <li>• Poor use is made of time in undertaking research to the extent that important aspects are omitted</li> </ul>

Designation: - Core Module - **Strategic Management** (4262) - Application of Theory to Practice

Grade	Application of Theory to Practice
<b>DISTINCTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Candidates provide clear evidence that research and theoretical understanding is appropriately applied to relevant strategic planning horizons for the target organisation</li><li>• The candidate demonstrates an understanding of the concepts and theories by way of a sensible presentation of gap analysis that is accompanied by an explanation of how the gap has occurred</li><li>• The quality and realistic nature of the recommendations will provide some reliable evidence concerning the candidates ability to apply theory to practice. Recommendations will clearly follow the research and analysis</li><li>• Evidence will come from the quality of the implementation plans associated with this module and will be indicative of the candidate's understanding of strategic management, and in particular the aspects associated with: - preparation for change; cultures/values; communication; time-lines; costs (financial, emotional and opportunity etc); responsibilities; accountabilities; monitoring; evaluation; and ideas associated with feedback loops</li><li>• Linkage to other Diploma modules will provide evidence of an understanding of the challenge associated with strategic management and change. This could include:- Finance, HRM, Communication, etc.</li></ul>

Designation: - Core Module - **Strategic Management** (4262) - Application of Theory to Practice

Grade	Application of Theory to Practice
<b>MERIT/PASS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Candidates provide evidence that research, analysis and theoretical understanding has been soundly applied to sensible strategic planning horizons associated with the target organisation</li><li>• The candidate may imply understanding of the concepts and theories by a sound presentation of gap analysis, but this may lack appropriate and in-depth justification</li><li>• The quality and nature of the recommendations following on from the research will provide some reliable evidence concerning the candidates ability to apply theory to organisational strategic practice</li><li>• Evidence will come from the quality of the implementation plans associated with this module. This will be indicated by appropriate inclusion of most of the following: - preparation for change; cultures and values; communication; time scales; costs; accountabilities; responsibilities; monitoring; evaluation; and some reference to feedback loops</li><li>• Reference to other Diploma modules will provide evidence of the candidate's understanding of how strategic management in the implementation phase affects other aspect of management</li></ul>

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Application of Theory to Practice</b>
<b>FAIL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The candidate fails to provide sound evidence that their research and theoretical understanding is applied to relevant strategic planning horizons for the target organisation</li><li>• The candidate may imply understanding of the concepts and theories by presentation of gap analysis but this lacks conviction because of the poor level of details and has no explanation of how the gap has occurred</li><li>• The quality of the recommendations made by the candidate is poor and fails to provide evidence that the candidate has the ability to apply associated theory to working environments</li><li>• There is little evidence from implementation plans associated with this module to convince the assessor that the candidate understands the aspects of Strategic Management associated with: - preparation for change; cultures/values; communication; time-lines; costs (financial, emotional and opportunity etc); responsibilities; accountabilities; monitoring; evaluation; and in particular ideas associated with feedback loops</li><li>• There is no linkage to other Diploma modules</li></ul>

Grade	Overall Quality of the Report
<b>DISTINCTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The candidate's report includes an effectively structured analysis of the strategic issues facing the organisation and is firmly set within the organisation's strategic operating environment</li> <li>• The report will include an associated in-depth PEST and SWOT analysis that logically leads to the identification of a justifiable 'gap' in strategic management practice</li> <li>• The report includes a risk analysis that covers consequences of '<i>no-change</i>' and of '<i>change</i>' as well as a suggested time sequence</li> <li>• The report should address the organisation's capacity to change in the light of existing cultures, values and current practices</li> <li>• The report should include options for change rather than present '<i>the solution</i>' to any threats identified within the 'gap analysis'</li> <li>• Recommendation must derive from the findings set out within the report and should be costed in terms of finance, time and include some Cost-Benefit statement</li> <li>• When monitoring, change plans should include a control loop even if not set out as a diagram. For the highest marks it must be set out with suitable PM/PI</li> <li>• Criteria for evaluating the change should be included in the plan</li> </ul>

Grade	Overall Quality of the Report
<b>MERIT/PASS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The candidate's report should include an analysis of the strategic issues facing the organisation that are set within the strategic operating environment</li> <li>• The report should include an associated PEST and SWOT analysis that leads to the identification of a 'gap' in strategic management but there may be a number of omissions</li> <li>• The report should include some form of risk analysis that identifies dangers for the organisation. This may only address risks if no change is made rather than address risk from 'change'. However, some reference should be made to time frames for decisions/actions</li> <li>• The report should include reference to organisation's capacity to change in the light of current practices and wider organisational constraints</li> <li>• The recommendations should be presented as options for change rather than the 'solution' and this should lead directly from the 'gap' analysis</li> <li>• Recommendations should have associated costings and the monitoring aspect of plans should have implied or explicit reference to a suitable control loop that highlights responsibilities</li> <li>• Evaluation of any change should be included with associated timings</li> </ul>

Designation: - Core Module - **Strategic Management** (4262) - Overall Quality of the Report

Grade	Overall Quality of the Report
<b>FAIL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report will not include a detailed analysis of the strategic issues facing the organisation and, if presented, they will not be set within the strategic environment</li> <li>• The report will only have a superficial approach to PEST and SWOT analysis and may omit significant issues. Any mention of gap in current management practice is not likely to be derived from this analysis</li> <li>• If the report includes some form of risk analysis, it is likely to be shallow and focus on only one or two aspects of risk. There will be little reference to appropriate time frames</li> <li>• The report does not mention the organisation's capacity to change or, if mentioned, it omits significant aspects that could seriously influence the potential success of any strategic management plan</li> <li>• The recommendations are presented as 'solutions' rather than options for consideration by other managers and recommendations that are made do not fully derive/evolve from analysis and the identified 'gap'</li> <li>• Recommendations are made without associated costings and the monitoring aspect of plans is poorly developed in that it would not serve managers of change well</li> <li>• Evaluation of any change is omitted or poorly structured because of inappropriate or lack of PI/PM</li> </ul>

**Assessment method**

A report of 3,000 - 4,000 words should be submitted to CIE for assessment. The report should be within +5% of this word count. If not then marks should be deducted for each additional 5% of words used.

**Duration of study**

The duration of study undertaken in this module is in the region of a total of 40 hours work for both the research aspect and developing the submitted assignment.

In undertaking assessment of candidate's submitted work this time constraint must be kept in mind. This will ensure that expectations of what can be realistically achieved within the 40 hours are kept in mind throughout when assessing the candidate's work.

The assessment criteria set out above must be concurrently applied with the 'CIE Generic' criteria for the Diploma in Management.

(CIE disk 1 M4262 Strategic Management assessment criteria)