



Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

Advanced Level Qualification

**Leading, Managing and Developing
People**

May 2018

Date: Thursday 24 May 2018

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.

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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.

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.

Eastholt Academy is a large inner-city school which provides secondary education to 990 pupils aged between 11 and 19. The Academy employs eighty teachers at any one time, a third of whom are employed on a part-time basis.

In the spring of 2018 the school was formally inspected by OFSTED (the Office for Standards in Education) two years after its previous inspection. During their visit the panel looked at extensive samples of marked work and teachers' lesson plans. They observed thirty-five lessons being taught across all the age-groups and subjects. Extensive discussions were held with trustees, teachers and pupils. Survey evidence of parents' perceptions were also analysed.

A few weeks' later the Ofsted Inspection Report was published. While the inspectors were pleased with aspects of the school's activities, their overall assessment was fairly critical. In particular they observed that in key areas no significant progress had been made since their previous inspection in 2016. On each of the four key inspection criteria (effectiveness of leadership and management; quality of teaching, learning and assessment; personal development, behaviour and welfare; outcomes for pupils) the rating awarded was 'requires improvement'. While a 'requires improvement' rating is a better outcome than 'inadequate', it falls below the 'good' and 'outstanding' ratings that schools always aspire to achieve.

The specific comments in Ofsted's 'summary of key findings' included the following:

- "Leaders did not respond quickly enough to the areas for improvement recommended at the last inspection. As a result pupils have underachieved for the past two years".

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- “Work is not always set at the right level of difficulty, particularly for the most able pupils”
- “Teachers’ questions are insufficiently challenging”
- “Leaders have not trained teachers how to meet the specific learning needs of pupils who speak English as a second language”
- “In several subjects the curriculum is not planned well enough to help pupils develop their reasoning skills and apply these to a range of problems”
- “Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because there is too much variability between and within subjects. As a result pupils do not always make good progress”
- “Some subject leaders are not as skilful as others in checking and improving teaching, achievement and pupil behaviour”

On receipt of the report the Head Teacher and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees decided to resign, both accepting that new leadership would be required if standards of performance were to be substantially improved at the Academy prior to its next expected Ofsted inspection in 2020. A new Chairman of Trustees, Bridget Smartly was swiftly appointed. A successful local businesswoman and a former local counsellor, She has extensive experience as a member of school governing bodies. At present one of the deputy head teachers is acting-up as head teacher, but he has made it clear that he is not interested in taking up the post on a permanent basis.

On taking up her appointment Mrs Smartly held one-to-one discussions with all the senior teachers and heads of department. During these she was deeply concerned to be told the following:

- The Academy is finding it almost impossible to attract applications from qualified teachers in the areas of physics, chemistry, IT and mathematics. There are also increasing difficulties in other subject areas. As a result these classes are being taught by colleagues who do not have degrees in the subjects concerned.
- Over half the teachers are considering leaving the school or taking early retirement as a result of stress.
- Staff complain that they often feel unsupported, undervalued and even bullied by members of the Academy’s senior management team.

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- Employee turnover among teachers at Eastholt is running at 24% a year. This is more than double the average for schools in the UK.
- Eight out of ten teachers that Bridget spoke to complained about excessive workloads. The amount of time devoted to attending meetings, marking, record keeping and lesson planning is considered both unproductive and excessive leading to poor work-life balance.
- Morale among teachers at the academy was variously described by the teaching staff Bridget spoke to as being 'appalling', 'rock-bottom' and 'irreversibly poor'.

You have been engaged by Eastholt Academy's Board of Trustees to advise them on HRM issues. In doing so they have reminded you that budgets are currently very stretched and that any recommendations you make must not be costly to implement.

You have been asked to prepare an initial report addressing the following questions: (in each case take care to provide a good justification for your recommendations, drawing on published research and examples where possible).

- 1) **What THREE immediate steps should Mrs Smartly and her fellow trustees take to begin the process of turning round poor performance and staff morale at the Academy? Justify your choice of priorities.**
- 2) **What practical initiatives might the acting head teacher bring forward to start addressing concerns about workload, work-life balance, stress and related staff turnover at the Academy?**
- 3) **What FIVE major essential attributes would you recommend were included in the person specification that the Board of Trustees is planning to draw up prior to recruiting a new permanent head teacher at Eastholt? Justify your points.**
- 4) **How can the new senior leadership team seek to raise standards of educational performance at Eastholt while reducing employee stress, lifting staff morale and avoiding accusations of bullying?**

It is recommended that you spend 25% of your time on each of Tasks 1. 2. 3 and 4.

