### SESSION PLAN

**COURSE:** ABE Level 6 Strategic HRM

**ELEMENT:** Element 5 – Contemporary issues affecting SHRM

## **LEARNING OUTCOME 5**

**Critically evaluate contemporary perspectives and debates on SHRM in order to develop insights into the changing nature of the profession (Weighting 20%)**

5.1 Review and evaluate contemporary research and debates

5.2 Analyse a range of contemporary issues affecting the practice of SHRM, justifying potential solutions and approaches

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

**SESSION TOPICS:** Session 1: Contemporary research and debates  
Session 2: Contemporary issues affecting the practice of SHRM, justifying potential solutions and approaches

**Note to tutors: This is the recommended session plan for learning outcome 5, element 5 for ABE L6 Strategic HRM. 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: Contemporary research and debates**

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| **Duration** | **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative Assessment** |
| 5-6 hours total | Introduction to session and learning outcomes | Introduce the learning outcome and assessment criterion 5.1.  **Use 6USHR Tutor Presentation E5.pptx** | 1-4 | Students to listen and make notes |  |
|  | Recent development in professional research | In many organisations, HR has successfully made the transition from ‘back-room to board-room’ and is regarded as a key player with the ability to influence the direction of the business and to be considered when key decisions are made.  What HR professionals can achieve in practice depends on how they are perceived within the organisation. Looking at the various ‘personnel’ roles functions have been traditionally service providers, that do not form part of the core of a company…but times have changed.  Brief **Activity 1**. |  | Complete **Activity 1** as homework. | **6USHR LO5 E5**  **Activity 1**  **Homework activity** |
|  | Changes in the nature of work | This slide shows some of the contemporary developments in the world of work.  **Class discussion**: ask students to think of anything else on top of these that they believe are important to them | 5 | Contribute to the **Class discussion**. |  |
|  | Demographics | The slide indicates that because of a changing demographic spread, there is a change in attitude towards the use of trade unions and collectivism to individualism.  **Class discussion**: ask students how much awareness they have of trade unions and any views they care to share. | 6-8 | **Class discussion** and video about Shipyards in Scotland (UK). |  |
|  | The four types of professional action | There are four types of activity action carried out by an HR professional:   1. Strategic. The forward thinking, planning, dynamic HR Professional that seeks to gain advantage by being proactive rather than reactive. 2. Executive. The HR professional operates at a senior level in many organisations. Organisations that value the input of the HR professional are likely to have an HR presence at board level. 3. Administrative. It is essential that the HR professional keeps accurate records to aid planning in the organisation, and to meet legal requirements. By doing this, it maintains the strategic position of the HR department, so is still deemed an important feature. 4. Advisor. In some situations, the HR professional will get involved in solving the issues. In other situations the HR professional will simply give advice. The HR professional needs to be well informed, must be able to communicate clearly and must be trusted to give sensible, accurate and valuable advice. This will encompass strategic issues as well.   **Class discussion**: what other activities do they believe are appropriate? Brief **Activity 2**. | 9 | Contribute to the **Class discussion**.  Complete **Activity 2**.  Once this is complete ask students to think about whether or not HR professionalism the same in all parts of the world or if different countries have their own priority tasks/behaviours. | **6USHR LO5 E5 Activity 2 -**  **Challenges to HR Professionalism** |
|  | Key requirements of the HR professional | Key requirements for the HR profession to be taken seriously within an organisation:   * Efficiency. * Service delivery * Trust and reliability.   Allow student to continue the discussion from the previous slide if they wish, but the slide may help students with taking notes and reconfirming ideas. | 10 |  |  |
|  | Changing attitude towards work | If we know what it takes to be professional in HR, what activities must we keep pace with? The changing attitude of work is one.  Ask students to watch the video link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JPlTEnUO4E> and start a **Class discussion** - ask if what they just witnessed was a step too far? Would they do that? | 11 | Watch the video and contribute to the **Class discussion**. |  |
|  | Change in demographics | According to research by insurance giant Aviva, it is expected that a third of workers will account for those aged 50 and over. In the UK the equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate based on age.  Another CIPD report which looked at the effects of an ageing workforce, showed that HR professionals may need to look at their health and wellbeing benefits and move towards a more flexible working approach (CIPD, 2015). Improved health care benefit provision (for firms that can afford it) may encourage employees to stay with the company for a longer period. | 12 | Students to listen and make notes, contributing to the discussion if asked. |  |
|  | Globalisation | Technology advances have affected HR in several ways. HR needs to be proficient in hiring overseas and become more attuned with other cultures and ways of working.  Communication with employees abroad will need to be aided by technology which may require additional investment from the business. HR teams may also need to adapt employee contracts to enable greater mobility for their workforce.  **Class discussion** - ask students to consider how globalisation has impacted on HR.  Issues could include the use of technology, travel, cross border workers, reduction of trade barriers. | 13 | Contribute to the **Class discussion**. |  |
|  | Employment law | Laws and politics constantly impact companies and any policy related changes impact the HR department and how they deal with staff.  HR professionals need to know legislation and any legal changes that may impact colleagues. | 14 | Students to listen and make notes. |  |
|  | Summary | Summarise key points from the session. |  | Tutor to answer any last questions |  |

