### SESSION PLAN

**COURSE:** ABE Level 6 Strategic HRM

**ELEMENT:** Element 2 – The global context of SHRM

## **LEARNING OUTCOME 2**

**Assess the role of the HR function in providing frameworks and practices to improve organisational and employee performance (Weighting 20%)**

2.1 Evaluate the factors impacting on the changing role of HR in organisations

2.2 Assess the impact of perception and expectations on the delivery of, and contribution made by, SHRM

2.3 Assess the main frameworks and models developed to analyse the role of the HR function

2.4 Analyse the suitability and implications of different structural arrangements for HR service delivery across a range of organisational contexts

**NUMBER OF SESSIONS:** Four - approximately twelve to sixteen hours in total, plus self-study.

**SESSION TOPICS:** Session 1: The factors impacting on the changing role of HR in organisations  
Session 2: The impact of perception and expectations on the delivery of, and contribution made by, SHRM

Session 3: The main frameworks and models developed to analyse the role of the HR function

Session 4: The suitability and implications of different structural arrangements for HR service delivery across a range of organisational contexts

**Note to tutors: This is the recommended session plan for learning outcome 1, element 1 of the ABE L6 Strategic HRM 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 factors impacting on the changing role of HR in organisations**

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| **Duration** | **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative Assessment** |
| 3-4 hours total | Introduction to session and learning outcomes | **Use 6USHR Tutor Presentation E2.pptx.**  Discuss the content of LO2, focusing on assessment criterion 2.1 which is the subject of this first session. | 1-4 | Learners to listen and make initial notes as tutor begins to introduce the topic and introduce the lesson. |  |
|  | Evolution of HR | Human Resources as a term has become better known in the last few decades.  Historically referred to as “Personnel Management” or just “Personnel”, they were primarily tasked with hiring, payroll, and disciplinary actions.  As competition, regulations and new technologies were introduced over time, organisations had to shift their focus to managing their most important asset: their employees.  Today, many companies practice Human Resources Management, which encompasses several additional roles. | 5 | **Class discussion:** learners to recap and revise (verbally as a group) what the differences were between personnel and human resource management from the previous session. Shout out what you think are some of the core elements of HR today. |  |
|  | Evolution of HR | Learners to watch video and have **Class discussion**.  Bring out the key points, about how technology has changed so much in HR. The use of Glassdoor for example allows people to leave reviews about employers and what it was like to work there. Also, Booking.com now use a Nudge notification service to employees as well direct via text message to their mobile phones. | 6 | Watch video with class and complete the **Class discussion**. |  |
|  | Historical trends in HR | * The Welfare Officer * The Administrator or ‘Clerk of Works’ * The Negotiator * The Legal Expert   Facilitate **Activity 1**. | 7 | Ask learners to make notes, but also ask them if these job roles and job titles are still relevant today. Generally, they should say no.  Complete **Activity 1**. | **6USHR LO2 E2**  **Activity 1 -**  **Forces of HR** |
|  | Employee engagement | Employee engagement is a workplace approach that results in the right conditions for all staff members that allows them to give their best each day, be committed to their organisations goals and values and be motivated to contribute to organisational success.  Employee engagement is about employees understanding their role in a company, them being fully aware of all aspects of the business, and how the business is progressing in order to meet goals. It is also about inclusion and being part of a team.  Employee engagement: Start a **Class discussion** on employee engagement; do learners think it is good for staff to be engaged in their employment? Why? | 8 | Take part in **Class discussion**. |  |
|  | Lack of engagement | A 2015 survey conducted by Gallup estimated that 31.7% of employees were engaged in their workplace. That leaves nearly 70% of their workforce disengaged. What impact do you think that has on an organisation’s success?  There is a direct correlation between engaged employees and their productivity and success. Employees who are happier are more likely to actively participate towards achieving the company’s goals.  See example of terrible employee engagement and facilitate **Class discussion**. | 9 | Continue **Class discussion**: what does poor engagement do to a business and why? |  |
|  | Changing the context of HR | Six of the key ways that HR has changed:   * Diversity and the impact to the workforce * Role of HR in organisational culture * Work life balance * Training * Recruitment * Retention and Succession Planning   Facilitate a **Class discussion** on mega trends. | 10-14 | Learners to listen and take notes.  **Class discussion** around the mega trends and any experiences that the learners have been through or witnessed too.  Form a discussion around the question on slide and divide class by opinion. |  |
|  | Summary | Recap the main learning points from the session.  Summarise session content. |  | Tutor to answer last questions |  |

