Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

Advanced Level Qualification

Leading Managing and Developing People

May 2014

29 May 2014   **09:50 – 13:00 hrs**

Time allowed – Three hours and ten minutes
(including ten minutes' reading time)

Answer Section A and five questions in Section B (one per subsection A to E).

Please write clearly and legibly.

Questions may be answered in any order.

Equal marks are allocated to each section of the paper.
Within Section B equal marks are allocated to each question.

If a question includes reference to 'your organisation', this may be interpreted as covering any organisation with which you are familiar.

The case study is not based on an actual organisation. Any similarities to known organisations are coincidental.

You will fail the examination if:

- You fail to answer five questions in Section B (one per subsection) and/or
- You achieve less than 40 per cent in either Section A or Section B.

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SECTION A – Case Study

Note: In your responses, you are allowed to improvise or add to the case study details provided below. However, the case study should not be changed or compromised in any way.

The Global Learners Trust (GLT) is a large, high profile, charitable organisation based in London, but with a network of eighty smaller offices across the world. Each year it raises several £million in the form of donations which it distributes in the form of grants to educational projects and institutions in developing countries. Established in the 1930s it can boast a long record of outstanding work which has helped many thousands of people to achieve educational goals that would otherwise have been denied to them. GLT raises 90% of its income by eliciting donations from corporations. Some of these take the form of straightforward gifts, while others are the result of employee fundraising activities encouraged by organisations as part of a wider programme of CSR (corporate social responsibility) activities.

In the past year GLT has found itself in the middle of a media storm which has recently forced the resignation of its Chief Executive Officer, a former government minister. While much of the media coverage of GLT's activities has been unfair and inaccurate, substantial reputational damage has been sustained:

- A group of high profile donors has been accused of using donations to GLT as part of a £multi-million tax avoidance scheme.

- Newspaper articles have accused GLT of spending as much on management and administration as it does on its aid projects, suggesting that 50% of donations never actually get spent in developing counties.

- Investigative reporters have uncovered examples of fraud involving the diversion of GLT funds from their intended recipients into the hands of corrupt politicians and business people in an African country.

- Criticism has been voiced about the giving of GLT grants to schools which are perceived to propagate religious intolerance and to give boys a superior education to that provided for girls.

- Some overseas–based GLT offices have been accused of appointing staff on grounds other than ability and experience. Nepotism and corrupt recruitment practices have been alleged.

GLT's board of trustees understands that the organisation can only survive and grow in the future if some significant (and perhaps painful) changes are made with some urgency:

- Major efficiency savings need to be made as a matter of priority so that no more than 20% of funds raised in the future are accounted for by administrative costs. Major re-structuring will be required in order to achieve this target.

- An outstanding, new Chief Executive must soon be appointed with the skills and experience to turn the organisation around and to start re-building its reputation.

- There needs to be far more standardisation of policy and practice across all GLT's international operations and in all its offices, including HR policy.

- Much greater financial supervision and control needs to be exercised over the activities of country-based offices in both developed countries (where funds are raised) and in developing countries (where they are spent).

In addition, the trustees have decided that the organisation needs to extend its fund-raising activities beyond Europe, Japan and North America. To that end, the growth of many highly successful businesses in South East Asia and in the Middle East is seen as providing major new opportunities.

While by no means finalised, the Trust's initial inclination is to commission an executive search agency to seek out possible candidates for the vacant Chief Executive's position in the private sector. If someone suitable can be identified, a high-profile business leader who is either based in Asia or has been in the past might well be ideal.

1. **Assume that you have been asked to advise the GLT on the appointment of its new Chief Executive. What major 'essential' attributes would you recommend were included in a person specification document? Justify your answer.**

2. **Assume that a high-profile business leader from South East Asia is appointed to lead GLT. Before taking up the post, he/she decides that over half of the GLT's international offices will have to be closed and that the remaining offices will take on regional responsibilities.**

    i. **What are the major advantages of this plan?**

    ii. **What advice would you give the new Chief Executive about how it should be implemented?**

3. **Explain why might it be difficult, in practice, to standardise Human Resource Management (HRM) and Human Resource Development (HRD) policy across all of GLT offices worldwide. Justify your answer.**

It is recommended that you spend 25% of your time on task 1, 50% on task 2 and 25% on task 3.

