



The Association of Business Executives

NQF

Personnel Administration

Mark Scheme

Unit Title: Personnel Administration

Unit Code: 4.01 PA

Session: June 2015

Question 1

HRM provides a service to the organisation in which it is operating.

(a) Explain how the culture of the organisation affects the work of the HRM department. **(15 marks)**

Three marks for each of the following points that are explained well:

- In an organisation where there is a strong emphasis on something, e.g. customer service, the work of the HR department will be very focused on ensuring that is achieved.
- If the culture is one of being very tough – firing under performers – the HR department will be very involved in performance management
- If the culture is one where HR is not valued, then the work of HR will be very much focused on administration
- If there is a strong emphasis on welfare then the work of the HR department will be focused on this aspect.
- If there is a lot of focus on commission and bonuses then the work of HR will be very focused on pay.

Maximum Marks for (a)

15 marks

(b) Describe the services that the HR function provides to other functions in the organisation.

(10 marks)

Two marks for each of the following:

- HR is a service function, so to all functions provides a service of advice and support
- Needs to ensure that the right people are in place – so provides a recruitment service to all functions
- Needs to ensure that the employees have effective skills – so provides a development service to all functions
- Needs to address problems that occur, so can be a mediator for problems between functions
- Needs to ensure that policies and procedures fit with the objectives of the organisation and the individual functions.

Maximum Marks for (b)

10 marks

Total Maximum Marks for Q1

25 marks

Question 2

Your organisation is focusing strongly on customer service this year and has asked you to put together a training programme for all employees. Your objective is to improve their customer service skills. Outline the training programme that you would provide.

(25 marks)

The following should be included:

- A realistic timescale for the training programme (2 marks)
- The training programme broken down into sections that flow logically (2 marks)
- A range of activities in the training programme, which takes into consideration the different ways in which people learn (3 marks)

The content should include items such as:

- Who is the customer? (2 marks)
- An explanation of what customer service is (2 marks)
- An evaluation of current abilities to provide customer service (2 marks)
- A reflection on what works well and what does not work well (2 marks)
- Ways in which to improve customer service (2 marks)
- How to deal with difficult customers (2 marks)
- A debate about what customer service actually is (2 marks)
- Should we meet customer expectations, or should we exceed expectations? (2 marks)

- Ending with an action plan setting out what will now be done differently (2 marks)

Total Maximum Marks for Q2

25 marks

Question 3

It is important that we continue to learn because everyone can develop their skills, and improve their current performance.

- (a) Explain why continuous professional development is important. (10 marks)**

Two marks for each of the following:

- To achieve promotion
- To ensure that our organisation is competitive
- To keep any professional accreditation
- To keep up to date with changes (e.g. the law)
- To stimulate an interest in the work that we do

Maximum Marks for (a)

10 marks

- (b) Outline the competencies and skills which are required by a Personnel Administrator.(10 marks)**

Two marks for each of the following:

- Time management
- Effective administration skills
- Empathy
- Team working
- Good communication skills

Maximum Marks for (b)

10 marks

- (c) Outline a personal development plan for yourself that includes two appropriate activities. (5 marks)**

The format used for the personal development plan shows an understanding of what a PDP should look like (3 marks)

Realistic content on the PDP (2 marks)

Maximum Marks for (c)

5 marks

Total Maximum Marks for Q3

25 marks

Question 4

You work for a retail organisation which has decided to open a new store. There will be a need to recruit new employees to work in this store.

- (a) Describe the planning that would need to take place to ensure that the right numbers of employees with the right skills were recruited to work in the store. (10 marks)**

Two marks for each of the following:

- Look at other stores and see what staff they have.
- A need to look at the budget to see how many employees the organisation can afford to recruit
- Think about any specific services being offered by this store that will require specialist skills
- Think about the future plans for the store – are certain skills needed to meet those plans?
- Use this information to identify how many people with different skills should be recruited.

Maximum Marks for (a)

10 marks

(b) Describe the recruitment process that would need to be followed to ensure that the best people were recruited to work in the store. **(15 marks)**

Two marks for each step of the following process (leaves one mark – award that for a good process that flows effectively):

- Need to write job descriptions
- Need to write person specifications
- Need to decide where to advertise
- Need to decide on the appropriate selection process
- Need to shortlist
- Carry out the selection process
- Make decisions

Maximum Marks for (b)
Total Maximum Marks for Q4

15 marks
25 marks

Question 5

Sometimes there are tensions between the employer and employees, or between different groups of employees.

