CIPD

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Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

Advanced Level Qualification

Leading, Managing and Developing People

September 2017

Date: Thursday 28 September 2017 **Time: 09:50 – 13:00 hrs**

Time allowed – Three hours and ten minutes
(Including ten minutes' reading time)

Instructions

- Answer **all** of Section A.
- Answer **five** questions in Section B (**one** per subsection).
- Read each question carefully before answering.
- Write clearly and legibly.

Information

- Questions may be answered in any order.
- Equal marks are allocated to each section of the paper.
- Within Section B equal marks are allocated to each question.
- If a question includes reference to 'your organisation', this may be interpreted as covering any organisation with which you are familiar.
- The case study is not based on an actual organisation. Any similarities to known organisations are coincidental.

7LMP – Leading, Managing And Developing People

EXAMINER'S REPORT

September 2017

You will fail the examination if:

- You fail to answer five questions in Section B (one per subsection)
  and/or
- You achieve less than 40% in either Section A or Section B
  and/or
- You achieve less than 50% overall.

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SECTION A - Case Study

Note: In your responses, you are allowed to improvise or add to the case study details provided below. However, the case study should not be changed or compromised in any way.

Since it was established the London-based Newbridge Dental Care Group has been financially successful. It was originally formed in 2010 when Dr Daphne Floss and Dr Marcia Brace decided to form a partnership and merge their two independently-owned dental practices. During the subsequent five years the group grew steadily, mainly by acquiring small dental practices in London boroughs from retiring owner-managers. Newbridge also acquired a small consultancy that provides specialist advice and business services to dental practices. Last year Newbridge completed its most ambitious acquisition to date when it took control of a similar company called Crown Dental which operates twelve dental surgeries in Kent and Sussex.

The Group now operates from twenty-eight sets of premises, including its head office in central London. It employs over two hundred staff, including seventy dental surgeons, twelve dental therapists, ten hygienists who all work flexibly alongside growing teams of nurses, nurse supervisors, practice managers, receptionists and administrators. During this period substantial investment has been put into new equipment and interior decoration of premises, as well as the capacity to provide a wide range of new specialist services. Patient numbers have increased substantially reflecting an ageing population and greatly increased demand for cosmetic treatments such as laser whitening and straightening procedures. Newbridge has enjoyed financial success thanks both to the increase in demand and to efficiencies generated through flexible deployment of staff, centralisation of functions, economies of scale and economies of scope.

Daphne and Marcia are now keen to build on their success and the expertise they have developed by accelerating the growth of their business and the reputation of the Newbridge Dental Care brand. Through further acquisition they now aim to spread their activities across the UK and also overseas, turning Newbridge into one of the Europe's leading dental care companies. They are keen to take over a laboratory and a manufacturer of dental products as well as dozens of surgeries in towns and cities around the country. There are considerable opportunities that will arise from the consolidation of multiple businesses into a single group. The IT, marketing, finance and maintenance functions can be centralised on a single headquarters site, while field-based staff can be flexibly deployed as and when required by changing patterns in patient demand. A much wider range of procedures will be made available to patients and a single, strong Newbridge brand image built.

To that end they are now in advanced negotiations with a venture capital group (Flush Mint and Partners) whose investors have expressed a serious interest in working with and advancing the money necessary to fund a further period of rapid expansion. While the Flush Mint team are very satisfied with most aspects of the business plan that Daphne and Marcia have presented to them, before any deal can be signed they have asked them to give 'a good deal of further consideration to the 'human resource and human capital aspects' which they consider to be a serious, potential weakness.

