**M&L 17 Manage conflict within a team**

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| **Learning Outcome** | **Assessment Criteria** | **Guidelines and range****The candidate provides evidence that they understand:** |
| 1. Understand the principles of conflict management | 1.1 Evaluate the suitability of different methods of conflict management in different situations | People with different needs and different goals will come into conflict. Effective conflict resolution can make the difference between positive and negative outcomes. Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. The aim being to enhance learning and group outcomes, in particular by enhancing performance. Different styles of conflict resolution are useful in different situations. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) helps you to identify which style you tend towards when conflict arises:* **Competitive**- used in positions of power or rank and although useful in emergency situations can leave people feeling upset or resentful when used in less urgent situations.
* **Collaborative**- used to meet the needs of all people involved; acknowledging that everyone’s views are of equal importance and the situation is too important for trade- offs.
* **Compromising**- used when trying to find a solution that partially suits everyone, this can be useful when the cost of the conflict is higher is higher than the cost of losing ground.
* **Accommodating**-used when there is a willingness to meet the needs of others at the expense of the person’s own needs. This method can be useful when ‘keeping the peace’ is more valuable than winning.
* **Avoiding**- used when difficult decisions can be delegated, when the controversy is trivial or when someone else is in a better position to solve the problem, e.g. escalating the problem upwards. Using this style can also be seen as a weakness when issues are evaded to avoid upsetting others

Rahim in 2001, has suggested that conflict management has three strands; the negative behaviour of individuals that needs to be reduced, together with an increase in organisational learning about different conflict- handling styles. In addition a third strand is in acknowledging that other types of conflicts can have positive effects on individual and group performance, when related to tasks, policies and performance issues.  |
|  |  | *In this criterion the learner is required to evaluate the suitability of two or more different methods of conflict management in two or more different situations* |
|  | 1.2 Describe the personal skills needed to deal with conflict between other people | Most people have a preferred conflict resolution style but use different styles depending on the situation. Key personal skills include:* Learning how to respect individual differences
* Being able to ‘see’ both sides of a situation by asking questions
* Using active listening skills
* Being calm under pressure
* Being assertive without being aggressive
* Ability to use interpersonal skills of restating , paraphrasing and summarising, to help to clarify a situation for all parties
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|  |  | *In this criterion the learner is required to describe the personal skills needed to deal with conflict between other people* |
|  | 1.3 Analyse the potential consequences of unresolved conflict within a team  | When conflicts are unresolved they can impact on individuals and teams, and some results of unresolved conflict in the workplace include:* Stress and frustration
* Employee turnover
* Increased client complaints
* Absenteeism
* Grievances
* Low morale and/or motivation
* Bullying

An overall loss of productivity could stem from any of the above, which in turn will affect other parts of the organisation and job security. |
| *In this criterion the learner is required to analyse two or more potential consequences of unresolved conflict within a team* |
| 1.4 Explain the role of external arbitration and conciliation in conflict resolution | When conflicts cannot be settled within the organisation another more impartial route may be selected for the resolution of disputes outside of courts. ‘External arbitration’ means using a neutral ‘third party’ to hear a dispute between parties. The hearing is informal, the parties mutually select the arbitrator who sets the terms and conditions and settles the dispute. The outcomes of arbitration are final and binding to both parties. ‘Conciliation’ is usually used where a complaint about employments rights is going to be made or has been made to an employment tribunal. Acas offers a free, independent and a confidential conciliation service.  |
| *In this criterion the learner is required to explain the role of external arbitration and conciliation in conflict resolution* |
| 2. Be able to reduce the potential for conflict within a team | 2.1 Communicate to team members their roles, responsibilities, objectives and expected standards of behaviour | Good two -way communication is important, and the writers Liebenau and Backhouse (1990) highlighted the ‘sender to receiver’ process, with the stages of coding, channel and decoding included, before the receiver provides feedback to the sender. Using the correct language and words (coding) is critical to the process along with the use of the correct channel, e.g. face to face, email, telephone. Managers working in the global market also need to be aware of cultural differences, including the use of silence, personal space, greeting methods and gestures. When individuals within teams are clear about their particular role, level of responsibility and objectives (measurable tasks and expected outcomes) it is helpful for the whole team. Standards of behaviour also need to be defined and reinforced regularly and good role models are essential here in order to establish leading by example principles.  |
| *In this criterion the learner is required to provide evidence that he or she has communicated to team members, using at least two different channels (modes) which are appropriate to message and audience, information about roles and responsibilities, objectives and expected standards of behaviour* |
| 2.2 Explain to team members the constraints under which other colleagues work | Being able to ‘see’ situations from other peoples’ perspectives can be an indication of emotional intelligence in both the leader and team member. This might take the form of sensitivity to personal circumstances, equalities issues, and recognition that there are constraints or limitations for each person in terms of level of training, knowledge and resources available. This could apply to variable workloads and the amount of time available to complete tasks. Conflicts can arise when there are misunderstandings or disagreements about the use of resources and the outputs required.  |
| *In this criterion the learner is required to explain to team members the constraints under which other colleagues work* |
| 2.3 Review systems, processes, situations and structures that are likely to give rise to conflict in line with organisational procedures | A system is composed of interrelated parts that work together in processes. An example could be a workflow plan (system) or order of work in the production of a product, where the actions of individuals or teams (processes) change or add to the developing product in some way. In a given work context (situation) and lines of reporting/ accountability (structures) there can be misunderstandings about what is required by all parties. By reviewing the systems, processes, situations and structures involved in the workflow and using feedback from others it is possible to make improvements and reduce or eliminate sources of conflict.  |
| *In this criterion the learner is required to provide evidence that he or she has reviewed systems, processes, situations and structures that are likely to give rise to conflict, in line with organisational procedures* |
| 2.4 Take action to minimise the potential for conflict within the limits of their own authority | Conflict may be defined as the internal or external discord that occurs as a result of differences in ideas, values or beliefs of two or more people.Conflict management is important in order to:* + Maintain morale
	+ Maintain performance standards
	+ Minimise absenteeism
	+ Promote a safe working environment
	+ Maintain group cohesion
	+ etc.

