

*SAMPLE PAPER*

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING  
SCHOOL OF INFORMATICS  
  
**PROFESSIONAL ISSUES**

Year 3 Courses

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External Examiners: S Drossopoulou, M Wooldridge

**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

**Answer QUESTION 1 and ONE other question.**

**Question 1 is COMPULSORY.**

**All questions carry equal weight.**

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1. (a) Explain the distinction between a Code of Conduct and a Code of Good Practice. What are the main areas covered in the “Key IT Practices” section of the BCS Code of Good Practice?

[7]

- (b) Identify at least three activities related to computing projects which involve writing documents in English (or some other natural language) and at least three disadvantages of using computer programs which are supposed to assist in the process of creating well-written documents.

[6]

- (c) Explain what is meant by *cybersquatting*. What legal provisions are in place to offer redress to victims of cybersquatting?

[6]

- (d) The UK Patents Act of 1977 specifically excluded from being patentable “a program for a computer”. Explain the reasoning used in the courts since then which has effectively negated this exclusion.

[6]

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2. Your answer to this question should be in the form of a report. This report will be marked for quality as well as content.

Imagine that you have been hired by a start-up company (DLS) that is planning to set up, in a database, a directory of local services which will be accessible using software incorporated into a mobile phone. DLS is currently negotiating with a large mobile phone company which has agreed to work with DLS to incorporate the new software into its next generation of phones.

Your employers are anxious to understand the legal position with respect to confidential information they may receive from the phone company and to protect their own intellectual property. They have therefore asked you to prepare a report advising them about:

- the legal situation with respect to their own IP
- the steps they should take to protect it
- the legal situation with respect to the IP of the phone company
- the steps the phone company is likely to take to protect its IP

[25]

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3. Your answer to this question should be in the form of a report. This report will be marked for quality as well as content.

Imagine that you are an independent consultant with expertise in the design and implementation of safety-related and safety-critical computer-controlled systems. You have been approached by a government official from a foreign country who wishes to gain an appreciation of the framework within which software companies involved with such systems operate in the UK, with a view to developing a similar framework in his own country.

Your report should explain the factors which affect system safety and should describe the relevant regulatory provisions in the UK and the position of UK companies with respect to legal liability for software.

[25]