The would-be investors are concerned because of what Daphne and Marcia have told them about the difficulties they experienced when acquiring the Crown Dental business last year. This did not go as smoothly as anticipated. There was considerable resistance, suspicion and openly-expressed disappointment on the part of a majority of Crown Dental employees when the take-over was announced. The three longest-serving dental surgeons working for Crown, along with a group of other staff decided to resign and set up their own new practice in nearby premises. They managed to take with them a large number of registered patients and have since poached a few more former Crown Dental colleagues along with further patients. Staff who have remained have not, however, appeared to be happy about the change in their employer's identity. There is concern about long-term job security and a general lack of motivation, commitment and engagement. Daphne and Marcia have found it very difficult to generate any strong sense of shared purpose. There are low levels of trust and a degree of suspicion among Crown's staff that a business they have been proud to work for is losing its identity and is in danger of being asset-stripped by its new owners. The lack of engagement and commitment has been reflected in reduced business performance. In short, the financial gains associated with the acquisition of Crown Dental Group have been much lower than anticipated.

You have been hired by Dr Daphne Floss and Dr Marcia Brace on a consultancy basis to provide advice about HR matters ahead of their next meeting with Flush Mint & Partners. They are also keen to commission you to undertake some independent research, drawing on research and current practice, to help give them a better understanding of where they went wrong when acquiring the Crown Dental Group and the lessons that they can learn from this bruising experience.

1. **Explain why employees who work for organisations that are the subject of take-overs by larger organisations are often suspicious and mistrustful of a new management regime. Why are these issues often more pronounced in professional services organisations?**

2. **What advice would you give Daphne and Marcia about the steps they might take ahead of future acquisitions to minimise the extent of disengagement and involuntary staff turnover that occurs as a consequence.**

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3. Newbridge Dental Care have asked you to carry out research and write a report with recommendations on "HR issues surrounding the recent acquisition of Crown Dental Group." What approach would you take? Justify your answer.

It is recommended that you spend roughly a third of your time on each of Tasks 1, 2 and 3.

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SECTION B

Answer FIVE questions in this section, ONE per subsection A to E. You may include diagrams, flowcharts or bullet points to clarify and support your answers, so long as you provide an explanation of each.

A

1. CIPD research, as well as that carried out independently by several researchers in recent years, demonstrates a strong relationship between high levels of 'employee well-being' and superior business performance. There thus appears to be a strong business case in support of an approach to HRM which prioritises employee well-being. However, the research also demonstrates that very few employing organisations even claim to be doing this in practice.

i. How would you define the term 'employee well-being'? What would you expect to observe in an organisation which prioritised employee well-being?

AND

ii. Why, given such strong evidence of a link between employee well-being and business performance, do so few HRM departments appear to prioritise activities which might enhance it? Justify your answer.

OR

2. Extensive international research has shown that individual workers and their families tend to be 'economically scarred' for a number of years as a result of redundancy or lengthy spells of unemployment. A severe economic recession can thus have negative consequences for many people over a prolonged period of time.

i. What different steps can organisations take to minimise the extent to which they have to make redundancies during periods of financial uncertainty?

AND

ii. You have been asked to speak in favour of the introduction of a policy in your organisation which is aimed at minimising the number of compulsory redundancies that are made. What business case will you advance? Justify your answer.

B

3. In recent years interest has developed in 'inclusive leadership'. While people differ somewhat in their understanding of what exactly an inclusive leader does, the concept is generally agreed to have a significant role to play in promoting equality and diversity in organisations. A CIPD research report defined it as follows:

"An inclusive leader: is a role model exemplar of inclusive behaviour; listens to and seeks out the views of diverse people and takes account of these views, without bias, in the decisions they make; appreciates that a diverse group of people will generate more creative solutions to problems and encourages this; inspires people through a shared vision of future success and motivates them to deliver it; leverages difference for high performance and provides responsive excellence to customers', clients' and service users' needs; provides positive feedback to boost people's self-efficacy; puts effort into helping diverse people identify their talents and develop them for performance now and future advancement; communicates authentically and honestly in a way that inspires trust, loyalty and well-being".

i. To what extent would you judge leaders in your own organisation to be 'inclusive' in their approach? Justify your answer drawing on research, examples and observations.

AND

ii. What steps would you recommend were taken by HR managers in your organisation and in organisations generally to bring about genuine inclusive leadership?