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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. A Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) research report was recently published with the title “Driving the New Learning Organisation: How to unlock the potential of L&D”. Here it was argued that the concept of a ‘learning organisation’ originally conceived by Peter Senge in the 1990s has a great deal to offer contemporary organisations. The term is defined as follows:

‘a company that continuously transforms itself through the learning and development of its members’.

The report notes that few organisations in practice have ever really attained the status of a genuine learning organisation. This is due to a failure of senior managers to support the idea, limited understanding of what it means in practice and the absence of readily available HRD tools to enable people to take control of their own learning. However well-delivered they are in practice, it is hard to create a genuine learning organisation when traditional, standardised training courses are the main method used to help people learn. This situation is now changing.

- i) How might online learning tools be better harnessed by managers and staff in your organisation in order to help create a genuine learning organisation? Illustrate your answer with examples.
- ii) What are the main advantages that are accrued when genuine ‘learning organisation status’ is achieved and sustained?

OR

2. Research looking at the ways in which employees experience human resource management in organisations demonstrates that team leaders and line managers play a more central role than formal HRM functions. It follows that any organisation seeking to better recruit, retain and engage its people needs to focus on improving the capacity of its management teams to carry out the HR aspects of their roles effectively. In practice, however, evidence strongly suggests that this is often not achieved. Surveys of employee perceptions show a huge variability in the extent to which people perceive that they are managed well by their immediate supervisors. It would appear that a very large proportion of line managers are not good at delivering effective HRM.

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- i) Drawing on published research or examples of organisational practice explain why so many line managers are perceived by their staff to be ineffective people managers.
- ii) Propose and discuss **THREE** distinct steps that could be taken in your organisation which would over time substantially improve the ability of managers to manage their people more effectively. What would you suggest and why?

B

3. The inventor and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Steve Jobs argued in favour of approaches to management that were rooted in an understanding of intrinsic motivation. He believed that supervision should be kept to a minimum that managers should lead by example and above all that people should be allocated work to do which they are really committed to. He summed up this philosophy as follows:

'If you are working on something that you really care about, you don't have to be pushed. The vision pulls you'.

- i) Explain what is meant by the term 'intrinsic motivation' and how it differs from 'extrinsic motivation'.
- ii) Drawing on your own experience and observations discuss how far it is either desirable or practical to rely on intrinsic motivation when employing people to work in organisations.

OR

4. You are asked to run a half day training event for managers and team leaders in your organisation entitled 'Improving Employee Engagement'. It is made clear to you that a good proportion of the participants will not be at all familiar with the term 'employee engagement' and that you will thus need to explain what it is and what it seeks to achieve. You will then lead a discussion about what steps could be taken in your organisation to improve levels of employee engagement.

- i) What would be the most suitable way of explaining the concept of employee engagement and its purpose for this audience? Justify your answer.
- ii) Set out **THREE** suggestions that you would expect participants to make as to ways in which levels of engagement might be improved in your organisation. Which of these would you argue has the most to offer in practice? Justify your answer.

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5. You receive the following e-mail from a work colleague who is attending a conference:

'Hello. I have just heard a speaker arguing that flexible working in organisations is a dreadful thing. She argued that zero hours contracts, the use of spurious self-employment and the growth of a 'gig economy' are making life worse for millions of people. These developments are leading to more income insecurity, lower pay and higher levels of social inequality. Her view was that flexible working must now be curtailed and that a return to permanent, secure, full time employment needs to be promoted. I think she is probably right. What do you think?'

How would you answer your colleague's e-mail? Justify your answer with reference to organisational practice **and** published research.

OR

6. A new management team is appointed to help give fresh direction to a well-established, private sector company that employs 400 people mostly to undertake higher-paid professional roles. While still profitable, the company's overall financial performance is in long-term decline. Customer feedback is disappointing and this is allowing competitors to take a bigger share of the market. The parent company has stated its preparedness to invest good sums in turning the business round, but has decided that these funds will only be forthcoming if the new management team can first demonstrate that it can bring about 'profound structural and cultural change'.

