

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

Advanced Level Qualification

Leading Managing and Developing People

January 2015

29 January 2015 09:50 – 13:00 hrs

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

Answer Section A and five questions in Section B (one per subsection A to E).

Please write clearly and legibly.

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.

You will fail the examination if:

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

Margaret Ho was always a wonderful cook and for a few years now she has also considered herself to be a pretty successful businesswoman, but recent events have led her to question this. A picture of her smiling face beams out at would-be customers on all her company's literature and from the frontages of her restaurants, but inwardly Mrs Ho is no longer smiling.

Margaret started her first restaurant, called 'Mrs Ho's Kitchen', in 2005 soon after the last of her four children left home to go to college. Located on the high street of her home town in the north of England, it was an overnight success, providing delicious Asian fusion cuisine with a buffet style of service. This newly fashionable style of cooking came naturally to Mrs Ho as she is part of a large family that includes people from China, Singapore, India and Malaysia. Before long her restaurant was making her a good deal of money.

In 2010 Margaret opened a new restaurant in another town some ten miles away. This second 'Mrs Ho's Kitchen' was managed by Margaret's daughter, but its proximity to the original restaurant made it possible for Mrs Ho to keep a close eye on it and to ensure that the same high standards were maintained. Here too, the combination of excellent food from various regions, a buffet style that kept prices low and a delightful family ambience led to rapid commercial success. Profits continued to mount and Mrs Ho and her family found themselves able to enjoy a lifestyle that they had never dared dream about before the business was launched.

It was in 2011 that things started to go wrong. This was when Mrs Ho's younger daughter married Peter, a charming young man who soon joined the family business as its Financial Director. Peter persuaded Mrs Ho that she should look to grow her business rapidly, creating a strongly-branded chain of restaurants. It seemed like a good idea. The two existing 'Mrs Ho's Kitchens' were very successful, so why not borrow the necessary money from the bank and expand using the same tried and trusted formula? A deal was done and by the summer of 2014 the company had managed to open ten further restaurants based all over the UK employing a total of 450 people.

The sheer speed at which this expansion took place made Mrs Ho uncomfortable, but Peter and her daughters seemed confident, so she trusted their judgement and went along with their plans. In retrospect Margaret now considers this to have been a big mistake, because things are not going at all well in the business.

Whereas in the past, customers could be relied on to give Mrs Ho's Kitchens excellent reviews on Trip Advisor and other websites, the comments are now often quite scathing about the food and service. Few seem to return after they have experienced these once and the number of customers dining in the newer restaurants each week is well below expectations. As a result, the company is now suffering financially. Losses are piling up and it is struggling to pay the monthly interest it owes the bank for all the money it borrowed to fit out the new establishments. The stress of the situation has now caused Peter to suffer a breakdown and he has had to take a period of extended medical leave. Mrs Ho has been left to carry the senior management burden alone.

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The fundamental problems are all people-related. Mrs Ho is deeply unhappy about the quality of most of the managers who have been hired to run the new restaurants. Most were recruited through a head-hunter who charged a great deal, but does not appear to have provided the kind of dedicated and experienced people the company required. Each of these people then hired their own teams using a variety of methods with very varied results. The chefs try to reproduce Mrs Ho's recipes but too often the results lack the delicious look and taste of the originals. They are also struggling to ensure that a sufficient variety of foods is available throughout opening hours. Customers regularly complain about standards of cleanliness and the tendency for used crockery and cutlery to be left uncleared on tables for a long time after customers have left. Perceived rudeness on the part of restaurant staff is another frequent common grievance, as well as slow and erratic service.

The staff in the new restaurants have also frequently turned out to be unreliable and uncooperative. Absence rates are appalling and growing. The company also seems to lose a remarkably high percentage of its new starters after they have worked for just a few weeks or months. It is now facing the prospect of defending three separate discrimination cases in the Employment Tribunal that former employees have decided to bring. Payment and other personnel systems are chaotic and wholly inconsistent between different restaurants. Staffing costs have soared and are running well above budgeted levels.