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SECTION B

Answer FIVE questions in this section, ONE per subsection A to E. You may include diagrams, flowcharts or bullet points to clarify and support your answers, so long as you provide an explanation of each.

A

1. According to Purcell and Hutchinson's research (2007), good Human Resource Management (HRM) in organisations is often 'negated' by 'poor first line management and weak senior management.'

    i. To what extent is it true of your experience of working in organisations? Justify your answer.

    ii. What actions can HR managers take to ensure that their efforts are not 'negated' by other managers?

OR

2. Fleetwood and Hesketh (2010) argue that while logic tells us that there is a positive link between HR activities and an organisation's subsequent performance, it is possible neither to prove the existence of such a link nor to quantify its financial significance.

    i. Citing published research studies on links between HRM and business performance, explain why Fleetwood and Hesketh's conclusions are controversial.

    ii. To what extent do you agree that no link between HRM activity and improved business performance can be proved? Justify your answer.

B

3. Some commentators argue that high levels of organisational commitment on the part of employees are not always 'functional' from a management point of view. This is particularly the case when flexible working is a requirement alongside regular and significant structural change.

    i.   Explain why relatively low commitment to an organisation may be a good thing in situations of high flexibility.

    ii.   Explain why high organisational commitment on the part of employees may be problematic when major structural changes are proposed and carried through.

    iii.   Drawing on your own experience, state to what extent you agree with the point of view expressed in the question. Justify your answer.

OR

4. Maslow's model of a 'hierarchy of needs' (1943) has been much criticised, not least by Maslow himself in his later work, but it remains very influential in management circles. Many accept that the model is helpful from an HR management perspective in the way that it identifies five distinct types of human need, all of which can be satisfied at work. They are, however, sceptical about the notion of a hierarchy.

    i.   Drawing on your own experience and that of people you know, explain how going to work and developing a career can help us to fulfil all five of the needs that Maslow identifies in his model.

    ii.   Why is there reason to cast doubt on the part of Maslow's theory which concerns progress up a hierarchy, at least in the context of work in the twenty-first century?

PLEASE TURN OVER

C

5. Employers often complain of skills gaps in the labour market. By this they mean that they often struggle to recruit and retain staff who have the skills that they require. In many cases, however, it is not higher-level, specialised or knowledge-based skills which are lacking, but more basic skills of the 'softer' variety such as the ability to communicate proficiently, customer service skills, team-building skills and the ability to resolve conflict effectively. The obvious course of action is to invest in programmes which help people to develop these softer skills, but this is more easily said than done.

    Assume that you have recently been appointed to lead the Human Resource Development (HRD) function in a customer service organisation which has identified a lack of proficiency in these soft skills as its major current training need.

    i.   What types of HRD intervention would you advise were used in order to close this 'skills gap'? Justify your answer.

    ii. How would you evaluate their success?

OR

6. It is currently very fashionable for organisations to use performance management systems which include an element of three hundred and sixty degree appraisal. This means that formal evaluations of each individual's performance are contributed by peers and subordinates as well as by managers.

    Undertake **one** of the following two tasks:

    EITHER

    i.   Your Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has recently returned from a conference at which a speaker advocated the use of three hundred and sixty degree appraisal across an organisation. She claimed that there were many advantages and few if any disadvantages. You are asked to advise managers about whether or not such a system should be introduced in your organisation. What key points would you make and why?

    OR

    ii. You have been asked to prepare a report which critically evaluates the current operation of three hundred and sixty degree appraisal in your organisation. What key points would you make and why?

D

7. Increasingly organisations permit and encourage some of their staff to work from home for all or part of the working week. This is being made possible by the spread of information and communication technologies which allow people to 'tele-commute'. The impact of these developments on the level of work-related stress that people suffer is debatable.

    i.   In what different ways do tele-commuting arrangements and associated flexible working practices tend to increase and decrease stress levels?

    ii. What advice would you give to an organisation that was looking to make tele-commuting less stressful for its staff?

OR

8. Major change management programmes invariably require managers to overcome some resistance to change on the part of employees. The response of many managers is to plan the changes in some secrecy before introducing them speedily, minimising the opportunity for effective resistance.

    i.   Some argue that resistance is not only an inevitable feature of change in organisations, but often a healthy feature too. To what extent do you agree and why?

    ii. Drawing on your own experience and on published research, explain what steps managers can take to bring about change successfully while limiting damaging resistance.