You apply for an HR role in the organisation. If appointed part of your remit would be to advise senior managers about the people aspects of the proposed change management programme.

- i) Distinguish between structural and cultural change. Explain why cultural change is a great deal more difficult to achieve successfully than structural change.
- ii) At your interview you are asked to give **TWO** pieces of advice about how you think this organisation should approach the promotion of cultural change. What would you say and why?

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7. In November 2017 the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) published a position paper entitled 'Have Your Say: Alternative Forms of Employee Voice'. In this paper it was argued that mechanisms to provide employees with a voice at work are traditionally viewed by managers as a means of directly improving organisational performance. Employees are asked to suggest ways of improving systems or are asked to contribute ideas and feedback before a strategic decision is taken.

While the paper supported these approaches, it argued that they do not go far enough in key respects. Employee voice has many other potential purposes, not least in improving working life and employee wellbeing.

- i) You are asked to define the term 'employee voice' and to give some examples of HR policies which are designed to encourage it. What key points would you make?
- ii) In what ways can practices aimed at improving employee voice help to improve working life? Justify your answer with reference to your own experiences and observations.

OR

8. One of the big challenges facing HR managers in organisations is how to find ways of recruiting and retaining high quality people when financial constraints make it hard to offer them more money. Some argue that the concept of 'total reward' has a lot to offer. This idea is that instead of focusing primarily on pay when thinking about reward management, organisations should give more consideration to what makes working for them 'rewarding' in a broader sense.

- i) You have been asked to advise an organisation which is considering adopting a 'total reward' approach for the first time. The aim is to improve its recruitment and retention record without increasing the pay bill. You are free to choose an organisation operating in any industry.

Drawing on published research and examples of organisation practice, explain what different elements you would recommend should be included in the 'total reward package'. Justify your choices.

- ii) How far do you agree with the view that an organisation can pay less and still attract and retain good people provided it compensates its people with other components that they value? Justify your answer.

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9. A positive corporate reputation can take many years to build, but can be severely damaged or lost in an instant. The bigger, more successful and more prominent the organisation, the bigger the risk of a lost reputation tends to be. The huge growth in social media has served to increase the risk because it makes it hard for organisations to restrain what is said or written about them. The media magnate Rupert Murdoch explained its importance when he said that 'our reputation is more important than the last hundred million dollars'.
- i) Explain how an organisation can benefit from an HRM perspective when it builds and maintains a positive reputation. Justify your answer.
 - ii) Drawing on examples explain how HR-related mistakes or failures can serve to damage an organisation's reputation.
 - iii) You are asked to give one piece of advice to your organisation about how the HR function could help further to build and guard its reputation. What would you say and why?

OR

10. In recent years there has been a great deal of debate about the continued prevalence of 'institutional racism' and 'institutional sexism'. The core idea is that while we have seen a welcome decline in the incidence of overt racist and sexist behaviour on the part of individuals, the way that institutions such as workplaces operate continues to include substantial bias. While it is no individual's intention, the result in practice is on-going unfairness and inequality. We see this reflected in the gender and racial make-up of senior management teams, in pay gaps between men and women, and in higher unemployment rates among members of some ethnic minorities. Many regard institutional racism and sexism as the most pressing issue in contemporary business ethics.
- i) To what extent would it be reasonable to characterise your organisation as exhibiting some features of institutional racism or sexism? Justify your answer.
 - ii) What major practical steps can organisations take in order to help reduce the extent of institutional racism and sexism in society? Illustrate your answer with examples.

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Introduction

A total of 351 candidates sat this May's 7LMP examination, and collectively their performance was outstanding. This group had a pass rate of 83% which is one of the highest we have recorded. Moreover, astonishingly, more than a third of all candidates and over 40% of those passing were awarded either merits or distinctions. We marked some quite stunningly good papers this summer and remarkably few really weak ones. Over recent years the standard of examination performances has risen very considerably. Students and tutors are to be congratulated. It was a complete pleasure to mark and moderate these papers.

The final breakdown of marks was as follows:

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Grade	Number	Percentage of total
Distinction	17	5
Merit	103	29
Pass	171	49
Marginal Fail	15	4
Fail	45	13
Total	351	100

Detailed feedback on each question follows.

Section A

Learning outcome: 3

The case study was intended to test knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3 (debate and critically evaluate the characteristics of effective leadership and the methods used to develop leaders in organisations) and learning outcome 6 (assess the contribution made by HRM and HRD specialists in different types of organisation).