Depending upon the severity and level of conflict, conflict may be resolved or reduced informally, but in some cases it may be necessary to use the organisation’s formal procedures. .  |
| *In this criterion the learner is required to identify how he or she has taken correct and appropriate action, within the limits of their own authority, to mimimise the potential for conflict* |
| 2.5 Explain how team members’ personalities and cultural backgrounds may give rise to conflict | In addition to individual needs and cultural backgrounds which require specific consideration to ensure that the most favorable conditions for work are provided, individual personalities can also have characteristics which can have a negative effect on others which may give rise to conflict. This is particularly evident when those with dominant or negative traits are allowed to influence others.  |
| *In this criterion the learner is required to explain how team members’ personalities and cultural backgrounds may give rise to conflict* |
| 3. Be able to deal with conflict within a team | 3.1 Assess the seriousness of conflict and its potential impact | There are situations where the level of conflict is not only unacceptable but potentially harmful and may even result in litigation. The ability to anticipate a situation ideally before it actually happens or to take action in its early stages by reporting to a supervisor or line manager is essential. Most organisations have a grievance and disciplinary policy and these should be followed rigorously. The ability to recognise that any emerging issues should be escalated upwards is critical. Extreme examples could be taken from any breach of equality of opportunity, contravention of health and safety issues, bullying or harassment issues.  |
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| *In this criterion the learner is required to provide evidence that he or she has aassessed the seriousness of conflict and its potential impact* |
| 3.2 Treat everyone involved with impartiality and sensitivity | ‘Impartiality’ means showing a lack of bias or being objective in your decision making outcomes. ‘Sensitivity’ implies that empathy and understanding will be demonstrated.  |
| *In this criterion the learner is required to provide evidence that he or she has treated everyone involved in a conflict situation with impartiality and sensitivity* |
| 3.3 Decide a course of action that offers optimum benefits | ‘Optimum’ means the best possible in the given situation (given human and physical resource limitations) and in terms of ‘benefits’ this will be balanced out for the organisation, team and individual members. The implication is that a level of compromise will need to be reached, as there may well not be a ‘perfect’ solution, rather as a ‘best possible’ solution in the circumstances.  |
| *In this criterion the learner is required to provide evidence that he or she has decided on a course of action that offers optimum benefits.* |
| 3.4 Explain the importance of engaging team members’ support for the agreed actions | Not all decisions are easy to take and may not reach the ideal situations for individual members. By explaining the reasons for a decision and the potential benefits and by motivating the team, it can be possible to engage their support. Adopting a fair and consistent approach to decision making is a way of gaining support, even for unpopular decisions that sometimes have to be taken.  |
| *In this criterion the learner is required to explain the importance of engaging team members’ support for the agreed actions* |
|  | 3.5 Communicate the actions to be taken to those who may be affected by it | The way that information is communicated to others is important in order that the method (mode) and words selected are in line with the mode used and organisational policy.  |
| *In this criterion the learner is required to provide evidence that he or she has ccommunicated correctly and appropriately the actions to be taken to those who may be affected by it* |
|  | 3.6 Adhere to organisational policies and procedures, legal and ethical requirements when dealing with conflict within a team | The organisationalpolicy describes the approach to be taken, which includes issue or issues that are to be addressed in order to fulfil legal and ethical requirements of conflict resolution. The accompanying procedure for each policy explains the stages that must be followed including the documentary evidence required.  |
| *In this criterion the learner is required to provide evidence that he or he has adhered to organisational policies and procedures, legal and ethical requirements when dealing with conflict within a team* |