In short, Mrs Ho decides, she and her family have managed to lose control of their own company. The pride she once felt in her creation and the prosperity it brought her have both gone. She thinks she might be able simply to cut her losses and close the new establishments down, but she is tied into too many long-term leasing arrangements to make that viable financially. She has no choice but to try to turn the situation around.

One of Mrs Ho's closest friends has told her that what she needs more than anything else is an experienced Human Resource Manager to work alongside her as she tackles the many problems her company has run into. She is not, however, at all sure what such a person could do for her and is very concerned about taking on any more financial obligations.

- 1. What would a professional HR manager with adequate support be able to achieve for Mrs Ho?**
- 2. What published research evidence would you draw on to convince Mrs Ho of the ability of an HR function to add genuine financial value to her business?**
- 3. If you were to be appointed to the role of Human Resource Manager at 'Mrs Ho's Kitchens' what would be your first priority? Justify your answer.**

It is recommended that you spend an equal amount of time on each of the above tasks.

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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. For over a hundred years researchers have been trying to answer the question 'what should employers do to motivate employees to maximise their contribution?' As yet, no one has come up with a simple answer to this which is applicable to people of all cultures, ages and backgrounds. It would thus appear that different people are motivated by different things and at different times because they have different needs.
 - i. Drawing on your understanding of research into motivation at work, what advice would you give an organisation that was looking to improve motivation among the following groups of staff:
 - recently appointed graduate trainees
 - single parents working full-time to support their families
 - older workers who have passed state retirement age

AND

- ii. What would be most likely motivate them all equally?

OR

2. In recent years, surveys of employee attitudes carried out by the CIPD have tracked a steady reduction in the level of trust that employees claim to have in their senior managers. When asked whether they agree with the statement 'I am not sure I can fully trust my employer' over half of respondents now either agree or strongly agree.
 - i. What are the consequences of persistent levels of low trust for a commercial organisation? Justify your answer.

AND

- ii. What steps would you advise an employer to take in order to rebuild levels of trust that have been lost?

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B

3. It is often stated that one of the major reasons that men are more likely than women to hold senior leadership roles in business and politics is because leaders are expected to exhibit attributes that come more naturally to men than to women. We expect our leaders to be assertive, decisive, competitive and certain that the decisions they take are the right ones. Leaders who express uncertainty or who prefer to nurture others and build close personal relationships tend to be less well respected.
- i. To what extent do you agree with this explanation for male dominance of senior leadership roles? Draw on your own experience and observations when writing your answer.

AND

- ii. What needs to change in order that a more equal representation of men and women at senior levels in organisations can be achieved? Justify your answer.

OR

4. In recent years, many organisations have developed competency frameworks which they use when deciding who to select and promote when vacancies arise. They are usually developed through a process which involves identifying the competencies (i.e. skills, traits, characteristics, attitudes, attributes etc.) shared by the most successful and admired individuals currently working for the organisation.
- i. Identify the person who you consider to be the finest leader you have ever worked for or with, either in an organisation or in any other walk of life. What key competencies did this person have which made them such an effective leader? How were they manifested in practice?

AND

- ii. To what extent would it be plausible to use your list of competencies as the basis for selecting a future organisational leader? Justify your answer.

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5. Critics of flexible working arrangements often see them as being damaging to employee interests because they reduce job security. While it is conceded that employees may gain from some forms of flexible working, overall it is the employing organisation that benefits most when they are introduced.
- i. In what different ways do organisations benefit when they introduce or extend flexible working arrangements? Illustrate your answer with examples.

AND

- ii. Which forms of flexibility are genuinely beneficial to employees? Justify your answer.

OR

6. Research on change management demonstrates that a fundamental problem for managers is the strong tendency that most people have to be suspicious of significant change when it is first proposed. They also tend to be resistant to its introduction and sometimes to try to prevent this.
- i. Why do employees often resist change when it is introduced in a workplace? Justify your answer.

AND

- ii. Explain what managers can do to reduce the extent of such resistance and its effectiveness.