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Task 1

What THREE immediate steps should Mrs Smartly and her fellow trustees take to begin the process of turning round poor performance and staff morale at the Academy? Justify your choice of priorities.

There was plenty of scope here for the development of original arguments and perspectives. Candidates focused on a variety of different interventions, some being better justified than others. Many had researched the issues raised in the case and current developments in schools management and were able to deploy their knowledge most effectively when answering this question. The major weakness was a tendency for some candidates to write rather generally without setting out the clear steps that the question asked about. We were not looking for long-term strategy here, just practical actions that address immediate problems and start to address the longer-term issues. The need in this kind of situation is for managers to steady the ship, re-build confidence and signal future intentions.

Stronger candidates demonstrated an appreciation of these needs and justified their specific suggestions most effectively. Where they demonstrated that they had carried out further reading too, they were handsomely rewarded. They appreciated, for example, that there is a need here to reassure staff and to build their confidence in the wake of the OFSTED report and the resignations. Effective communication of a reassuring and forward-focused message is therefore a priority, and this can take a variety of practical forms (one-to-one meetings, focus groups, larger staff meetings etc). Secondly there is a need to start rebuilding trust and potentially to re-set the prevailing psychological contract. A signal that there will be greater employee involvement (union and non-union varieties) in the future would thus make sense here. Staff voices need to be heard and constructive suggestions as to how the school's performance can be turned around acted upon. Steps in this direction can be taken immediately if the new management team act on what they have been told in their interviews. Thirdly a statement that senior managers are determined to move away from a culture that could be perceived as being bullying in nature or which prevents the achievement of a good work-life balance. This should help to de-stress people if it is genuine in terms of how it is expressed.

Weaker answers tended to focus either only on the wellbeing or only on the performance issues. The key to doing well here was to appreciate that both need to be addressed swiftly and effectively. HRD interventions were also often recommended and justified effectively.

Task 2

What practical initiatives might the acting head teacher bring forward to start addressing concerns about workload, work-life balance, stress and related staff turnover at the Academy?

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Teacher workload has been the subject of much research in recent years, as well as being the subject of recent ministerial statements (made long after the paper was set). Teaching unions have also made many suggestions and we have recently had a select committee report on the issue published by parliament. Both draw on ‘The Workload Challenge’ research which was a major recent consultation on the issue. Stronger candidates had located some of this work when preparing for the examination and made good use of it in their answers.

The key is to start by recognising that while some workload issues are outside the control of any particular school, many are and that there are many ways in which pressure can be reduced incrementally if not totally. Potential areas are reducing the length of meetings so that only necessary business is covered, allowing more flexibility over marking schedules, using electronic marking so that teachers are not required to write out the same points in longhand multiple times, delegating administrative tasks to admin staff and teaching assistants, electronic databases of lesson plans so that teachers can adapt existing versions rather than having to write their own from scratch all the time and smarter timetabling (again often IT-enabled) which give teachers blocks of time away from the classroom to complete administrative activities more efficiently. Some candidates made suggestions that were either somewhat impractical (eg: reducing the length of school terms) or far too costly in a situation in which resources are constrained as is made crystal clear in the case study. Employing a large number of additional staff, for example, is not an option here. While the outstanding answers justified points using research literature, this was not necessary to score a pass mark. What was important though was that it was ‘practical initiatives’ and not general aspirations or policies that were being advanced and justified.

Task 3

What FIVE major essential attributes would you recommend were included in the person specification that the Board of Trustees is planning to draw up prior to recruiting a new permanent head teacher at Eastholt? Justify your points.

Here too there was plenty of room for difference of view and we were not too prescriptive when marking. What mattered was that the points made were compelling, appropriate and well-justified. That said, I was disappointed to observe that many candidates focused wholly on personality attributes or soft skills, making no mention at all of the need for the appointee to be experienced and to have a proven track record in school leadership. What is clearly needed here is a new head teacher who is able both to give direction (ie appreciates what operational improvements need to be made) while also managing employee relationships most effectively. The person appointed has to be able to gain respect and help staff to develop confidence in their ability to meet the expected performance standards.

