### SESSION PLAN

**COURSE:** ABE Level 4 Principles of HR

**ELEMENT:** Element 2 – Approaches to HR management

## **LEARNING OUTCOME 2**

**Explain how different perspectives of human resource management impact on the organisation and workforce (Weighting 15%)**

2.1 Differentiate between definitions of human resource management and personnel

2.2 Explain ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ approaches to human resource management

2.3 Summarise the role of key stakeholders in delivering a strategic approach to HR

**NUMBER OF SESSIONS:** Three - approximately 11 hours in total

**SESSION TOPICS:** Session 1: The difference between human resource management and personnel

Session 2: ‘Hard’ and ‘soft’ approaches to human resource management

Session 3: The role of key stakeholders in delivering a strategic approach to HR

**Note to tutors: This is the recommended session plan for Learning Outcome 2 of Element 2 of the ABE L4 Principles of HR unit. You should follow the plan, using the resources (referenced as ‘slides’ here) and activities provided. It is important to enhance all sessions with local examples and case studies, involving the learners ACTIVELY wherever possible.**

### SESSION 1: The difference between human resource management and personnel (3-4 hours)

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| **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative Assessment** |
| Introduction to session and learning outcomes | Use file: **RESOURCE Element 2 LO2 The impact of different perspectives of human resource management on the organisation and workforce.pptx**  Learning outcome 2  Assessment criteria 2.1 | 1-4 |  |  |
| What is human resource management (HRM)? | Question for general class discussion: what do you understand by the term Human Resource Management (HRM)? |  | Participate in class discussion, sharing their ideas about what is meant by the term Human Resource Management. |  |
| Share and talk through definition: ‘*a strategic, integrated and coherent approach to the employment, development and well-being of the people working in organisations*'.  Explain the evolution of HRM, ***placing appropriate emphasis on the national context.*** | 5-6 | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Set group activity on the essential skills and knowledge of a HR practitioner. |  | In groups, list the skills and knowledge needed by a HR practitioner to deliver effective HRM in a contemporary business organisation.  Learners share their lists with the class. | Activity 1 – Element 2 LO2 AC2.1 – Skills and knowledge needed to deliver HRM |
| Question for general class discussion: will different skills and knowledge be needed in the next decade? |  | Participate in class discussion, sharing their ideas about how skills and knowledge requirements are likely to change. |  |
| What is strategic HRM? | Introduce the concept of SHRM. Share and talk through CIPDs (2016) definition:  *'an approach to managing human resources that supports long-term business goals and outcomes with a strategic framework'.* | 7 | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Set pairs activity to explore the differences between HRM and SHRM. |  | In pairs, read the journal article  ‘HRM is strategic at Shanghai Shuozhi Close ties with top management ensure that personnel policies meet company needs’, Human Resource Management International Digest, Vol. 21 Issue 1 pp. 23 – 25. (This article will be available from your online student resources.)  What do you consider to be the difference between HRM and Strategic HRM?  Points likely to be:   * SHRM has a strong link to organisational objectives * Longer term-focus * Motivation through enriching from the work experience * Measuring the value added by HR activities | Activity 2 – Element 2 LO2 AC2.1 – The difference between HRM and SHRM |
| The impact of organisation type on HRM | Explain how organisation type influences HRM in several ways. Link back to ‘best fit’ concept. |  | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Set group activity to explore impact of different organisation types.  HRM inside sectors |  | In allocated groups, identify how the organisational type shapes the approach to HRM.  Group one: SME  Group two: Public Sector  Group three: Voluntary sector  Group four: Multi-national corporation  Present findings to class. | Activity 3 – Element 2 LO2 AC2.1 – The impact of organisation type on HRM |
| Tutor to emphasise:  HRM differs widely from organisation to organisation, sector to sector. Some of the key themes found across the different sectors.  Private sector: HR Specialists, divisions or departments with HR directors or managers having a higher profile. However, HR generalist may be used in smaller businesses. HR tasks may be linked together with payroll and training. May use external consultants. Trend is a reduced role for collective bargaining. More business focused.  Public sector: HR has a large function with management clout. Directors are prominent. Wide range of tasks with adherence to legal compliance. Old functions still prevalent. Public accountability and transparency expected. Trade union presence brings collective bargaining and national pay-scales still survive.  Voluntary sector: Wide differences and attitudes to HRM across the sector. HR has a peripheral role – more administrative with less opportunity to be strategic. Evidence of high standards of practice and similarities to the public sector.  MNC - Managing human resources in an international context is more complex than in a domestic set up because of the many differences between headquarters and the subsidiaries. The staffing policies of MNCs are determined by their approach to globalization. MNCs with an ethnocentric approach fill all top management positions with home country nationals to ensure that home country practices are replicated in subsidiaries. Companies that adopt a polycentric approach to globalization, fill all senior management positions with local nationals to ensure maximum adaptation to local conditions. |  | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Contemporary themes in HRM | Explain that over the last decade, HRM thinking and practice have evolved in significant new directions as HR agendas have shifted to take account of development in the business environment. | 8 | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Question for general class discussion: what are the key themes in HRM?  Prompt the class to reflect on PESTLE analysis completed in Element 1. |  | Participate in class discussion, sharing their ideas about key themes in HRM. |  |
| Likely themes include:   * Impact of new technologies * Organisations becoming more flexible and agile * Increased demand for work-life balance * Rise of ethical awareness |  | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Set pairs activity to explore the significance of employees as an organisational resource. |  | In pairs, learners should consider an organisation they are both familiar with and consider the following questions:   * How far is it true to state that employees are becoming ‘increasingly critical’ to its operations? * How far is it true to state that would-be employees are becoming increasingly scarce? | Activity 4 – Element 2 LO2 AC2.1 – The significance of employees as a human resource |
| Set Activity 1 from Chapter 2 of the Study Guide as a **homework** activity. |  | Set Activity 1 from Chapter 2 of the Study Guide as a homework activity.  Research global job sites for HR-related job titles.  Compare the different job titles, and use the information in the job description and person specification to compare the scope and nature of the jobs. Summarise any common themes. |  |
| Review of session and learning outcomes | Question for general class discussion: what are your key learning points from today? |  | Participate in class discussion, sharing learning points. |  |