E

9. Long term environmental sustainability cannot be achieved by individuals alone, organisations are going to have to take a major role if carbon emissions are to be substantially reduced, energy consumption cut back and recycling increased.

   i.   In what ways are HR managers in the future likely to be involved in helping their organisations to meet targets in these areas of environmental sustainability?

   ii. Assume that you have been asked by your own organisation to recommend ways in which HR managers could help to improve your record in these areas. What recommendations would you make and why?

OR

10. It is often argued that UK discrimination law is deeply unethical and unfair in its scope of operation. It comes down hard on employers who discriminate against people because of some 'protected characteristics', such as sex and race, yet permits discrimination against people on other grounds such as their size, their regional accent or their hair colour.

   i.   To what extent do you agree with this view of discrimination law and why?

   ii. How might an employer that is striving to be ethical in its management develop policies and ethical codes on discrimination that protect a wider range of groups? Who should be covered and why?

END OF EXAMINATION

Leading Managing and Developing People

EXAMINER'S REPORT

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Introduction

A total of 294 candidates sat the Leading, Managing and Developing People exam in May and collectively they did very well indeed. The final pass rate was a shade over 80% which compares very favourably with the performance of other recent cohorts. There is no obvious explanation for this except for the observation that a good proportion of these candidates were sitting at centres whose students traditionally achieve higher than average final marks. There were also relatively few re-sit candidates on this occasion.

The paper seemed to cause few difficulties. Everyone appeared to understand what they were required to do and there were fewer examples than usual of candidates failing to make a reasonable attempt at the required number of questions. We were able to award a large number of merits and distinctions too, thanks to the efforts of students who proved able to write some outstanding answers.

On this occasion the papers were marked by Gail Swift, Elisabeth Wilson, Krystal Wilkinson, Andrew Hambler, Claire Roberts, Graham Perkins, Esther Park and myself.

The overall breakdown of marks was as follows, but as always, these statistics obscure the marked differences we observe between groups of candidates sitting at different centres.

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Grade	**Number**	**Percentage of total** (to 1 decimal point)
Distinction	11	3.7
Merit	71	24.1
Pass	154	52.4
Marginal fail	21	7.1
Fail	37	12.6
Total	**294**	**10.00**

Section A

Learning outcomes: 3 and 6

The case study was intended to allow students the opportunity to demonstrate that they had met learning outcome 3 (the characteristics of effective leadership and the methods used to develop leaders in organisations) and 6 (the contribution made by HRM and HRD specialists in different types of organisation). They were advised to divide their time roughly equally between 1, 2a, 2b and 3.

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Task 1

There was plenty of scope here for original answers and candidates tackled it in a variety of ways. The best answers were those that took the broader approach, focusing both on leadership skills and relevant experience, while also acknowledging the particular circumstances set out in the case. Many of the good answers better focused on the kind of qualities associated with transformational leadership, namely; charisma, determination, the ability to persuade others of a case and to inspire them, good judgement and personal resilience. In terms of experience, we were looking for demonstrable prior success in leading an international team and in generating of efficiency savings while maintaining the quality of services. The international character of the organisation calls for someone who has experience of working effectively with people from a variety of diverse cultural backgrounds, while in this case there is also a need for someone who has a high level of personal integrity. The best candidates were also keen to point out that the candidate would also need to have an ability to deal effectively with the media, as a major PR programme will have to be embarked on.

Task 2a

This was more straightforward, and the vast majority of candidates handled it well. The major points to make here simply concerned cost reduction/efficiency savings and the capacity having a smaller chain of offices gives an organisation for exercising greater levels of management control – especially financial control – over their operations. It also makes standardisation of practices more readily achievable and simplifies reporting lines. Some just focused on costs, but most saw how the two aims were achievable via a programme of organisational rationalisation.

Task 2b

Pass standard answers here needed to mention inter-cultural sensitivity and the importance of taking an entirely rational approach based on likely future business trends when determining which offices to close/merge and which to retain. A south eastern business figure might well be used to quite an autocratic corporate culture in which employee involvement in decision-making is restricted. Advice here thus needed to include the case for consultation and genuine participation where possible, for widespread and effective communication, and above all for persuasion based on a rational, economic case.