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Stronger answers made appropriate reference to leadership theories (for example, to the concept of 'authentic leadership' and potentially 'emotional intelligence') when answering this question. The individual who is appointed will also have to gain the respect of pupils (as behaviour is a problem in this school), parents and the board of trustees, as well as teaching staff. There is thus a need for a combination of authority and humanity. The best answers gave us a good balance in their five points and were all the more credible as a result. It is also worth mentioning here that I was disappointed to observe that a large number of candidates seem to have made the assumption that the new head teacher will be male. There were lots of references to 'him' and 'he' in these answers which was interesting to note, given the later question on institutional sexism.

Task 4

How can the new senior leadership team seek to raise standards of educational performance at Eastholt while reducing employee stress, lifting staff morale and avoiding accusations of bullying?

The stronger candidates appreciated the opportunity to diversify their thinking and demonstrate a wider body of knowledge and understanding rather than repeat points raised earlier. This is ultimately the big HR challenge that is being faced by the case study organisation. Paying people significant amounts more money to reward performance is not an option, while the inability to recruit high-quality teaching staff rules out a strategy of encouraging poor performers to leave in the hope that more effective replacements can readily be found. The only viable option is therefore to manage people much more effectively than has been the case in the past. The relational aspects of employment need to be given equal attention to those of a transactional nature. The key to achieving this is encouraging career development by providing HRD opportunities, actively seeking genuine employee involvement in decision-making (people support what they help to create), delegating decision-making wherever possible and generally treating people in a mature, manner, demonstrating that their contribution is valued whenever the opportunity to do so arises. Stronger answers here drew on understanding of employee engagement, also discussing key theories in the motivation and performance management fields (for example, needs-based theories, Theory X / Y etc).

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Section B

Question A1

Learning outcome: 1

This question was intended to test knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 1 (review and critically evaluate major contemporary research and debates in the fields of HRM and HRD)

As the learning organisation concept does not form a specific part of the 7LMP standards and may have been unfamiliar to candidates, we marked these answers without any expectation of detailed knowledge of the specific concept. We appreciated that the information provided in the question stem would be all some would know and marked accordingly. That said it soon became apparent that a good proportion of candidates had some good knowledge about learning organisations as well as opinions about them.

To score well in part one specific approaches to HRD that make use of new technologies needed to be identified and discussed. The wide availability of Youtube videos, podcasts, MOOCs, online help fora etc were the sort of things that were used by way of illustration.

Collaborative learning tools are the other major contemporary innovation, allowing employees to form their own learning communities, supporting one another and sharing their learning. Some candidates drew effectively on their own learning experiences, including studying for CIPD qualifications. To do well, of course, candidates had to do more than simply describe the technologies, also explaining how they can be 'better harnessed' either in their own organisations or in HRD more generally. What the question did not ask for was a description of online learning methods currently used in the candidates' own organisations. Too often candidates slip into descriptive mode like this and lose marks accordingly. At M level we are looking for argument and analysis, not descriptive accounts.

The major advantages deriving from the learning organisation concept highlighted in the report are improved growth, responsiveness to change/agility, profitability and productivity. Some stronger candidates went beyond this, discussing creativity, innovation and various measures of employee satisfaction. Improved employability and the building of human capital were also discussed and effectively justified too. The weaker answers tended to be very brief, perhaps only making one point or listing several in bullet point form without explanation or justification.

Question A2

Learning outcome: 1

This question was also intended to test knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 1 (review and critically evaluate major contemporary research and debates in the fields of HRM and HRD).

There was a great deal of published research to draw on here, particularly the seminal 'black box' studies carried out at Bath University which candidates are often keen to cite in their answers. Here though they were also invited to use organisational examples to justify points, or indeed both these sources of justification. There are many points that could be made in answering this question effectively. Some related to the criteria that are used in organisations when recruiting and managing the performance of line managers. These tend to focus on technical knowledge and ability to meet shorter-term targets, more than on effective people management skills. Over the years published studies have also pointed to a lack of training, the need to prioritise other more pressing tasks and more generally a lack of interest on the part of first line managers in the people side of their roles. Plenty of specific examples were discussed here which made these interesting answers to mark.

The steps that can be taken to address these issues are inevitably varied and specific to organisations. Our focus when awarding marks here was on the need for candidates focus on recommendations for the future and not simply to describe what their organisations currently do.