### SESSION 2: ‘Hard’ and ‘soft’ approaches to human resource management (2-3 hours)

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| **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative assessment** |
| Introduction to session and learning outcomes | Use file: **RESOURCE Element 2 LO2 The impact of different perspectives of human resource management on the organisation and workforce.pptx** Learning outcome 2  Assessment criteria 2.2 | 9 |  |  |
| ‘Hard’ and ‘soft’ HRM | Explain the concepts of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ HRM. | 10-11 | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Set group activity to complete the ‘Hard or soft’ scenarios.  The groups share answers and class explore any differences.  Answers:   1. Hard 2. Hard 3. Hard / sort – depending on the focus of the training. Hard – focus on making judgements. Soft – focus on development 4. Soft 5. Soft 6. Soft 7. Hard |  | In groups, complete the ‘Hard or soft’ scenarios. | Activity 5 – Element 2 LO2 AC2.2 – The difference between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ HRM |
| Question for general class discussion: as an employee, would you prefer a ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ approach to HRM, and why? |  | Participate in class discussion, sharing their preferences and reasons why. |  |
| HR delivery methods | Question for general class discussion: earlier on in the unit we looked at the traditional and ‘three box’ models of HR delivery. What are the key features of each? | 12 | Participate in class discussion, sharing their knowledge and understanding. |  |
| Explain that there are many ways in which HR can be delivered and the HR function may look very different from one organisation to another. |  | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Question for general class discussion: thinking about the organisations that you know, how is HR delivered? |  | Participate in class discussion, sharing their experiences of HR delivery. |  |
| Explain the following delivery models:   * Shared-service centres * Outsourcing * HR consultancy |  | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Set group activity to explore the potential advantages and disadvantages of the delivery models. |  | In groups, identify the potential advantages and disadvantages of shared-service centres, outsourcing and HR consultancy.  Learners share their conclusions with the class. | Activity 6 – Element 2 LO2 AC2.2 – HR delivery methods: advantages and disadvantages |
| The resource-based view of strategic HR | Explain the resource-based view of strategic HR. Highlight that the RBV emphasises that investment in employees – through activities such as training and development – increases their value to the organisation. | 13 | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Question for general class discussion: how does the RBV fit with the ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ approaches to HRM? |  | Participate in class discussion, sharing their ideas about how the RBV approach fits with ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ approaches to HRM. |  |
| Ethical and responsible approaches to HR | Explain that HR has a primary responsibility for championing approaches that concern the dignity and rights of employees.  Explain key aspects such as:   * Equality of opportunity * Dignity at work * Work-life balance * Health and well-being | 14 | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Question for general class discussion: can you give any examples of when HR might face an ethical issue or dilemma? |  | Participate in class discussion, sharing examples of ethical issues and dilemmas faced by HR. |  |
| Set pairs activity to complete the ‘Responsible HR’ case study.   1. Clive needs to challenge John. May be appropriate to set time aside when John returns from holiday. Find out what specific concerns John has about Annie – use questioning skills to determine the performance issues from John’s perspective. Challenge any unfounded biases. Give John own assessment of Annie’s performance based on evidence – appraisal information, own observations, etc. Explain to John the potential consequences of dismissing Annie in the way that he suggests. 2. Potentially a claim from Annie of unfair dismissal. Wider impact on the organisation – morale of other employees, reputation as an employer. Also, Clive likely to feel undermined. |  | In pairs, complete the ‘Responsible HR’ case study. | Activity 7 – Element 2 LO2 AC2.2 – Responsible HR |
| Review of session and learning outcomes | As a **homework activity**: what are your key learning points from today? |  | Complete homework activity, noting key learning points. | Activity 8 – Element 2 LO2 AC2.2 – Key learning points |