OR

4. There is much debate about the need for 'transformational' or 'heroic' leaders in employing organisations and in other walks of life. Those who favour this model of leadership often argue that the many attributes of transformational leadership cannot be developed through formal HRD interventions because they are innate characteristics such as charm, charisma, presence and energy that individuals either do or do not possess. Those who are sceptical about transformational leadership often emphasise its 'dark side', arguing that people who have these characteristics often deploy them for unattractive or undesirable purposes.

Drawing on examples or published research, explain how far you agree or disagree with both these points of view.

C

5. It has long been recognised that a key to ensuring that a business satisfies and retains its customers is the effective management of their expectations. The same is true of employees. In competitive labour markets, if an organisation wants to help ensure that its human resource management objectives are met it needs to keep its staff reasonably well-satisfied. The effective management of expectations is central to achieving this.

i. Using practical examples from HR practice, explain how any **ONE** of the following theoretical perspectives helps to support the above assertion:

- expectancy theory;
- equity theory;
- theories about psychological contracts.

AND

ii. To what extent is your organisation good at managing employee expectations? In what ways could it improve? Justify your answer.

OR

6. Many argue that individuals develop successful careers through the acquisition of different types of human capital:

Social capital – contacts and people you know who trust you

Cultural capital – education, manners, tastes, business knowhow and inside knowledge

Symbolic capital – qualifications, certificates and achievements that are widely admired

i. Explain how far you have acquired these different forms of human capital as you have developed your career to date. To what extent do you agree that their acquisition is necessary for the development of a successful business career and why?

AND

ii. You have been asked by your Chief Executive Officer to draw up a proposal setting out **THREE** distinct ways in which your organisation could help employees with senior management potential to acquire these forms of human capital. What will you propose? Justify your answer.

D

7. A great deal has been written about the effectiveness of processes used by global companies expatriating home-based managers to work in overseas subsidiaries. Despite the similarity of the situations, much less has been written about how organisations manage the employment of overseas recruits coming to work in their home-based operations.

Ten overseas recruits from a variety of countries are about to arrive to start their employment in your workplace. Their recruitment was costly and it is important that there is a good return on this investment. You have been given responsibility for ensuring that they are looked after on arrival and are able to operate to their full potential as soon as possible. A budget of £5000 has been provided to you for this purpose.

What initiatives would you propose were taken? How would you allocate the £5000? Justify your answer.

OR

8. You decide to apply for a new job, putting yourself forward for a role you see advertised as an HR manager in a small enterprise which operates in an industry with which you are familiar. The advertisement states that the company was established three years ago with five employees. It has grown rapidly and now employs 100 people. There is currently no HR manager employed, nor anyone with any HR qualification. Activities such as recruitment and selection, performance management, training and payroll administration are carried out by a variety of different managers in quite an informal way. A consultancy provides employment law advice when it is required. The Chairman is dissatisfied with this state of affairs. He plans further, steady expansion over the coming months and believes that the time has come to establish an HR department and to employ a professionally qualified person to run it.

Your application is shortlisted and you are invited to a recruitment event. You will be interviewed and will also have to make a short presentation setting out your “three main priorities for Year 1”.

i. What three priorities would you talk about in your presentation? Justify your answer.

AND

ii. What key points would you seek to get over during the interview in order to persuade the panel to appoint you to the role?

E

9. The CIPD has recently been researching the gap between what people consider to amount to ethical practice in HR and the extent to which these principles are applied in practice. For example, the researchers found that while most agreed that "giving employees an effective voice" was the right thing to do, only a quarter of respondents said that this principle was one that they always apply in their decisions. A further quarter suggested either that it never applies or that it is merely 'nice to have'.

i. Explain why giving employees 'an effective voice' is generally considered to be ethically appropriate. Justify your answer.

AND

ii. Drawing on published research **AND** your own observations, explain why organisations so often fail to give their employees an effective voice in decision-making.