As with Question A1, too often candidates chose this approach, telling us what their organisations did in the past or currently do when the question asks for justified recommendations about the future. There is nothing at all wrong with a recommendation that builds on past achievements, but it is always analysis and not description which gains marks at M level. It was also important that distinct interventions were recommended. There are many varied interventions that aim to improve the quality of line management and the strongest answers demonstrated familiarity with a good, broad range of them. The main examples are training, redesigned promotion criteria, more sophisticated selection, building people management objectives into performance management systems and, perhaps, a more general and conspicuous commitment from senior management improving HR outcomes across the organisation.

Question B3

Learning outcome: 2

This question 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).

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The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators is long established and underpins a great deal of basic theoretical debate in the field of motivation at work. Candidates should thus be broadly familiar with these terms and their application in practice. Those that were, scored well here. A good number, however, struggled to explain the concept of 'intrinsic motivation' at all credibly or wrote answers that confused the two concepts somewhat. Put crudely, extrinsic motivators are experienced externally. We are motivated to do things because this is what others want us to do – to gain a reward, avoid punishments, gain career advantages etc. Pretty well all formal performance management interventions take this form. Intrinsic motivators, by contrast come from within us. We are motivated to do things because we want to, because we find them interesting, challenging worthwhile or enjoyable. This is not directly in the gift of managers except in the allocation of work, although steps can be taken to create an environment in the workplace which maximises the chances that people will develop high levels of intrinsic motivation.

Views on part two varied. The strongest answers contained original arguments that were well-justified with strong, relevant examples. Most agreed that intrinsic motivators are superior in terms of their capacity to deliver results (notwithstanding some apparent confusion about what intrinsic motivation amounts to), but that in practice it is very difficult to base people management in organisations on intrinsic motivation alone. Tasks have to be achieved in a competitive context which may not always interest people or be seen by them as challenging, enjoyable or even worthwhile. However, they still need to be achieved. In order to do this people are hired, trained and paid to do them, then incentivised using extrinsic motivators to do them better.

A key to effective people management is spotting opportunities for an organisation to benefit from people's intrinsic motivation. This is what Steve Jobs tried to achieve, with huge success. But that is different from basing practice around intrinsic motivation alone.

Question 4

Learning outcome: 2

This question was also 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).

This was pretty straightforward for most candidates who attempted it, the only significant weakness again being a tendency to describe existing practices when answering part 2 rather than the actual question we asked.

There is no universally accepted definition of the term 'employee engagement' – indeed the term is itself highly contested - so markers allowed some room for interpretation here provided a reasonable amount of good knowledge was displayed. Nowadays the concept is commonly linked to the notion of 'discretionary effort' to indicate a situation in

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which employees willingly go the extra mile or work beyond contract because they want to rather than having to. Stronger answers went further in teasing out different types of engagement. Credit for inventing the term 'employee engagement' is often given to the American psychologist WA Khan (1990) who conceived of it as being made up of two distinct elements:

- * emotional engagement, a situation in which employees have strong emotional ties to their managers and organisations, feel their opinions count and feel that their managers have an interest in their development.
- * cognitive engagement, a situation in which employees know what is expected of them, understand their purpose or mission, are given opportunities to excel and grow, and are given information about how to improve their progress.

Truss et al (2006) then added the third element, described as 'physical engagement' defined as a situation in which the employee is prepared to 'go the extra mile' and demonstrate discretionary effort in the service of his/her organisation.

In order to score well here candidates needed to explain the concept in a readily understandable way, and this may lead them to use organisational examples. There was then plenty of scope in part two for candidates to develop their own points. However, it was important that some reference was made to their own organisations and that they argued the case well. It was not enough just to make suggestions.

A good justification also had to be provided, particularly in respect of the intervention they consider has 'the most to offer'.

Question C5

Learning outcome: 4

This question was intended to test knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 4 (contribute to the promotion of flexible working and effective change management in organisations).

There was very considerable scope here for candidates to develop and justify their own arguments. The more compelling well-justified and well-informed, the higher the mark. Most took a more nuanced approach than that set out in the e-mail, arguing that the term 'flexible working' covers a wide variety of arrangements, many of which (for example, part-time jobs, home-working, term-time hours, flexitime, freelancing, multi-skilling etc) are very beneficial to some people who prefer not to be tied to a full-time permanent job. However, there are also examples of flexible working which can indeed be criticised for the reasons this conference speaker gives. It is not though so black and white. It is entirely possible for very good employers to operate flexible working arrangements that do not lead to low pay, insecurity or inequality.