**SESSION 2: Contemporary issues affecting the practice of SHRM, justifying potential solutions and approaches**

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| **Duration** | **Topic** | **Tutor Activity** | **Slides** | **Learner Activity** | **Formative Assessment** |
| 5-6 hours total | Introduction to session and learning outcomes | This session covers assessment criterion 5.2.  **Use 6USHR Tutor Presentation E5.pptx** | 15 | Students to listen and make notes |  |
|  | Issues affecting the practice of SHRM | HR professionals need to keep up-to-date. They must be well versed in the policies and practices of the organisation but also the wider business, legal and cultural environment.  The table shows some core issues that can impact SHRM and the delivery of their knowledge. There are many more factors that could be listed but we could go on forever.  **Culture**  Where a company has several very different business sectors, it would need to define the scope of operations for each sector. In addition, it must be recognised that the company’s culture will influence the mission along with several other elements.  **Equal Opportunities**  This allows a business to be a business which adds value, promotes a strong culture and projects a positive image, all helping with the recruitment process and naturally, the deployment of HR strategy.  Complete **Activity 3**. | 16-19 | Complete **Activity 3**. | **6USHR E5 LO5**  **Activity 3 - HR Trends** |
|  |  | **Downsizing**  A result of strategic change or changes in the business environment. Downsizing can be seen through redundancy and job loss.  There are three main downsizing strategies:  1. Workforce reduction  2. Organisational redesign  3 Systematic strategies  **Mergers**  There was talk in early 2017 of a merger between Unilever and Kraft Heinz for around £115 billion. There are lots of advantages, but sadly job losses are often the result of them. Ask students if they can name any mergers in the country in which they reside. The Kraft Unilever one is fairly international, but there could be more useful local examples.  Discuss more examples and ask learners to add their knowledge in a **Class discussion**. What experience do they have for each of these? |  | Contribute to the **Class discussion**. | **6USHR E5 LO5 Activity 4 - Mergers and acquisitions** |
|  | Effects of migration and immigration on recruitment | Here emphasise that in some countries, people moving to other regions will not be good for skill shortages and that it may make recruitment very difficult indeed.  **Class discussion**: ask students to consider migration and immigration in their home country. How has it impacted recruitment? |  | Contribute to the **Class discussion**. |  |
|  | Local Minorities | A diverse workforce can greatly impact how a company performs and how effective a team is.  A diverse workforce is inclusive and made up of people with different human qualities or who belong to various cultural groups. It brings different views, adds value, shows that a company is dynamic in its approach and means there is a greater chance of strategic HR success.  The key to this section is to get students to think about how minority workers are seen in their home countries and if anything in particular is done to help promote their presence in the workplace. Facilitate a **Class discussion** on the topic.  Brief **Activity 5**. | 20-21 | Contribute to the **Class discussion**.  Complete **Activity 5**. | **6USHR E5 LO5 Activity 5 - HR Policies – Best Fit and Best Practice** |
|  | Summary | Summarise the session, learning outcome 5 and the unit as a whole.  Arrange revision sessions with the class.  Brief assignment requirements. |  | Last questions answered by tutor. |  |