OR

10. In recent years there has been considerable growth in the number of people who are employed on zero-hours contracts. These enable employers to alter the hours that people work (and hence their income) on a week by week basis, guaranteeing no work at all. It is commonly stated by politicians, trade unions and campaigning groups that the use of such contracts is neither socially responsible nor ethical. Exclusivity clauses in zero-hours contracts were outlawed in the UK in 2015, but many argue that such contracts should be banned altogether in law.

What is your view of this debate? Are zero-hours contracts always unethical or are there circumstances when this is not the case? Would you support an outright ban? Justify your answers.

END OF EXAMINATION

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EXAMINER'S REPORT

September 2017

Introduction

226 candidates sat the Leading, Managing and Developing People exam in September, achieving a very respectable overall pass rate of 72%. While candidate struggled somewhat with some questions and parts of questions, most managed to write good, full answers which addressed the questions asked reasonably directly. There were more passes this time than really outstanding merit and distinction answers, but there were also relatively few poor fails. A majority of papers thus fell into the solid pass category.

The final breakdown of marks was as follows:

Examination results of 7LMP, September 2017

September 2017		
Grade	**Number**	**Percentage of total**
Distinction	6	3
Merit	35	15
Pass	122	54
Marginal Fail	19	9
Fail	44	19
Total	**226**	**100**

The papers were marked by Krystal Wilkinson, Graham Perkins, Julie Beardwell, Penny Graham, Cecilia Ellis, John Mitchell, Catherine Jones, Andrew Hambler, Claire Roberts and myself.

Detailed feedback on each question follows.

Section A

Learning outcomes: 2 and 4

This case study was intended to test knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 2 (evaluate major theories relating to motivation, commitment and engagement at work and how these are put into practice by organisations) and learning outcome 4 (understand and contribute to the promotion of flexible working and effective change management in organisations).

By and large Task 2 here was answered best. Most were expecting such a question and had good, thoughtful points to make. The standard of answers to Task 1 was more variable and often rather narrowly focused. The question about professional services organisations was challenging and we were not expecting to read outstanding answers here, but a good number lost marks by simply ignoring it altogether. Similarly, Task 3 was answered far more effectively by some than by others. Many avoided saying anything much about how they would go about carrying out their research and got poorer marks than they would have done had they simply addressed the issue in quite a basic way.

Task 1

The strongest answers were wide-ranging in their content, focusing on more than one way in which mistrust develops in these situations. Insecurity concerning employment and career prospects is clearly the most important and was discussed by most candidates at some length. Fear of redundancy, reduced promotion opportunities, restructuring and other forms of disruption can all be significant. Fear of pay cuts is also a major source of disengagement. There are then issues relating to new management regimes and the potential need for retraining, redistribution of duties and new systems / technologies which are sometimes unsettling, potentially impacting on future job satisfaction. Weaker answers avoided looking into these different types of employee concern, focusing much more broadly on resistance to change generally. Where these discussed redundancy specifically marks were awarded, but there was a disappointing tendency on the part of some candidates simply to write what appeared to be a pre-prepared answer on change management which was not quite what we were looking for here. In professional services settings there is often additional concern about standards and possible moves away from service-based organisational values to those which are more commercially driven – the introduction of a sales-culture for example. Stronger answers also discussed the attractions of working for small professionally-focused organisations and the concerns some people legitimately have about a new employer being much larger and more corporate in its approaches.

Task 2

Stronger answers to this task also covered a good range of relevant points. Most focused correctly on communication issues. The more precise and well-justified their answers, the better the mark. The key is for managers to communicate effectively and openly, addressing individual concerns, anticipating employee reactions, answering questions, consulting at length and offering reassurance. In situations such as the one described in the case the impact of take overs will be disruptive, but will not lead to fundamental change for most staff. Importantly, they provide many opportunities that working in smaller organisations do not. These positive messages need to be communicated effectively too. Secondly there is then a need to deliver on promises, so that trust is built. Thirdly there is a need to involve people in the change process. Consultation and participation are important. The company that is doing the taking-over needs to demonstrate a preparedness to listen to those who are being taken over. Fourthly, favouritism towards parent company employees should be avoided. Fifthly, it is important and helpful to pay attention to soft HRM issues in these circumstances so that a sense of high trust and shared purpose can be developed. Social events have a major potential role to play in this context. The weaker answers tended to be more descriptive than evaluative. Some were also rather general, avoiding much or any direct engagement with the case study itself. Again, it was not uncommon for candidates to write rather general answers about change management, describing Kotter's model at some length and offering little original argument or justification in the process.