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7. One of the fastest growing sectors in the UK and in many other countries is professional services. Made up of law firms, consultancies, architectural practices, accountancy firms and a wide range of other providers of specialist advice, this sector is characterised by intense competition and the employment of highly qualified knowledge workers. Skills shortages are a major fact of life for many of these firms, especially as the advice that clients seek becomes more and more specialised in nature. But there are often only very limited opportunities to increase pay. They also often suffer from significant staff retention problems. This can lead to whole teams of professionals leaving to join rival firms and taking their clients with them.
- i. What major strategies would you recommend are adopted by a growing professional services firm that is struggling to recruit highly skilled specialists and is not in a position to increase its salaries?

AND

- ii. What steps could be taken to reduce the likelihood that teams of staff will be 'poached' by competitor firms?

OR

8. Despite the advent of cheaper flights, inexpensive communication systems and video-conferencing technology, global organisations continue to employ many expatriate workers. In the main these people are managers who are sent on overseas assignments for periods of three to five years before returning to their home countries to resume their careers.

To what extent do you agree with the view that the employment of expatriate managers is a necessary activity for multi-national companies, but also a very risky one? Justify your answer.

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9. HRM is a field of management practice in which practitioners frequently face ethical dilemmas. Sometimes decisions have to be taken which are likely to have an adverse impact on people's lives. Sometimes decisions are taken which benefit powerful and privileged people at the expense of others. Sometimes decisions are taken which might be hard to justify legally.

Drawing on your own experience or observations, set out and comment on **two** distinct examples of ethical dilemmas relating to HRM or HRD activities. In each case explain what decision had to be taken and its background, why it was coloured by ethical considerations and what the final outcome was.

OR

10. The need to engage in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities is increasingly recognised as being a fundamental duty for anyone who aspires to maintain membership of a Profession. But it is also good practice for anyone working in a management or technical role.

Senior managers in your organisation have organised an 'away day' at which they intend to discuss and debate a variety of longer term issues and developments. As someone who is known to be working towards the completion of a professional qualification, you have been invited to make a short presentation at the away day about CPD. You are asked to explain what it is and what it involves. You are also asked to explain how the organisation might benefit if all its senior managers undertook CPD and encouraged their teams to do the same.

What would be the major points you would make? Justify your answer.

END OF EXAMINATION

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Introduction

This was the thirteenth cohort of students to sit the Leading, Managing & Developing People exam and they performed pretty well. The overall pass rate was 75%, which is one of the highest we have recorded recently and broadly in line with the long-term average. This cohort was notable for gaining a high number of merits, indicating that in comparison with others they were a particularly well-prepared and able group.

As always our intention when marking was to be as fair and generous as we could be. Those who addressed our questions directly and fully, attempting all parts while justifying their points effectively and demonstrating good knowledge and understanding passed. Those who were also able to develop original arguments and demonstrate breadth and depth in terms of their reading were rewarded with higher marks.

On this occasion the papers were marked by myself, Graham Perkins, Krystal Wilkinson, Andrew Hambler, Sue Speakman, Elisabeth Wilson, Gail Swift and Claire Roberts.

The overall breakdown of marks was as follows:

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Grade	Number	Percentage of total
Distinction	8	2.9
Merit	64	23.7
Pass	131	48.5
Marginal Fail	28	10.3
Fail	39	14.4
Total	270	100

Section A

Learning outcomes: 1 and 5

This case study was designed to test knowledge and understanding of the following two learning outcomes:

Learning Outcome 1: Review and critically evaluate major contemporary research and debates in the fields of HRM and HRD.

and

Learning Outcome 5: Understand and explain the aims and objectives of the HRM and HRD functions in organisations and how these are met in practice.

Task 1

This was entirely straightforward and, as a result, few candidates had many problems with it. Those who did tended to take far too broad a perspective, pointing out in too vague a fashion, for example, that an HR strategy could be developed or that the quality of the

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organisation's leadership needed addressing. Such candidates failed to get to grips with the detail and often only made passing reference to the facts of the case. One or two candidates offered less than credible sets of plans for such a small organisation (and one that is already probably overstaffed) involving large HR departments staffed with specialists of various kinds. Such candidates demonstrated a lack of basic business awareness.