Task 3

This was straightforward for anyone with a grounding in international HRM/HRD in multi-national corporations, which a good majority of the candidates had clearly gained. It is because HRM is generally quite context-specific, being heavily influenced both by cultural and institutional variation across different countries that standardisation in any MNC is potentially problematic. The mantra 'think local, act global' was appropriate to quote here as the need is to standardise policy while permitting discretion to local managers to take account of specific issues in particular countries. There were some outstanding answers provided here, candidates taking the opportunity to justify points with examples and to make plenty of sound points about striking the balance between standardisation and local discretion.

Section B

Question A1

Learning outcome: 1

This proved to be a very popular choice of question. It related to learning outcome 1 (Major contemporary research and debates in HRM and HRD). The type of situation described in the question tends to come about because line managers have a range of priorities that are often different from those of the HR function. They tend to be more focused on short-term objectives and are reactive rather than strategic in their orientation. This makes them resistant to some HR initiatives which they sometimes see as irritating, low priority or just unnecessary. Bureaucratic requirements are a particular problem for many line managers - and for employees too. Senior managers by contrast are more strategic in their approach, but are often more concerned with maintaining and increasing profit margins or bringing about structural change than they are on people issues. These were the kind of points that the strong candidates focused on when answering part 1. The answers varied considerably, of course, with different examples being given. The quality of the justification provided was therefore key in determining the mark. And as always, not all candidates appreciate the need to justify their points clearly, even though the instruction to do so was, in this case, very clear in the question.

As far as part 2 was concerned, research suggests that a great deal can be achieved through effective training interventions, and also by HR demonstrating that they add value and are effective. The need is for both sides to accept their different perspectives and to address these constructively. The shift in many organisations to an Ulrich model with 'business partners' actively working alongside line managers may improve matters too. The best answers were also acutely aware of the need for HR managers to work with line managers on HR matters and, in particular, to involve them in the evolution of HR policy and the design of HR interventions. As soon as a seemingly remote HR function is perceived as acting to impose things, the chances of losing line manager support is greatly increased. The better candidates were well aware of this and were able to ram the point home with good examples too.

Question A2

Learning outcome: 1

This question also related to major contemporary research and debates in HRM and HRD but rather fewer candidates attempted it. Those who did tended to be students who were well-informed about the recent research that appears to find strong links between HRM practice and superior business performance. Such candidates found it easy to pick up plenty of marks here.

The key point to make in answering part 1 was that the controversy springs from the fact that so many researchers have published work over the past ten to twenty years which purports to demonstrate that the HR - business performance does exist. Some have gone further in putting a financial value on it. Hesketh and Fleetwood are thus taking a revisionist position which is contrarian in nature and which challenges the dominant view.

Part 2 was more challenging, but we were happy to reward candidates who developed a range of original arguments here, provided they were well justified. People have a wide variety of views on the question of how far a link has definitely been 'proved' at all, and of course, about whether it 'works' in all organisational settings or just some. There are plenty of studies to quote and cite that support different positions. What mattered therefore as far as marks were concerned was that a solid, well-justified argument was developed by the candidates. The major argument put in the published literature is that while correlations can be shown between high performing companies and best-practice HR, causation has not yet been restively proven. There are some grounds for arguing that effective performance leads to good HR rather than the other way round. The best candidates made points of that kind rather than simply relying on personal experience and observation when shaping their arguments.

Question B3

Learning outcomes: 2 and 4

This question related both to learning outcome 2 (motivation, commitment and engagement) and also to learning outcome 4 (Flexible working and change management). Perhaps because of its rather counter-intuitive nature and the strong interest that so many students have in the work of Abraham Maslow (see Question B4), this question was only answered by a minority of candidates. But those who attempted it tended to do quite well.

Paradoxical though it may seem there is a rich seam of research that comes out in favour of the functionality of low organisational commitment in some situations. A variety of points are made, but the most common relate to situations in which job security is low or where temporary work is all that can be offered. In such situations low commitment on the part of employees is expected. The psychological contract is formed on that basis, and this avoids dashing expectations, cynicism and distrust developing. Answers to part 1 mainly appreciated this and were rewarded well.

As far as part 2 was concerned, most candidates appreciated that the same position is sometimes taken on the question of managing change. Here high organisational commitment tends to be undesirable because it is associated with resistance to change – particularly major structural change such as outsourcing etc. Where the psychological contract is weaker and people have only a limited low expectation of job security, there is less likely to be organised and effective resistance to change.