Task 3

This was much less impressively answered on the whole, which is unsurprising given that it was one that most candidates would not have been expecting and thus had not rehearsed any answers to. To do well here though there was no need for answers to be hugely sophisticated. We were really only looking for suggested approaches of a practical nature such as attitude surveys, interviews, focus groups etc, all carried out on a confidential basis, the aim of which would be to gain a full understanding about why the people side of the Crown acquisition failed to meet expectations and what could have been done differently. After marking the initial scripts it became clear that a good proportion of candidates understood the question to be asking for the key points from the report rather than the methods used to research it. We read the question carefully and agreed that this was a legitimate way of answering it. We did not therefore mark these candidates down hugely, but instead chose positively to reward those who included a full answer to the question about research.

As always with case study questions it was important that candidates referred to the case study and did not write generally about the issues without making some reference to it. On this occasion, as is often the case, a failure to do this was the most common cause of lost marks here. Because of the way that Task 1 was phrased, we were less strict there. But answers to Task 2 and Task 3 really had to be focused on the case in order for a pass mark to be awarded. The other major reason for answers to Section A failing to pass was brevity. Candidates are advised to remember that Section A accounts for half the marks on a CIPD exam paper and that we thus expect them to be argued at some length and in some depth. Again, as is always the case research evidence and examples taken either from reading or personal observation impressed us and were awarded marks, as was originality and thoughtfulness. Clear evidence that students had researched the dental industry and/or the background to HR in take-over situations was also rewarded with marks.

Section B

Question A1

Learning outcome: 1

Review and critically evaluate major contemporary research in the fields of HRM and HRD

There do not appear to be any generally agreed definitions of precisely what the term 'employee well-being' means. Different writers and researchers put a different emphasis on its key aspects. There were thus no clearly right or wrong answers to part 1. Those who were sufficiently familiar with recent CIPD research in this area demonstrated understanding of these definitional debates and were rewarded with high marks as was everyone who appreciated that the term can be used in a number of subtly different ways. For some the term is quite narrowly defined as being about mental health. Others broaden this to cover issues relating to stress, presenteeism and burn-out in the workplace, the implication being that these are the result when employers focus too little on enhancing well-being by, for example, encouraging their employees to strive for a good work-life balance. A wider definition encompasses physical health, often specifically linking mental health and excessive stress to poor physical health and high levels of absence. A further definition is broader still, seeing well-being as being akin to job satisfaction, positive engagement and happiness. The greater the understanding of these points, linking them all together, the higher the mark we were able to award.

Stronger answers to the second part focused on high levels of satisfaction among employees, good job design, people being discouraged from working excessive hours, low absence rates (especially stress-related), plenty of flexible working and, potentially specific health-related HR interventions (counselling, gym membership, heathy options in canteens etc).

There was plenty of room when answering part 2 for candidates to develop original arguments as this is a contested debate. The main reasons are probably ignorance of the research findings and competitive pressures in product markets. There is plenty of evidence concerning increasing intensity of work in organisations generally as managers try to increase productivity, cut costs and simultaneously enhance quality. Strong answers drew on this, as well as specific examples and their own personal observations of working life when answering this question. The more compelling and effectively justified the answer, the higher the mark.