Generally, however, this was answered well. Within quite a short period an HR manager supported by a small team should be able to address all of the major people-related problems set out in the case, and given time, turn around the fortunes of the restaurant chain, while also reducing its fixed costs. This could be achieved first establishing efficient management control systems, so that each restaurant manager was required to follow centrally determined policies and procedures. Appropriate support could then be given in fields such as training, recruitment and performance management to address the service quality issues currently being experienced. Some staff, including restaurant managers, may also need to be dismissed (lawfully) and new people with more appropriate experience hired to take their places. A firm, central grip on pay needs to be exercised to ensure that staffing budgets are adhered to, while policies aimed specifically at reducing absence and staff turnover rates need to be introduced. The tribunal cases should be settled. The strongest candidates also demonstrated understanding of the need for cultural change in this organisation so that a sense of shared purpose is created around a commitment to high standards of customer care. Employee involvement and engagement initiatives have a potential part to play here. The extent and quality of communication between the senior managers and the operational teams needs to be radically improved. Last, but not least, a professional HR function would be able to address the many HRD needs identified in the case. Interventions aimed at improving the quality of cooking and of table service should be introduced, for example, alongside a performance management system that monitors and rewards individual contribution.

As always with CIPD papers candidates do best when they justify the points they are making as well as simply stating them. This is particularly important with the case study. Higher marks are awarded to students who not only make strong points, but also justify them credibly by linking their learning with the facts of the case.

Task 2

This was much tougher, not least I imagine, because it was not a question that candidates were expecting and had thus prepared for. This led to answers of much more varied quality. Well-read and well-informed students had a wide choice of different studies to draw on, and the more detailed and well-informed the answers they wrote, the higher the marks they were awarded. The well-known 'good practice' studies associated with researchers such as Mark Huselid and Jeffery Pfeffer which show links between the introduction of 'bundles of HR practices' and subsequent business performance against several criteria in a variety of organisational settings were frequently referenced as were the Gallup studies on employee engagement and its link to business performance, and the famous 'black box' studies conducted by John Purcell and his team. The latter were particularly relevant here in that they provide good evidence of the crucial role played by immediate line managers in delivering HR policies, practices and outcomes.

Too many candidates lost a lot of marks here because they were simply unable to cite any of this research, or indeed any that came close to explaining links between HRM/HRD

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interventions and subsequent business performance. This was very disappointing, given the prominence such research is given in the 'indicative module content' for LM&DP.

Task 3

There were no definite right or wrong answers here, but to score high marks a sound and credible priority had to be named and its choice justified convincingly. Most focused on training to address the service quality issues or on financial control, and particularly the need rapidly to get on top of staff expenditure, but a surprisingly high number were more concerned with settling tribunal cases. This could be justified on cost and reputational grounds, but some failed to offer any credible justification for their suggestions and lost marks accordingly. A good proportion of the answers were frustrating to mark simply because the candidates ignored the requirement in the question to outline a singular first priority, instead writing answers setting out all their priorities. As a result the answers lacked the very depth of understanding and ability to develop a good argument that we were looking to test here.

Section B

Question A1

Learning outcome: 2

This was attempted by the vast majority of candidates, proving by some distance to be the most popular question in Section B. By and large it was very effectively answered. As always a minority of candidates used it as a platform to show off their knowledge of motivation theories (Maslow in particular) without justifying their points or making much of a distinction between the three groups. Most, however, appear to have leapt at the opportunity to say some very sensible and thoughtful things about how the three groups are likely to vary and what the consequences should be in terms of organisational policy.

Graduate trainees are likely in particular to be motivated by career development opportunities and opportunities for personal growth (for example, overseas travel). They are also likely to be motivated by the opportunity to earn money to pay off debts and establish themselves on the property ladder, and by opportunities to socialise with workmates. By contrast a single parent is likely above all to be concerned with work-life balance and the opportunity to combine earning a good living with family responsibilities. Flexible working arrangements (flexitime, homeworking, term time working etc) are thus likely to be major motivators as are childcare benefits and job security. For older people flexibility is also particularly important, but here it is fulfilling work which is the major motivator as individuals in this category often work through choice rather than necessity.

