

Section 2 (Not based on the case study)

Answer either A or B in each section.

All answers should be justified as far as possible using appropriate theory and evidence

To communicate your answers more clearly, you may use whatever methods you wish, for example diagrams, flowcharts, bullet points, you need to provide an explanation of each.

2.1

- a) Richard Veal UK leader for Reward, Talent and Communication at Towers Watson Consultancy argues that how senior leaders communicate change is crucial for the business to succeed. 'Above all leaders need to come across as authentic to inspire the confidence and respect of the workforce'.
Critically evaluate the concept of 'authentic leadership' and the extent to which it is important to develop 'authentic leaders' in organisations.

OR

- b) i. Discuss the characteristics of emotionally intelligent leaders?
ii. Critically evaluate the HRD methods and interventions that could be used to develop effective emotionally intelligent leaders.

2.2

- a) David Macleod and Nita Clark(2009) 'Engage for Success' project found that 80% of the variation in employee engagement sits with the line manager.

Discuss the extent to which you agree with this statement. Justify your answer with reference to contemporary HRM and HRD research and debate.

OR

- b) The resource based view of the firm has attained substantial influence in HR Circles in recent years. 'It can perhaps be seen very much as today's fashion.' (Taylor, 2011)

Critically evaluate the importance of the resource based approach to the development of an HR strategy in the 21st century business environment.

2.3

- a) Critically evaluate the role HRM and HRD functions play in developing organisations as 'employers of choice'.

OR

- b) 'Extensive research shows that organisations which take care to manage the psychological contract out perform those who do not' (CIPD, 2014).

Discuss the role the HRM function plays in fostering a positive psychological contract between employer and employee?

2.4

- a) Ken Blanchard in an article for the Training Journal (July, 2013) discussed the issue of trust in organisations. 'Only one fifth of employees fully trust the organisations they work for and only 11% believe their manager shows consistency between their words and their actions.'
- i) Discuss why some managers struggle to show consistency between their words and their actions in relation to the management of people?
- ii) Critically evaluate how managers can develop high trust relationships with the people they manage?

OR

- b) Discuss the role of HRD in developing and strengthening professional practice in the leadership and management of people in organisations.

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2.1

- a) Critically evaluate the relevancy of the best-fit/best practice debate to contemporary strategic HRM.

OR

- b) In a survey of business organisations by Orion Consulting (2014). Alan Borough reported that the HR business partner roles are still 'too transactional' in nature and that they struggle to shed the administrative elements of their roles.

Critically discuss the 'Business Partner' role in delivering added value to HR operations.

2.2

- a) 'In today's uncertain context will employees continue to seek identity and self-actualisation in Maslow's terms through work, or will more basic concerns such as job safety and security take precedence?' (Holbeche, 2014. The future of engagement, CIPD).

Critically evaluate the extent to which Maslow's theory of motivation is still relevant for HR professionals seeking to increase employee motivation in the workplace.

OR

- b) Critically evaluate the role of 'employee voice' initiatives for building engagement at work.

2.3

- a) 'To enable people to move to a state where they are willing to experiment or change, to take personal risks and start moving through transition it may be necessary to increase people's propensity to trust' (Balogun and Hailey, 2014. 'Landing transformational change', CIPD).

Drawing on relevant models and theories of change, critically discuss how leaders/managers in organisations can increase people's propensity to trust?

OR

- b) Critically analyse the role of HRM professionals in supporting employees through 'radical' and complex organisational change programmes.

2.4

- a) Drawing on relevant research and literature, critically evaluate the concept that private sector organisations can more easily pursue an 'employer of choice' business strategy compared with public sector organisations.

OR

- b) The CIPD Employee Outlook Survey (Autumn 2014) shows an increasing gap between the employee engagement levels of public sector employees compared with private and not for profit sector employees.
 - i) What are the likely causes of lower engagement levels in the public sector, despite signs of economic growth in the UK?
 - ii) Critically discuss how HRM professionals could support initiatives to increase employee engagement levels in public sector organisations?

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2.1

- a) The Towers Watson Consultancy Global Workforce Survey (2014) stresses the importance of the effective communication of change by senior leaders. Drawing on your knowledge of change management theory and models, critically evaluate the role of senior leaders in managing change effectively. (LO4)

OR

- a) Assume you had to present a business case for 'agile working' in your organisation. What points would you make and why? Justify your answer using relevant literature and research. (LO4)

2.2

- a) Maslow's theory of motivation despite being over 50 years old is often cited in employee motivation strategies. Critically evaluate its relevancy and applicability to the modern workplace and business environment. (LO2)

OR

- b) Discuss the role the HRM function plays in fostering a positive psychological contract between employer and employee? (LO2)

2.3

- a) Using appropriate organisational examples, critically evaluate the concept that private sector organisations can more easily pursue high cost reward strategies to motivate employees.’ (LO6)

OR

- b) Critically discuss the ‘Business Partner’ role in delivering added value to HR operations in a large public sector organisation. (LO6)

2.4

- a) The management consultant Marcus Buckingham (2005) in his book, ‘First Break all the Rules’ stresses the importance of ‘good’ managers spending more time with their top performers than with their poor performers. Critically analyse the extent to which this approach is ethical from a HRM perspective. (LO8)

OR

- b) Critically evaluate the extent to which HR can be referred to as a professional occupation and analyse the steps HRM specialists can take to build their professional credibility. (LO8)

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2.1

- a) The Towers Watson Consultancy Global Workforce Survey (2014) stresses the importance of the effective communication of change by senior leaders. Drawing on your knowledge of contemporary change management theory and literature what advice would you give senior leaders on how to communicate change effectively? (LO4)

OR

- b) CIPD report (2014) 'Getting Smart about Agile Working' explains that more than a third of employees wanted to change their work arrangements, however fewer than half of all HR Leaders said flexible options were open to all employees. Critically evaluate the concept of 'agile working' and explain why some employers are reluctant to embrace this practice? (LO4)

2.2

- a) Choose one theory of employee motivation and critically evaluate its relevancy and applicability to the modern workplace and business environment. (LO2)

OR

- b) Assume you had to present a business case for employee engagement in your organisation. What points would you make and why? Justify your answer using relevant literature and research. (LO2)

2.3

- a) Rewarding and motivating employees who work in the public sector requires more creative solutions and strategies. Critically analyse this perspective using appropriate organisational examples to justify your argument. (LO6)

OR

- b) Critically evaluate how HRM specialists working in a small to medium business enterprise (SME) can demonstrate added value of the HR function to the business. (LO6)

2.4

- a) The management consultant Marcus Buckingham (2005) in his book, 'First Break all the Rules' stresses the importance of 'good' managers spending more time with their top performers than with their poor performers. Critically analyse from a HRM perspective the ethical issues which may arise from this scenario. (LO8)

OR

- b) Critically analyse the practical steps a HRM specialist can take to build and develop their professional credibility in the company or organisation that they work for. (LO8)