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Question A2

Learning outcome: 1

Review and critically evaluate major contemporary research in the fields of HRM and HRD

UK-based organisations have become a great deal more effective at finding ways of avoiding compulsory redundancy in recent years. During the 2008-2011 recession only 13% of organisations made redundancies – only 10% in the public sector. This was largely made possible by introducing a wide range of alternatives, notably voluntary redundancy and early retirement schemes, recruitment freezes, wage cuts/freezes, re-organisations, overtime reductions, cutting costs more generally (for example on HRD), reducing hours, laying people off on a temporary basis, offering unpaid leave and introducing multi-skilling. The wider the range of appropriate HR initiatives that candidates were able to set out here, the higher the mark we were able to award. Many only focused on flexible working initiatives to the exclusion of everything else. They were awarded a pass mark if they did this effectively, providing a good and well-informed answer, but the highest marks went to answers which were broader in scope.

Part 2 answers varied considerably depending on the nature of the students' own organisations. In order to pass, however, candidates needed to advance a compelling and well-justified business case and not to discuss the issues in a general sense. The wider-ranging and broad it was, the better. Strong answers covered both a labour market effect (that is, improved recruitment/retention of strong performers, employer-of-choice status etc.) and a performance effect (that is, engagement, commitment, motivation, trust, psychological contracts etc.). Arguments that were based on employee perspectives/ interests were only acceptable if they also specifically linked these to a positive business/commercial case. As is always the case, too many candidates appear incapable of developing arguments of this kind, apparently assuming that looking after employee interests in itself constitutes a persuasive business case. This is not so and is not what this question was asking candidates to do.

Question B3

Learning outcome: 3:

Debate and critically evaluate the characteristics of effective leadership and the methods used to develop leaders in organisations.

Answers to the first part of the question naturally varied very considerably depending on the candidates' assessment of leadership in their own organisations. When marking what mattered to us here is that the concept of inclusive leadership had clearly been understood and that a compelling and well-justified case was advanced. It is not the same thing as 'effective leadership' or 'good leadership. The question also specifically asked for observations and examples to be used by way of justification, so this had to form a part of any pass level answer. It was pleasing to read answers which were rather critical of management teams in the students' own organisations and not just those which took the more usual somewhat hagiographic approach.

Answers to part 2 varied too with the organisation and answers to part 1. The stronger answers here were broad in their coverage, ranging across the fields of HRM and HRD. There were plenty of good points made on the recruitment and selection of inclusive leaders, the introduction of leadership development initiatives that are focused on inclusion as well as performance management measures to reinforce and monitor these. The creation of a relevant competency framework which a number of diverse initiatives could draw on provided a good starting point in some of the strongest answers.

Question B4

Learning outcome: 3:

Debate and critically evaluate the characteristics of effective leadership and the methods used to develop leaders in organisations.

It has become common in LM&DP exams for candidates writing about leadership to cite some of the more monstrous historical figures as examples in a manner which is not always as unadmiring as it should be. This question gave them every opportunity to discuss such individuals in a fuller and more rounded way with its specific reference to the dark side of charismatic leadership. Unfortunately few took up the opportunity as this question was not one that most opted to answer.

There was plenty of scope here for the development of original argument and for any number of examples to be cited. What mattered from a marking perspective was that a strong line of original argument was developed, that both sets of observations in the stem were properly addressed and that a compelling and thoughtful set of points were made by way of justification. The question also specifically required that candidates use examples or published research in developing their responses. In order to pass they must therefore have done one or the other, or both.

The weaker answers tended only to address one of the two issues raised (ie: either the dark side or the limitations of HRD initiatives in producing genuinely transformative leaders). The very strongest answers too issue with some of the premises in the stem, and this was something we rewarded when the question had nonetheless also been answered fully.

Question C5

Learning outcome: 5

Critically discuss the aims and objectives of the HRM and HRD functions in organisations and how these are met in practice.