The best answers to the second question demonstrated understanding of research which shows that some pre-requisites for high levels of motivation are universal in all workplaces – these are being treated with respect, having interesting work to do, being given autonomy, being led by people who are competent and just in the way that they operate. I was struck by the ease with which stronger candidates were able to link these practical points to theories such as those associated with Herzberg, Adams, Vroom, McClelland et al and make a strong case accordingly. Knowledge and understanding of research into intrinsic motivation in particular was impressive.

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Question A2

Learning outcome: 2

Relatively few candidates attempted this, largely I think because they were positively drawn to Question 1 in such large numbers, but those who did attempt Question 2 tended to perform just as well.

There is a strong link between trust and employee engagement. This means that people who lack trust in their employers are less likely to demonstrate discretionary effort and that there is likely to be a strong knock-on effect on standards of performance. People working in low trust environments are thus more likely to minimise their contribution, less likely to share ideas or see it as worth their while to take initiatives forward. In a commercial setting the net result will be lost sales, lower financial performance than might otherwise have been achieved and a reduced likelihood that competitive advantage will be either gained or maintained.

Re-building trust is difficult. But the research on this question demonstrates that frank and honest communication is important and especially upward communication. Managers must demonstrate that they are listening, and this involves giving employees the mechanisms to use their 'voice' in the first place. Ultimately trust is rebuilt when the experiences that generated it in the first place are replaced in the collective memory with experiences that demonstrate the opposite. So high profile initiatives aimed at sending a message to employees that they are valued and respected and will be treated honestly. Stronger candidates could link this to the concept of breaching the psychological contract and the type of initiatives that are taken to heal those breaches. It takes time and persistence. There were also potential links to Learning outcome7 and business ethics that candidates successfully exploited here.

Question B3

Learning outcome: 3

This question did not attract many takers, but those who did select it tended to know a good deal about the subject and were thus able to address it quite effectively. There were some shallow answers that were too content-light to pass, but most were strong or solid, albeit frustratingly limited in their citing of relevant published research.

Most candidates broadly agreed with the views expressed in the question although some legitimately criticised it for tending towards stereotyping, and gave examples of female leaders with traits associated with women to prove their points. On the whole the candidates agreed that women who are prominent in senior leadership positions typically exhibit traits that are more often associated with men, and they get criticised for it. There are of course many other explanations that are put forward for male dominance of senior roles and strong answers made reference to these.

Views differed substantially as far as part two was concerned. It could be argued that society must be forced to change, or that girls must be brought up to have different values and to assert themselves more (that is, women must change). Alternatively it could be argued that over time attitudes will change as more women are appointed to senior roles and act as role

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models for others, men and women, leading to a change in social expectations about leaders. Stronger answers here made mention of theories about authentic leadership styles and evolving debates about emotional intelligence.

Question B4

Learning outcome: 3

This question attracted a large majority of candidates and it was a pleasure to read about so many outstanding managers who are clearly acting as good role models for our students.

Answers obviously varied very considerably here depending on who was identified and the closeness of the relationship with the candidate. Most identified an individual they had worked with closely and observed quite intimately, but there was no reason why a more distant figure who has proved to be inspirational should not be chosen. The key here was for a relatively rich range of competencies to be identified as is suggested in the question, ranging from personality traits through to skills, experience, knowledge and even attitudes or values. Examples of incidents to demonstrate the competencies in action also featured in some of the better answers.

Views on part two differed a lot. The important thing here is that whatever argument was developed, a good justification also had to be advanced. Competency frameworks have been widely criticised for creating teams of clones and for working against the appointment of diverse teams. But they are also flexible and need less updating than alternatives such as job descriptions/person specs that are more job-focused. The proposition in the question could also be criticised on the grounds that effective leaders may well have very different sets of competencies and that using the attributes associated with one thus makes no sense at all when selecting another. Indeed, some of the strongest and most original answers took the position that the competences they had identified in part 1 were in fact only of limited relevance to competency frameworks overall. Others were more nuanced and thoughtful, arguing that some aspects of their chosen leaders' strengths were appropriate for inclusion in a competency framework, while others were not.