These are highly contested ideas and some took the opportunity to voice scepticism and disagreement. That was fine from the point of view of marking provided of course that a good justification was developed. Some, very impressively, made a distinction between commitment to one's work or to one's fellow colleagues, on the one hand, and to the employing organisation on the other when answering here. Others simply agreed with the main propositions and backed this up with examples.

The poorer answers here tended not to engage fully with the question, or rather to miss the point of it. Quite a few simply wrote what they knew about organisational commitment without providing a direct answer.

Question B4

Learning outcome: 2

Throughout twenty two years of examining CIPD exam papers in various capacities I have been made very aware of the attraction that Maslow's theories have for many CIPD students. They are referenced in all manner of questions, sometimes more effectively than others. It would seem that for some students at least, any excuse to write about Maslow will be seized on with some relish. It was thus about time that a question that directly focused on his work was included in a paper, and the response was as anticipated. A large number chose to answer this question. It too, of course, related to learning outcome 2 (motivation, commitment and engagement).

Part 1 was very effectively answered on the whole, although there were some candidates who forgot the detail of the Maslow model and missed one or more levels of the hierarchy from their analysis. We had also anticipated that some students might struggle (as many psychologists do too) with the concept of self-actualisation, but in fact this was handled surprisingly well by most candidates. The five needs that Maslow identified – physiological, safety, affiliation, esteem and self-actualisation can all be met through work, particularly when someone is fortunate enough to have a job which they perceive to be socially useful as well as personally fulfilling. It was important that candidates answering this question demonstrated a reasonably full understanding of all five needs and could go on to explain how working can fulfil them. The best answers gave appropriate examples from their authors' own experience to back up their points which genuinely enlighten.

Part 2 was more challenging and proved to be a good discriminator between candidates who had thought critically about Maslow and were able to argue their case well, and those who were less confident. Most agreed that the hierarchical aspect of the model is its weak point as regards work in the twenty-first century, some pointing out that Maslow himself voiced doubts on this aspect of his own work. What mattered, however, was that a decent justification was put forward to back up the argument, and this is not difficult to do. People do, for example, leave jobs voluntarily because their psychological needs are not being met (for example, when damage to their self-esteem occurs), even when doing so may put at risk their ability to satisfy supposedly lower level needs.

Question C5

Learning outcome: 5

This related to learning outcome 5 (The aims and objectives of the HRM and HRD functions in organisations and how these are met in practice) and it was a straightforward question about the major alternative types of training intervention and basic training evaluation. It proved to be a very popular choice and most candidates passed with some ease. Quite a lot of the answers were, however, pretty basic and unoriginal, so when candidates set out a more ambitious argument they tended to be rewarded well. A sound case can be made here for the use - probably best in combination – of a wide variety of training interventions. There is a potential role for classroom-based introductory sessions, particularly using video to illustrate proficiency with examples. On-the-job training also has a big role to play as, possibly would role-playing exercises and, more generally, effective coaching and mentoring. Stronger candidates made a case for e-learning here too and generally wrote in

more detail about the precise types of learning activity they would design in order to focus on the development of more effective 'soft skills'. Some went on to argue that performance management interventions would need to be used in addition to HRD in order to ensure success. Weaker candidates, as is often the case when we ask specifically about HRD, took it to mean HRM and wrote far too generally - not answering the question directly.

Evaluation could be achieved through management observation and self-review. In the customer services area though the best way of tracking progress over time is probably through customer surveys and mystery-shopper exercises. Surveys thus need to be designed so as to focus (in part) on the particular skills that are being developed. Most candidates made strong points along these lines.

Question C6

Learning outcome: 5

This question also related to learning outcome 5 and it was phrased so that it could be answered as effectively by students who have yet to study performance management in great detail as by those who have. The focus was very much on the student's own organisation rather than on the theory or empirical evidence on 360 degree appraisal. Those who tackled this tended to do it well, putting together convincing argument whether they opted for i or ii. The major advantages are usually cited as being the quality of the performance feedback that is received (reliability and validity) and the wider positive impact that such systems can have on employee engagement. It also helps promote a mature culture in an organisation, a sense of shared purpose and one in which all opinions are valued. The negatives tend to be cost, the time consuming nature of 360 degree exercises, potential problems relating to confidentiality and conflicts of interest and the need to train so many people in providing constructive feedback. There are also serious doubts about the wisdom of using 360 degree approaches in cultures that are characterised by relatively high measures of 'power distance'. This is why it is often argued that 360 degree appraisal is a great idea, but one which is very difficult to operationalise effectively. All of these points were made by the stronger candidates, often rendered more effective with the inclusion of genuine 'own organisation' examples.