This question was opted for by a good majority of the candidates which was not surprising as these three theoretical perspectives are often cited by candidates sitting LM&DP exams and appear to interest them. Expectancy and equity theory formed the basis of most answers. The aim here was to provide candidates with an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of a core theory, but to do so by linking theory to practice. Strong answers to part 1 were not therefore entirely theoretical. The purpose was not simply to give candidates an opportunity to tell us what they know about the theories and their originators. They also needed to make clear and credible links to HR practices. Weaker candidates struggled to do this effectively, despite there being numerous possibilities ranging from recruitment advertising through induction to disciplinary processes, bonus schemes, performance management, succession planning, job security and the management of change generally. All of these and others too formed the basis of stronger answers to part one.

Answers to part 2 varied considerably depending on the organisation and the candidates' perception of its strengths and weaknesses in this respect. What mattered here was that a good, full argument was presented and justified both effectively and compellingly.

Question C6

Learning outcome: 5

Critically discuss the aims and objectives of the HRM and HRD functions in organisations and how these are met in practice.

This question may have appeared more challenging than it really was, which may explain why relatively few candidates chose to address it. To do well and score high marks, answers to the first part of question (i) had to be explanatory and not merely descriptive in nature. The second part offered more scope for candidates to develop some original ideas and to offer criticisms of this perspective on human capital development. Stronger answers took a more critical or evaluative line arguing, for example, that personal attributes and raw ability are more significant and that these elements are relatively unimportant in the wider scheme of things. Some also took take issue with parts of the point of view expressed in the stem and were rewarded for doing so when a good justification was provided. Most, however, agreed but they also needed to say why if they were to score a good mark.

Answers to the second question varied depending on which forms of human capital acquisition candidates preferred to focus on. They had a great deal of choice from across the HRD/knowledge management field. What mattered was that a compelling and well-informed case was advanced to back up three practical proposals which were achievable. It was important that they made clear the link between what they were proposing and the specific points of theory set out in the stem. To get high marks they had to avoid assuming that such a link was obvious. It needed to be explained as well. This is precisely to sort of issue which distinguishes a merit from a pass standard answer.

Question D7

Learning outcome: 6:

Assess the contribution made by HRM and HRD specialists in different types of organisations.

Candidates were completely free here either to develop a range of proposals or to focus all their efforts on a single, more sophisticated programme. The strongest answers took their cue from the stem and made suggestions of the kind that are commonly discussed in the research on expatriation – proper preparation, language training, coping with culture shock, practical matters such as housing, banking, transport, clothing etc. In effect this is 'induction plus' being both tailored to their specific needs as well as comprising interventions aimed at easing the settlement of an overseas worker in an established home-based operation. Whatever was suggested, in order for high marks to be awarded, the proposals had to be practical (and achievable with £5000) and justified effectively. The more compelling and credible, the higher the marks. It was also important that some of the proposals, if not all, should be specific to the candidates' own workplace (or one with which they are familiar) and not all general in nature. The weaker answers here tended to be descriptive rather than evaluative, sometimes comprising little more than a list of bullet points without good justification. The other common reason for marks being lost was candidates simply describing a conventional induction programme without taking account of the expatriate element or engaging with it significantly.

Question D8

Learning outcome: 6:

Assess the contribution made by HRM and HRD specialists in different types of organisations.

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. What mattered when marking them was that students clearly demonstrated an appreciation that this is a small but growing company with the particular challenges associated with SMEs. The weaker answers ignored this scenario and largely argued for the establishment of a sizeable HR department of the kind that is typical in larger companies, some including departmental structures incorporating six or seven HR specialists. It was extraordinary how costly and impractical some of these suggestions were. Stronger candidates were also able clearly to demonstrate an understanding of the need for an HR function to add value and not simply to provide an administrative service. Too many weaker answers failed to do this at all. Furthermore, in order to do well of course, candidates had to provide strong, credible justifications which made a business case as well as one based on employee satisfaction etc.

Question E9

Learning outcome: 7

Promote professionalism and an ethical approach to HRM and HRD practice in organisations.