### SESSION 3: The role of key stakeholders in delivering a strategic approach to HR (3-4 hours)

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| **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative assessment** |
| Introduction to session and learning outcomes | Use file: **RESOURCE Element 2 LO2 The impact of different perspectives of human resource management on the organisation and workforce.pptx**  Learning outcome 2  Assessment criteria 2.3 | 15 |  |  |
| Key stakeholders | Question for general class discussion: what is a stakeholder? | 16 | Participate in class discussion, sharing their ideas of what is meant by stakeholder. |  |
| Explain that stakeholders can be internal or external to the organisation. |  | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Set Activity 5 from Chapter 2 of the Study Guide as a classroom activity.  Facilitate the feedback, highlighting similarities and differences. Compare stakeholders with those listed on the slide. |  | In pairs, complete Activity 5 from Chapter 2 of the Study Guide – stakeholder analysis  Share the highlights from the analysis with the class. |  |
| The vital role of line managers | Explain that the class will now explore one stakeholder that has an especially important relationship with HR – the line manager. | 17-18 | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Question for general class discussion: what are the people management responsibilities of line managers?  With the help of the class, make a list.  Explain that on a day to day basis it is the line manager that brings HR policies ‘to life’. The line manager: enables HR policies and practices   * enables HR policies and practices * acts upon advice or guidance from HR * controls the work flow by directing and guiding the work of others   Talk through training example. |  | Participate in class discussion, sharing their ideas about the people responsibilities of managers. |  |
| Explain that the relationship between the HR function and the line manager has experienced a number of changes and tensions in recent years. Changes in the delivery of HR has moved responsibility for many core HR activities, such as recruitment, objective setting and performance management, from HR to line managers. |  | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Question for general class discussion: in your experience, which people-related issues are the most common source of tension between line managers and the HR function? Why do these tensions occur? |  | Participate in class discussion, sharing their experiences of tensions between HR and line managers. |  |
| The importance of managing relationships with stakeholders | Explain that the dynamics of organisational life means that all professionals must be able to work with one another. HR professionals are no exception to this and must work with colleagues within their function as well as individuals and groups from other backgrounds. Relationships matter because business doesn't happen in ideas and plans, it happens between people. | 19-20 | Students to listen, take notes and participate in class discussions throughout, as appropriate. |  |
| Set group activity to list the reasons why managing relationships with stakeholders is important.  Likely reasons:   * enables managers and employees to do business better by being more closely involved with tackling people problems and issues * helps to prevent problems developing too far, by spotting them early * brings in good ideas from outside the business * achieves more consistency of people management |  | In groups, list the reasons why managing relationships with stakeholders is important. | Activity 9 – Element 2 LO2 AC2.3 – Reasons to manage stakeholder relationships |
| Set pairs activity to complete the ‘Building relationships’ case study |  | In pairs, complete the ‘Building relationships’ case study | Activity 10 – Element 2 LO2 AC2.3 – Building relationships |
| Review of session and learning outcomes | Question for general class discussion: what are your key learning points from today? |  | Participate in class discussion, sharing learning points. |  |