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The most common weakness here was a tendency for candidates to avoid the nub of the question – about insecurity and inequality – focusing entirely on positive aspects of flexible working or simply avoiding any mention of forms such as zero hours contracts altogether. Some appeared to be writing out prepared answers to questions about flexible working on past 7LMP papers rather than addressing this particular question directly.

Question C6

Learning outcome: 4

This question was also intended to test knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 4: Understand and contribute to the promotion of flexible working and effective change management in organisations.

Structural change involves altering the make-up of jobs in an organisation (that is: job duties, responsibilities etc) and also often reporting lines. In most organisations (universities apparently being a major exception) the trend in recent years has been to reduce the extent of management hierarchies by taking out layers and creating leaner, more efficient organisation structures. This can be a difficult process which people resist, particularly when redundancies are an outcome. It makes sense to handle it thoughtfully, to involve employees in decision-making and to communicate extensively, but at the end of the day a management team can force through a programme of structural change and hence achieve their prime objective. This is not the case with cultural change which is concerned with changing 'hearts and minds'. Changing attitudes and values are also often a part of this process. This is not in the gift of managers and it tends to take a good deal longer to achieve in practice. The more profound the change, the more challenging the process will be. It requires effective communication, a compelling case which people will support, targeted reward and HRD interventions and often the appointment of 'change agents' to promote the process. The stronger candidates sailed through here making these kinds of points. Weaker answers tended to be brief, without offering credible justification to back up the points being made.

Answers to part two varied considerably. Candidates had a choice about which two pieces of advice they want to give. Weaker answers tended simply to set out a model (Kotter, Lewin etc) in a descriptive fashion. This was not enough. To do well here, while potentially quite general in nature, the advice had to be appropriate to the situation described in the question stem and justified thoughtfully.

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Question D7

Learning outcome: 5

This question was intended to test knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 5 (Critically discuss the aims and objectives of the HRM and HRD functions in organisations and how these are met in practice).

The term 'employee voice' has been defined in a variety of ways over the years. It is sometimes used as an alternative to 'employee involvement' and 'employee participation' and sometimes rather more broadly to cover a wide variety of ways in which employees make their voices heard, both individually and collectively, in a workplace context. The CIPD paper cited in the question starts with the following working definition which is as effective as any: *'the ability of employees to express their views, opinions, concerns and suggestions, and for these to influence decisions at work'*. Examples that are commonly given are suggestion schemes, consultation fora (representative committees or meetings open to all), newsletters which allow for opinion to be expressed, trade union activities and situations in which management decisions are made using co-determination mechanisms.

The CIPD report focuses very much on the ways in which employee voice is good for employees and not just for organisational performance, although there is of course a link between the two in that a happy workforce is likely to be more productive than one which is unhappy. The key ways relate to improved employee wellbeing and fulfilment. If people feel their voice is listened to and that they have some influence over decision-making, especially in their own areas of work, they are likely to be less stressed and much more satisfied with their work. This contributes to a sense of being valued and hence increases levels of engagement. The report also argues that employee voice should properly be seen as 'an end in itself'; an embedded feature of well-managed, respected organisations. The precise points made here were less important when marking than the persuasiveness of the arguments set out and the extent of knowledge demonstrated.

Question D8

Learning outcome: 5

This question was also intended to test knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 5 (Critically discuss the aims and objectives of the HRM and HRD functions in organisations and how these are met in practice).

Strong answers to part one included a good range of possible elements ranging from those which are essentially transactional in nature (for example, fringe benefits, staff discount schemes, additional holiday at quiet times) to those which are far more

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relational (flexible working opportunities, praise/recognition schemes, career development opportunities). There are many possibilities. Importantly these had to be components that reward people. We were not looking here for general accounts of good management / HR practice. As with the question about learning organisations earlier on this paper. We did not expect candidates to be familiar with the concept of ‘total reward’ when marking these answers. We assumed that the information provided in the question stem was all they would know. In practice, however, many of the stronger answers here demonstrated very considerable knowledge and understanding.