(a) Explain the factors that can result in poor employer-employee relationships. **(15 marks)**

Two marks for each of the following:

- The employer and employees having different objectives – for example the employer could have the objective to reduce costs, whereas employees want improved benefits
- Misinformation – the employees have misunderstood what the employer has told them
- Difficult operating environment – for example, losing a key customer which means that work becomes difficult for everyone
- Troublemakers – sometimes there are one or more employees who stir up trouble
- A rogue leader – there can sometimes be a manager who has a particular approach which upsets a lot of people
- Lack of trust
- Past problems, which suggest that the employer might do something that the employees do not like
- Problems with pay – particularly if it is perceived that the approach to pay in the organisation is not fair

Maximum Marks for (a)

15 marks

(b) Explain how information gathered in exit and pre-retirement interviews can be used to help improve employee relationships. **(10 marks)**

Two marks for each of the following

- Understanding why people want to leave the company gives an insight into grievances that other employees might have
- The information might give some insight into what other companies are paying and offering as benefits, and hence what might be attracting employees away from your company
- Pre-retirement the employee could reflect on what has changed, and debate whether the changes are good or bad
- It might help to identify what people like in the organisation
- It can help to identify if there are particular tensions between employees and a particular line manager

Maximum Marks for (b)
Total Maximum Marks for Q5

10 marks
25 marks

Question 6

Explain how effective communication in an organisation can increase the commitment and engagement of employees. In answering the question you should refer to different forms of communication. **(25 marks)**

Two marks for:

- Showing an understanding of commitment, and how this is determined amongst employees

Three marks for:

- Knowing what engagement is, and showing a reasonable understanding of what constitutes engagement

One mark for identifying a communication method and two marks for identifying why it might increase commitment and engagement:

- Newsletters – tell employees what is going on in the organisation, but it does not give the opportunity for feedback
- Intranet – a quick way of getting information to all employees, but does not work for those who do not have a computer
- Team briefings – gives the opportunity to discuss issues and ask questions, but the team leader might distort the information and might not be able to answer the questions
- Suggestion schemes – gives the opportunity for employees to share their insights into what can be improved, and can result in money being earned. However, encourages individuals to work individually rather than as a team (unless it is a team based scheme)
- Meeting with senior management – means that employees hear information from those who are creating it and can ask questions, but very time consuming for senior management
- Videos/podcasts – a way to ensure that senior management are communicating a consistent message, but there are no opportunities to ask questions
- Emails – a quick way to get information across, but very impersonal.

Total Maximum Marks for Q6

25 marks

Question 7

Your organisation has decided to run a graduate trainee scheme, and wants to recruit ten graduates in different functions across the organisation.

(a) Identify where the organisation might place the advertisement for these jobs, and recommend the best option. Give reasons to justify your choice. (Note: you are being asked for recruitment approaches, not selection methods.) **(15 marks)**

Two marks for each of the following options, and then three marks for recommending the option (and justifying the recommendation):

- Advertising in the local paper – will get local graduates interested, but only if they read the local paper. Limits the pool to people living locally.
- Advertise in local universities and colleges – targeting the place where graduates are likely to be looking for a job, but could mean an overwhelming response
- Advertise on the company website – presumes that people are tracking the company and keeping aware of what jobs they are advertising
- Advertise on a recruitment website – it is likely that those looking for jobs will have registered with a number of websites, so you will be reaching the audience you want.
- Advertise on local radio – possible that graduates listen to the radio, but limits the selection pool to those who are listening when the advertisement is played.

Best option: probably to advertise at local universities and colleges

Maximum Marks for (a)

15 marks

(b) Write an advertisement for the graduate trainee scheme. **(10 marks)**

Two marks for each of:

- Has some description of the company
- Clearly explains what the job involves
- Gives an explanation of pay and benefits
- Tells the applicant how to apply
- Written concisely, but to create an attractive advertisement

Maximum Marks for (b) **10 marks**
Total Maximum Marks for Q7 **25 marks**

Question 8

You are the Personnel Administrator at your organisation but you are now leaving the organisation and have been asked to recruit your replacement.

(a) Identify the information you would gather to determine whether an applicant would be successful in the job. **(10 marks)**

Two marks for each of the following:

- The skills and competencies that the applicant has
- Past experience in a similar role
- The qualifications that the person has
- Their responses to the interview questions – do they show an understanding of the job role
- Enthusiasm for the role – do they have a positive attitude?

Maximum Marks for (a) **10 marks**

(b) Outline the information you would need to record about each of the applicants on your computerised system. **(8 marks)**

Two marks for each of the following:

- Contact details
- Date when they were invited to interview
- Performance at interview
- Performance on any selection tests
- Decision on their recruitment

Two marks for each of the following:

- Cannot keep information about unsuccessful applicants without their permission
- Must not keep information about unsuccessful applicants for a long time with no purpose
- Consider who will have access to the information that is kept.

Maximum Marks for (b) **8 marks**

(c) Explain the factors you should consider concerning the holding of this information on the computerised system once the recruitment decision has been made. **(7 marks)**

Two marks for each of the following (up to 7 marks, if there are 3 very well explained points give the 7 marks);

- Need to store the information securely
- Should not keep the information for longer than needed
- Should file the information so that it can be used – so if another job vacancy appears then the applications can be easily accessed
- Need to be mindful of Data Protection legislation

Maximum Marks for (c) **7 marks**

Total Maximum Marks for Q8

25 marks