Question C5

Learning outcome: 4

Both the questions in this section proved to be popular choices, roughly equal numbers of candidates attempting each of them. By and large they were effective and picked up plenty of marks. As far as this question was concerned, lack of justification brought marks down on occasion as did too narrow a focus on just one variety of flexibility. Some candidates also demonstrated a worrying lack of business awareness when answering this question, focusing entirely on attracting, motivating and retaining employees without also demonstrating sufficient understanding of the cost savings and productivity gains which underpin most moves towards more flexible working.

The strongest answers to part one thus covered a good variety of different ways in which organisations benefit. Efficiency is one major advantage. Functional flexibility ensures that individuals can be deployed as and when required to different duties where the requirement is greatest at any time. Part-time and fixed-term contracts mean that people are only employed at peak times. Outsourcing is also often motivated by a wish to improve efficiency. Flexibility also allows organisations to access specialist skills rapidly when needed. This is

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true of some casual working, sub-contracting and the use of consultants. Another advantage is the ability it gives organisations to compete more effectively in labour markets making them more attractive to would-be employees who want to work flexibly. Employee retention is another advantage. Some students also included financial flexibility in their answers and reflected on the motivational qualities associated with pay-at-risk systems of various kinds, but these were a minority.

Part two was probably best answered with reference to flexitime, part-time working, term-time working, annual hours and compressed hours. Work-life balance and employee well-being are good forms of justification to deploy here. Functional flexibility/multi-skilling is also of potential benefit for employees seeking to improve their employability and that point was ably made by many candidates.

Question C6

Learning outcome: 4

Change management episodes often fail to live up to expectations and resistance is an important element here. It is partly born out of insecurity and the fear that individuals have of being losers rather than winners from proposed changes. Another factor is often experience of past change management episodes and the upheaval they often bring with them to little real positive effect. Recent research provides more biological explanations relating to the reaction of nervous systems leading to defensiveness. Natural conservatism and a suspicion of the unknown are other relevant factors. These were the main kinds of points that most candidates made and picked up plenty of marks in the process. Weaker candidates had a tendency not to appreciate that fear of change or disagreement with it is often the main source of resistance, preferring instead either to blame misunderstanding or miscommunication. Such answers tended to be touch naive and lacking in credibility as a result. The strongest answers demonstrated understanding with examples from experience or reading.

There is a vast amount of research on approaches which minimise resistance and help managers to overcome it. Employee involvement comes top of the list because 'people support what they help to create', but reference was also made to a wide variety of models (Lewin, Rodgers, Kotter, CIPD). One or two stronger candidates also made reference to more recent work on more political approaches to change management, including for example reference to change agents and to communication which is designed to ease fears and prevent rumour mills from distorting things unnecessarily.

Question D7

Learning outcome: 6

While this question focused on a particular sector, experience of its workings were not required to answer it effectively. I suspect, however, that a good number of candidates failed to spot this and took the decision to avoid answering a question which they might actually have done rather well on. The question was really about the challenges of recruiting and retaining knowledge workers in a competitive labour market – a challenge faced by most organisations albeit on a smaller scale. A variety of strategies can be developed to tackle skills shortages. First, it is possible to recruit people who do not have the required skills but who have the potential to gain them and to make use of HRD initiatives. In this context that

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means employing bright people and giving them experience plus an opportunity to become qualified where necessary. Another strategy involves increasing productivity so that fewer people are required to do the necessary work, this also allows for some pay rises. Work can also be reorganised so that there is less reliance on hard-to-recruit groups (that is, skills mix reviews). This often involves more delegation of tasks so that specialists spend 100% of their time doing what only they can do. Finally there are a range of recruitment and retention initiatives that can be introduced to improve the attractiveness of the firm and which allow it to tap into non-traditional labour markets – employer branding, overseas recruitment, flexible working, employee involvement are all potentially relevant here.

Retention initiatives were also key to answering part two well. Stronger candidates mentioned some of the legal steps that can be taken in this context (restrictive covenants, contractual clauses which oblige people to pay back the costs of training etc), but more generally it is a question of treating people with respect, maximising the autonomy they can exercise, supporting them both practically and rhetorically, recognising their achievements, involving them in decision-making and providing attractive internal career development opportunities. All these points were mentioned commonly in the answers we read, as were a range of initiatives designed to remind people via communication exercises about how well-placed they would be if they stayed.