The second part was more challenging for some. Views differ and this reflects the reality of the situation; namely that a total reward philosophy offers more to some industries and groups of workers than it does to others. Where people tend to be primarily motivated by money (For example, sales teams and a lot of low paid jobs) the impact on recruitment and retention will generally be slight. In other lines of work where people have a wider range of motivations, there is more scope for total reward to be deployed more effectively. Stronger candidates also wrote about implementation issues here. Total reward only has the desired effect if ways are found to communicate what is on offer effectively, both to would-be and actual employees. As always, the extent and persuasiveness of the justification provided played the major part in determining marks.

Question E9

Learning outcome: 7

This question was intended to test knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 7 (promote professionalism and an ethical approach to HRM and HRD in organisations).

It soon became apparent when we started marking this question that it could be interpreted in two different ways. The intention when setting this question was that candidates should discuss ways in which organisations with a good reputation benefits in terms of this helping it to meet HR objectives (ie: attracting, retaining and engaging staff). But many candidates quite legitimately took it to be about ways in which organisations benefit from implementing ethical HR practices. A decision was thus taken to allow for both interpretations here and to mark both types of answer equally.

Strong answers that adopted the first interpretation explained how organisations which have strong and positive reputations are better placed than their rivals to attract and retain staff. People want to work for such organisations because of what they hope to learn and because the positive corporate reputation “rubs off” onto the workforce. Having worked successfully for such an organisation for a period impresses others and looks good on a subsequent CV. This makes people more employable. People are also attracted to and tend to stay with organisations that they perceive will provide them with job security. This is more likely to be the case in an organisation with a good reputation than one which is less reputable. More generally people are more likely to have a sense

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of pride working for a highly reputable organisation and are more likely both to demonstrate high levels of employee engagement and to be effective brand ambassadors. The wider the range of relevant points that are made and effectively justified, the higher the mark should be.

By contrast, under the second interpretation of the question the better answers gave full accounts of the way that organisations can build a positive reputation for the way that they do HRM, committing to high standards of ethics and professionalism in their practices, treating people in a humanistic way rather than a mechanistic fashion, involving them in decision-making, encouraging work-life balance etc.

On part two, there have been a number of examples in the press in recent years of situations in which a corporation's reputation has been seriously damaged by negative press stories which have an HR-related aspect. Sports Direct, Merlin, Oxfam and the BBC are all prominent examples, as is Rupert Murdoch's own company, News International, which was heavily caught up in the phone hacking scandal. The key here was that candidates demonstrated understanding of the way that newspapers will happily help to tarnish a reputation if it helps to sell copy and that reputational damage is then spread via social media. Incompetence in terms of the way an HR issue is handled, or worse still, the operation of ethically questionable HR policies and practices are the main areas of risk.

Candidates had plenty of choice about how to answer the third part. Some chose to recommend a very concrete course of action such as establishing and following a code of ethics, while others wrote more generally about professionalism or the need for more vigilance. Either approach was fine provided the answer was well-informed and effectively justified with reference to their own organisations.

Question E10

Learning outcome: 7

This question was also intended to test knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 7 (promote professionalism and an ethical approach to HRM and HRD in organisations).

This was by some margin the least chosen question on the whole paper. In the other sections there was a reasonably good balance between the numbers choosing each of the options. Not so here. Most avoided this. As a result those who did attempt it tended to be well informed and to pick up plenty of marks.

As this topic area does not feature specifically in the 7LMP standards, we did not expect any detailed or specialist knowledge when marking.

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The jist of 'institutional discrimination' is explained in the question stem and is of course very widely written about in the media. There was thus no reason why most candidates would not have been able to have a good stab at this. Strong answers to part onedemonstrated that the standard used to judge institutional sexism and racism is outcomes rather than any deliberate action on the part of managers or employees. If pay is unequal, a group under-represented etc this is considered to amount to institutional bias.

For part two there were all kinds of points that could be made. Stronger answers demonstrated familiarity with the common contemporary calls for transparency in relevant decision-making, equality auditing and different forms of positive action. While the question is deliberately not focused on 'your organisation', candidates were welcome to draw on their own observations and experiences here. What mattered in terms of marks was that effective examples were provided to illustrate the key points.

Conclusion

Overall then this was a very good set of papers. The questions were, I think, just as challenging as those on past papers, yet the good majority of students coped very well with them. At the upper end the extent to which candidates are able to write a lot, including a wide range of really interesting, original and well-informed arguments is really most impressive. Well done everybody.

Stephen Taylor
Chief examiner