



Mark Scheme - Assignment

Level 6 Strategic HRM

General overview – word count

The recommended minimum word count is 3,500 words. Anything above +10% (3,850 words) will not be marked. Appendices and reference list are excluded from the word count and will not be marked.

Context

Choose a company (or context) with which you are familiar:

- It can be a real company or a fictional company (a large national / multinational / global company)
- The company must be an organisation for which operations management is applicable, for example a manufacturing company or a retail organisation.

Provide one page (up to 200 words) with background information on your chosen company:

- Name of the organisation
- Size of organisation
- Main markets where it operates (geographical locations)
- Examples of products and services
- Key competitors

Task 1 – 25 marks - 850 words

Critically evaluate the internal and external factors impacting on the HR function and its strategy within your chosen organisation.

Task	Indicative content		Total
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical trends and influences (evolution) of HR as a response to environmental changes and expectations • Impact of the changing nature of work and the workforce • Situational factors, e.g. characteristics of local workforce and labour market, organisational culture and social context and their impact on the delivery of SHRM and the achievement of its objectives • The forces shaping the HR agenda both internally and externally and how these impact on choices made • The implications of organisation structure on HR strategy and practice 		25
Level	Mark	Descriptor	
	0	No rewardable material	
1	1-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of, limited, or incomplete knowledge and understanding of the internal and external factors impacting on the HR function and its strategy within the chosen organisation • Lack of ability to evaluate situational factors • Lack of ability to evaluate the forces shaping the HR agenda • Lack of ability to present a balanced evaluation 	
2	10-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate knowledge and understanding of the internal and external factors impacting on the HR function and its strategy within the chosen organisation • Adequate ability to evaluate situational factors • Adequate ability to evaluate the forces shaping the HR agenda • Adequate ability to present a balanced evaluation 	
3	15-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound knowledge and understanding of the internal and external factors impacting on the HR function and its strategy within the chosen organisation • Sound ability to evaluate situational factors • Sound ability to evaluate the forces shaping the HR agenda • Sound ability to present a balanced evaluation 	
4	19-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive knowledge and understanding of the internal and external factors impacting on the HR function and its strategy within the chosen organisation • Extensive ability to evaluate situational factors • Extensive ability to evaluate the forces shaping the HR agenda • Extensive ability to present a balanced evaluation 	

Task 2 – 25 marks - 850 words

Analyse how HR management supports strategic alignment and the achievement of organisational success within your chosen organisation. Use appropriate theory to support your answer.

Task	Indicative content		Total
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of strategy: strategic intent, strategic capabilities and competitive advantage; assessing the implications for the HR function of each of these • Developments in SHRM and definitions: to include those focused on differences between personal management, HRM and SHRM, and those which focus on SHRM as a concept linking management and deployment of individuals • Features, aims and characteristics of SHRM and how each impact on organisational success • Features including planning and focus on longer-term, matching activities to strategies, the concept of a resource to be managed for competitive advantage • Characteristics: hard vs soft HRM (Storey 1989), integrated process (Walker 1992) • Aims: contribution to organisational success, focus on longer term, balancing of hard and soft elements • Relationship with strategy and competitive advantage: types of strategy, approaches to strategy, evaluation of role of vision and mission (all applied with the HR context) • Vertical and horizontal alignment of HR and organisational strategy: meaning and process, benefits of, impact on HR activities and focus, conflicts • Fit with business strategy and implications/issues associated with different business strategies • Linking HR with competitive strategies (Porter 1985), Schuler and Jackson (1987) Miles and Snow (1978) • Evidence of link between HR and organisational achievement - research evidence including Huselid (1995), West et al (2002), Purcell (2003) • Measuring the strategic contribution and value of SHRM, approaches including balanced scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 1988) and benchmarking, practicalities of measuring (what and how to measures), applicability to different settings • Human capital management and reporting: drivers for, benefits, barriers to, impact on HR practices and approaches • Models: universalist best practice (Pfeffer, 2005) vs contingency (best fit) Harvard model, Ulrich's HR champion model (1997) and updated model (2005), resource-based view of the firm (Barney 1991) • Benefits and critiques of each application 		25
Level	Mark	Descriptor	
	0	No rewardable material	
1	1-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of strategic alignment and achievement of organisational success supported by HR management; there may be gaps or omissions • Uses limited theory with some development • Response is not related to the chosen organisation 	
2	10-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of strategic alignment and achievement of organisational success supported by HR management with few omissions • Uses adequate theory with some development • The proposed analysis lacks clarity and order 	
3	15-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates appropriate knowledge and understanding of strategic alignment and achievement of organisational success supported by HR management with few omissions • Uses a good amount of theory references with sound development • The response is presented in a logical order and provides a clear analysis 	
4	19-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates cohesive and thorough knowledge and understanding of strategic alignment and achievement of organisational success supported by HR management; with no gaps or omissions 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses an extensive amount of theory references with in-depth development • Analysis is provided in detail and supported by extended reasoning
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Task 3– 25 marks - – 850 words

Recommend approaches to talent acquisition and retention within your chosen organisation.

Task	Indicative content		Total
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourcing strategies: HR planning, retention and talent management; contribution, best practice • Concepts of employer of choice, employer branding (Price 2004) and employee value propositions (EVP); characteristics of each, practices associated with, benefits and issues • Employee involvement and participation strategies including employee voice strategies • Employee engagement: meaning of, and types of engagement (intellectual, affective, social; Alfes 2010), benefits, drivers of engagement, implications for HR 		25
Level	Mark	Descriptor	
	0	No rewardable material	
1	1-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of, limited, or incomplete knowledge and understanding of approaches to talent acquisition and retention • Lack of understanding of employee involvement and engagement • Lack of ability to present balanced recommendations 	
2	10-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate knowledge and understanding of approaches to talent acquisition and retention • Adequate understanding of employee involvement and engagement • Adequate ability to present balanced recommendations 	
3	15-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound knowledge and understanding of approaches to talent acquisition and retention • Sound understanding of employee involvement and engagement • Sound ability to present balanced recommendations 	
4	19-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive knowledge and understanding of approaches to talent acquisition and retention • Extensive understanding of employee involvement and engagement • Extensive ability to present balanced recommendations 	

Task 4 – 25 marks – 850 words

Discuss the role of HR management in supporting the organisation to achieve its objectives for employees in respect of diversity, cultural management, equal opportunities and work-life balance.

Task	Indicative content		Total
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourcing strategies • Agreeing and implementing policies • Employee communications and engagement • Performance management • Alignment across the organisation • Recruitment and selection 		25
Level	Mark	Descriptor	
	0	No rewardable material	
1	1-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of, limited, or incomplete knowledge and understanding of the role of HR management in supporting the organisation to achieve its objectives for employees • Lack of ability to link to diversity, cultural management, equal opportunities and work-life balance • Lack of ability to present a balanced discussion 	
2	10-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate knowledge and understanding of the role of HR management in supporting the organisation to achieve its objectives for employees • Adequate ability to link to diversity, cultural management, equal opportunities and work-life balance • Adequate ability to present a balanced discussion 	
3	15-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound knowledge and understanding of the role of HR management in supporting the organisation to achieve its objectives for employees • Extensive ability to link to diversity, cultural management, equal opportunities and work-life balance • Extensive ability to present a balanced discussion 	
4	19-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive knowledge and understanding of the role of HR management in supporting the organisation to achieve its objectives for employees • Excellent ability to link to diversity, cultural management, equal opportunities and work-life balance • Excellent ability to present a balanced discussion 	