Question D8

Learning outcome: 6

This was a straightforward question for anyone who has studied expatriation – a major topic in the field of international HRM and one which has featured on this paper before. Answers tended either to be noticeably strong or weak depending on how much knowledge people had of the subject area. A majority of candidates attempted this, a good number making a range of useful points while (frustratingly) missing some others.

As far as necessity is concerned, candidates generally reflected sensibly on the one or two of the major management objectives that have been identified as underlying decisions to expatriate – effective management control, developing a global corporate culture, networking, knowledge exchange, management development opportunities and the benefits of working through diverse teams. Too often though, as with the question on flexibility, there was a failure to acknowledge (let alone explain) the business case for expatriation, candidates preferring instead to dwell entirely on career development matters.

On the question of risk, the best starting point is Black and Gregerson's work on 'expatriate failure' and the considerable costs associated with expatriating staff only to find that the episode fails to meet expectations. Early returns, resignations soon after repatriation, poor performance when overseas etc are often cited in the research literature. However, risks can be minimised with effective selection and preparation, and the better quality answers pointed this out. Generally though answers to the risk point were rather weak and limited in terms of justification.

Question E9

Learning outcome: 7

This was quite a challenging question, but hopefully enough hints were given in the opening paragraph about the kinds of decision that we were looking for students to discuss in their

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answers to enable good answers to be written. The key here was that the instructions set out in the question were fully followed. We needed for each of the two examples a description, a discussion of the ethics behind it and a justification for the decision taken. The very strongest answers brought in some ethical theory (utilitarian arguments, Kantian arguments, Friedmansque arguments etc) into their answers and were rewarded accordingly, but most simply demonstrated thoughtfulness and pragmatism. The weaker answers were often simply too rushed (this often being the last question attempted) or described more than they analysed.

Question E10

Learning outcome: 7

This was answered by the majority of candidates. While some were reaching the end of their time allocation and had to rush their answers, many were thoughtful, full and well-justified.

The key point we wanted to see emphasised was that CPD is a formal and systematic activity. It involves taking steps to keep up with developments in a field of knowledge or endeavour, including industry developments, but also recording these and devoting a fair amount of time each week or month to developmental activities. Importantly the process also involves self-reflection, not least as the basis for planning further steps in CPD.

CPD can involve a very wide and diverse range of HRD activities, some formal others more informal, some elaborate, others simple and inexpensive. Examples are reading books and journals, undertaking training courses, attending conferences, receiving coaching, participating in seminars, observing others at work and generally reflecting thoughtfully on one's own day to day activities.

The benefits are many, but are sometimes hard to quantify. In effect it turns an organisation into a 'learning organisation' made up of individuals whose skills and knowledge are as up to date as possible. This is likely to mean that the organisation is well placed to seize opportunities when they arise, prepared to change when necessary, and in a position to innovate and consider new possibilities. When CPD is widely carried out across an organisation its reputation for competence is likely to be enhanced, with positive knock-on effects in terms of its ability to raise capital, to attract customers and to mobilise a high quality workforce. These points were often well made in the answers and illustrated with personal examples of a kind which always work well in presentations.

Conclusions

It is had to avoid concluding that this was a pretty satisfactory set of scripts to mark. The pass rate climbed back above 70% again after what proved to be a temporary dip in September 2014. We read many very strong answers and when a candidate managed the difficult task of stringing a group of these together they were rewarded with high marks. I was delighted that we able to award so many merits on this occasion in addition to the passes.

As always, in the vast majority of cases the candidates who did not pass simply failed to demonstrate to us that they had a level 7 understanding of the subject area. Too often parts of a question were missed entirely and too often candidates preferred to write what they knew rather than answering the question we had asked. Lack of references to research and reading remains a major weakness for some, while we do still occasionally have to fail

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candidates who do not follow the instructions at the start of the paper and answer two Section B questions from the same category. Generally though these papers were very satisfactory (or better) and were a pleasure to mark.

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