Only a minority of candidates attempted this question. Giving employees a voice is something which they very much appreciate and which therefore helps to drive engagement and effective recruitment/retention. It also helps to improve the quality of senior management decisions. But the emphasis in this question is on its ethical nature; something it is more challenging to articulate clearly. The essence of the case is that giving employees 'an effective voice' helps to ensure that management decisions are made in the interests of employee stakeholders and not just stockholders or senior managers. It is thus about restricting the power that senior people in organisations exercise in such a way as to deter corruption. More generally an ethical case for voice can be developed around notions of fairness and fair dealing, and giving effect to aspirations in the field of diversity. A third argument is constitutional in nature. The CIPD report summed it up as follows:

"No one should be subject to a regime in which they have no say".

Part 2 could be answered in different ways. There was room here for several arguments to be developed. What mattered was that they were justified with reference to the outcomes of published research or observations or both. Some struggled to do more than advance a quite general argument with very limited justification. Most, however, reflected in some shape or form on the natural reluctance of powerful people to relinquish any of that power and also, potentially, on the tendency of senior managers to have a high level of self-belief.

Question E10

Learning outcome: 7

Promote professionalism and an ethical approach to HRM and HRD practice in organisations.

This question was attempted by a good majority of candidates and was generally done pretty well. It is a subject that many have thought about and have experience of and that very much showed in the high quality of answers.

There has generally been good deal of support for the banning of exclusivity clauses that prevented people on zero-hours contracts from working for other employers. However, opinion remains divided on the question of whether an outright ban would be appropriate and on whether or not zero hours contracts are inherently unethical. The argument against them rests on their impact on employees. They reduce income security, making it hard for people to plan expenditure and putting them at risk of building up debts. It makes it difficult to access mortgages and other financial products, pushing them into the hands of pay-day lenders. Another argument simply relates to the innate unfairness of a system which transfers financial risk associated with business from employer to employee. This can be seen as an abuse of power. The argument in favour of zero-hours contracts is partly practical. They are necessary in businesses which require additional staff on an occasional but regular basis (for example, seasonal work, casual work in hotels and restaurants, conferences and exhibitions etc.). In such organisations they are often given to people who have other employment in addition and are looking for casual work to top up their income. It thus suits some employees as well as employers and in such circumstances cannot be described as unethical. A case can also be made on grounds of affordability. If they were banned there would be fewer jobs and higher unemployment. It is thus a good thing for employees as well as employers that they are lawful. When marking this question examiners had regard to the breadth and depth of arguments, as well as the quality of the justifications advanced to back up answers.

Conclusion

There were some challenging questions on this paper, and in Section A one which candidates were unlikely to have been expecting they would have to answer. Nonetheless this cohort performed just as well as those attempting past LM&DP papers and considerably better than some.

There is not a great deal to add in terms of advice to tutors and students to that I have tried to articulate many times before in examiner's reports. The way to do well is quite simply to address all parts of the question fully and directly, demonstrating in the process that you have studied the subject and developed some thoughts about core professional issues and debates. We are always looking for effective justification of points when marking and for answers which argue and evaluate rather than simply describing. We reward references to theory and research provided these are relevant to the question and do not simply comprise descriptive passages.

On this occasion we noted a few more answers than usual which are insufficiently commercially focused or which are a touch too idealistic or impractical. While there is nothing wrong at all in advancing a vision of HR practice which is supportive of employee interests, candidates must also remember that their advice must also very much be managerial in nature. When we ask for a business case we are looking for evidence that a candidate is able to articulate why a course of action is favourable from the organisation's perspective. It is not sufficient simply to argue for higher employment standards, employee wellbeing investment in human capital development without explaining why this will be of benefit to the organisation making the investment. By the same token we would urge candidates not to advocate to the establishment of HR administration activities without appreciating their cost and, again, explaining their potential benefit to organisations. Too often it seems to be erroneously assumed that the examiners are simply looking for a statement of received 'good practice'. This is not the case. The organisation scenario and context are crucial in determining what HR interventions or prescriptions are realistic, affordable and likely to be beneficial.

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