**SESSION 2: The impact of perception and expectations on the delivery of, and contribution made by, SHRM**

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| **Duration** | **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative Assessment** |
| 3-4 hours total | Introduction to session and learning outcomes | **Use 6USHR Tutor Presentation E2.pptx.**  This session will be looking at assessment criterion 2.2 | 15 | Learners to listen and make notes about introduction to the session. |  |
|  | Stakeholders | What is a stakeholder in a business context? Start with a **Class discussion**.  A stakeholder is defined as a person, group or organisation that has interest or concern in an organisation.  Stakeholders are essentially any entity that may be affected by organisation's actions, objectives, and policies.  Examples of organisational stakeholders include: investors, directors, employees, neighbouring companies, government agencies, shareholders, suppliers, and unions. | 16 | **Class discussion** on what ‘stakeholder’ means. |  |
|  | Types of stakeholders | Two types:  1. Internal  2. External  **Class discussion** on types of stakeholders.  Internal stakeholders include those who have an active role inside the organisation: management, employees, investors, etc. External stakeholders are those who are impacted by an organisation from the outside: customers, sister organisations, the economy, etc. | 17 | **Class discussion** to identify types of internal and external stakeholders. |  |
|  | Interests and expectations | The table breaks down the key stakeholders in an organisation and their main interests and expectations.  Asks learners if they can think of another three stakeholders and what their expectations would be. **Class discussion**.  Facilitate **Activity 2**. | 18 | **Class discussion** on stakeholders.  Complete **Activity 2**. | **6USHR LO2 E2**  **Activity 2**  **Stakeholder expectations** |
|  | Balancing tensions in delivery of HR | HR managers have a unique position in an organisation. They often interface with everyone from the CEO to front-line employees.  HR has a role in balancing tensions in an organisation. Just as a Project Manager handles stakeholder issues on a large construction project, HR managers would mediate between internal stakeholders at an organisation.  The real tension is between the needs of management (hard HRM), controlling costs and the needs of the employee (soft HRM) - and being a bridge between the two. This is often seen as the core tensions between the ‘human’ and the ‘resources’.  Facilitate **Class discussion**. | 19-20 | **Class discussion**: examples of times where HR has had to step in and control/eliminate tension. |  |
|  | Employee relations | Employee relations has replaced industrial relations as the term for defining the relationship between employers and employees.  A positive climate of employee relations - with high levels of employee involvement, commitment and engagement - can improve business outcomes as well as contribute to employees' well-being.  **Class discussion** on local employee relations. | 21 | **Class discussion** about whether employee relations are strong or weak in organisations where they have worked. |  |
|  | Summary | Summarise session content. |  | Tutor to answer any last questions |  |

**SESSION 3: The main frameworks and models developed to analyse the role of the HR function**

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| **Duration** | **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative Assessment** |
| 3-4 hours total | Introduction to session and learning outcomes | **Use 6USHR Tutor Presentation E2.pptx.**  This session will cover material relevant to assessment criterion 2.3. | 22 | Learner to listen and make notes as tutor introduces the session. |  |
|  | Legge | Legge identifies many strategies which HRM practitioners may follow to improve their status and gain more power and influence.  Class discussion on which of Legge’s strategies would work best in an organisation they have worked in - and why. | 23 | Contribute to the **Class discussion.** |  |
|  | Conformist innovation strategy | HRM managers must conform to the dominant values in the organisation where they work. They must simply satisfy the requirements of senior management. This can be very restrictive for proactive managers who might want to introduce new policies (in reward management, for example). The implications are that managers:   * Need to be seen to positively accommodate change * Tend to be positively responsive rather than innovative * Learn to ‘survive’ in what may well be a rather autocratic work environment.   Conformists are very much about achieving organisational objectives - cost reduction, increase productivity and conflict resolution. | 24 | Learners to listen and make notes. |  |
|  | Deviant strategy | HRM practitioners have a different set of values from senior management. For example, these could be social values such as concern about increasing workplace stress, equality in the workplace and changing the status quo. Implementing such policies is costlier than conforming with business values. The shift away from ‘welfare’ personnel management towards a ‘harder’ HR approach will reduce this tendency. The realities for HR are now:   * A focus on employee development * Interest in the work life balance * Independent professionals. | 25 | Learners to listen and make notes. |  |
|  | Problem solving strategy | This means that HRM specialists are seen chiefly as problem solvers for senior management. The employer uses them as a ‘sounding board’ for employee complaints. Most of the most unpopular measures (e.g. changes in reward structures) are associated with ‘personnel’ in the views of the employees.  **Class discussion**: which strategy would work best? | 26 | Learners to listen and make notes.  **Class discussion** – which strategy do you think would work best in their current or previous organisations. |  |
|  | Tactical/ strategic model | Storey’s tactical model (1992).  On one side of the framework, the work is strategic, but on the other, it is tactical and one where people are involved on a day to day basis.  Storey goes onto categorise HR employees into four distinct groups, depending on what level at which they operate.  Ranging from ‘Handmaidens’ to Change Makers. Whilst the model seems accurate in the sense that some individuals will be more strategic than others, some of the terminology is considerably out of date.  This model is outdated and has been improved upon. | 27 |  |  |
|  | HR champion model | Ulrich updates upon the original Storey theory, especially regarding the terminology such as ‘Handmaiden’.  Ulrich saw this development as a step towards more strategic human resource management, especially if you consider when it was put together – 1998.  At this point, the idea and concept of SHRM was growing in popularity, and the developments made here are a direct reflection of this change, in the sense it should be a function which is part of the long-term vision and planning of where the business needs to be.  Facilitate **Activity 3**. | 28-29 | Learners to listen and make notes.  Complete **Activity 3**. | **6USHR LO2 E2**  **Activity 3 -**  **Ulrich HR champion model** |
|  | Tyson and Fell | Take learners through this as the three types of HR activities. Refer to it as the building site of HR. This name comes from the fact that HR may resemble a building site with the various types of jobs that you may expect in that environment.  **Class discussion**: ask learners if they have ever thought of HR as a building site – answer will probably be no. Take learners though the table and ask if there are any other activities on a building site that could be in this model. | 30 | Contribute to **Class discussion**. |  |
|  | Summary | Summarise session content. |  | Any last questions |  |

**SESSION 4: The suitability and implications of different structural arrangements for HR service delivery across a range of organisational contexts**

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| **Duration** | **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative Assessment** |
| 3-4 hours total | Introduction to session and learning outcomes | **Use 6USHR Tutor Presentation E2.pptx.**  This session addresses assessment criterion 2.4. | 31 | Tutor to introduce next section, learners to listen and make notes. |  |
|  | Three legged functional design | There are various common structures used in organisations:  Three-Legged Functional Design (Ulrich, 1997):   * Shared Services * Business Partners * Centres of Expertise   (**Class discussion** on possible fourth ‘leg’.) | 32 | Learners to listen and take notes.  **Class discussion**: could there be a fourth leg needed – if they could add one, what would it be and why? |  |
|  | Functional structure | One of the most commonly used structures. Employees are grouped according to the type of work that they do. A typical structure for an engineering company is shown on the slide.  The implication for this and HR is that this structure groups people together according to what they do, and this can result in a rather limited view of the overall organisation. **Class discussion**. | 33 | Learners to listen take notes.  **Class discussion** on advantages and disadvantages of this model type. |  |
|  | Geography structure | A divisional structure is based around divisions of the organisation – maybe geographical or maybe different product groups. A divisional structure based on product groups might look something like what is shown on the slide.  This overcomes the difficulty of people remaining focused on what they do, and not seeing the contribution to the wider performance of the organisation. However, there is the possibility that people have less expert support from those who are more senior within their function, which can result in poorer performance.  Facilitate two **Class discussions**. | 34 | Learners to listen take notes.  **Class discussion** - advantages and disadvantages of this model.  **Class discussion** - consider how a global business might achieve an appropriate structure. |  |
|  | Implications of Structure on HR | The table shows the HR structures that we have covered in this part of module so far along with the implications, how HR is often delivered, the suitability in business type and any barriers which might exist. The key to the way in which HR is set up will most probably take a congruency/best fit approach as no two organisations are the same.  Run through the slide with learners and add in appropriate examples. | 35 | Ask learners to image there was a tall structure with lots of layers and levels, what would this do to decision making any why? Discuss how some of the global forces such as globalisation, the changing nature of work, the gig economy might have an impacted HR globally. |  |
|  | Outsourcing | Outsourcing is a process of transferring some, or all, of an in-house team to an external provider. HR outsourcing is predominantly utilised by either small organisations or larger organisations may outsource certain tasks or projects to HR consultancies.  Typically, the activities outsourced by HR are recruitment, payroll, pensions, training, legal services, information systems, company car leases, compensation and benefits.  Facilitate **Activity 4**. | 36 | Learners to listen and make notes.  Complete **Activity 4**. | **6USHR LO2 E2**  **Activity 4 -**  **Outsourcing HR** |
|  | Benefits of outsourcing | The greatest benefits of outsourcing these transactional and specialist function for smaller organisations or for project work are:   * Access to specialist knowledge without overhead, which may lead to significant savings on an ongoing basis * Achieving higher levels of service quality and efficiency, access to greater levels of benchmarking * However, it does mean that often, focus and attention is taken away from where it needs to remain, so things such as customer service can slip.   **Class discussion** on outsourced HR. | 37 | **Class discussion**. Can you name any businesses that have outsourced HR? What are the benefits and drawbacks? |  |
|  | Role of Senior management | Without the influence of senior managers, strategic human resource management may not be seen as being an important part of a business function otherwise.  Here are some examples of the role this group of employees have on SHRM;   * Bringing HR policies to life * Enabling strategic learning solutions to happen * Help identify learning needs and ensure that learning is strategically aligned to the future scope of the business * Act upon the advice of the HR departments and HR Directors/Head of HR * Directing and controlling the workforce * Inspiring front-line managers with policies, practices and opportunities that will make a difference to employees. | 38 | Start a class discussion on whether line managers should be more involved with HR activities or more left alone? Ask learners to explore their answer in more detail. | **6USHR LO2 E2**  **Activity 5 -**  **Structural choices** |
|  | Summary | Summarise session content. |  | Tutor to answer last questions |  |