Question D7

Learning outcome: 4

This question related to learning outcome 4 (Flexible working and change management). It was chosen by a majority of students, and was the one that the examiners found to have been answered rather disappointingly. Some students struggled with the idea that home-working could be more stressful than commuting into a office and were thus less convincing on those aspects. Perhaps, in hindsight, we should have given more of a steer in the question as to the kind of points we were hoping they would develop here. By contrast, candidates tended to be much stronger and more convincing when putting the case for home-working being associated with less stress. Interestingly a good number were clearly writing from personal experience when answering this question.

The aspects of home-working or 'telecommuting' that tend to decrease stress are those which remove the need for rush-hour commuting and which make it easier for parents and

carers to juggle their home and work responsibilities. This is true of flexi-time and of many work-from-home arrangements. The extent of the de-stressing depends very much on individual circumstances. However, increased stress occurs when telecommuters feel obliged to work longer hours and deal with e-mails and mobile phone calls outside normal working hours (permeability of work-home divides) - a subject about which a great deal has been written in recent years. Additional stress can also result from isolation from work colleagues and supervisors. These things matter because excessive stress has negative outcomes for organisations in the form of absence, disengagement, unwanted turnover and reduced performance levels.

Answers to part 2 were better on the whole. The main thrust of these being a need to find ways of maximising flexibility without, to too great a degree, breaching the boundary between home and work life. Published research suggests that the boundary needs to remain relatively impermeable. This can be achieved except at times when high work loads are unavoidable if managers take care to address the issue and set rules/manage client expectations.

Question D8

Learning outcome: 4

This question also related to learning outcome 4. The main reason for resistance is that some people invariably perceive (often rightly) that they will be losers rather than winners once change is implemented. Some resist simply because they are not looking forward to the effort that tends to have to be expended as a result of major change. Finally, some resist because quite rightly they disagree with the proposed changes and believe that they will fail to meet their objectives or damage the organisation.

The key point we were looking for as far as answers to part 1 were concerned was a recognition of the idea that resistance can be good if it forces managers to rethink aspects of their change plans which are controversial or poorly judged. It can also have the effect of slowing down aspects of a change process, allowing people the time to absorb changes and develop new practices. This tends to mean that adjustments are made that improve things and may mean that change is accomplished without provoking disengagement, unwanted organisational conflict and employee turnover.

The major message which research studies reiterate again and again is the need to involve people in change, and it was important that candidates made this point in order to score the highest marks. The very best were aware of the dangers associated with pseudo-consultation and the need for genuine employee involvement. The more direct the involvement, the less resistance there will be. The old mantra 'people support what they help to create' is very true and should be heeded by managers considering to plan change secretly before implementing swiftly without involving people. Some answers here were solid, but missed the point about involvement, and indeed the whole idea that change management has a political dimension. Candidates passed if they wrote about planning change and were able to set out the stages advocated by Kotter and others in their models. But to score high marks more was needed here to demonstrate genuine depth of understanding.

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Question E9

Learning outcome: 7

This question related to learning outcome 7 (Professionalism and ethics) and it attracted a lot of candidates, most of whom managed to advance a good argument and to justify it well. Answers varied hugely and were richly justified with reference to diverse organisational practices. The emphasis, however, tended to be put on things like incentives for people to use public transport when commuting, reducing the need to commute altogether, designing work/jobs so as to be energy-efficient and taking steps itself to reduce energy use and recycle more. A good number of candidates also wrote about initiatives concerning paperless work environments or near-paperless ones. Key, however to securing high marks, was some kind of argument about the precise role that the HR function can play in promoting culture change along these lines. The best answers thus went beyond identifying the initiatives and wrote about the use of HRD, employee reward and employee involvement in encouraging the development of changed mindsets and behaviours on the part of staff.
As far as part 2 was concerned, all manner of answers were possible depending on the type of industry or organisation the candidate worked in and its current activity in this field. The fuller the answer and the more persuasive the justification, the higher the mark.

Question E10

Learning outcome: 7

This question also related to learning outcome 7. It proved rather less popular as a choice than Question E9, but those who attempted it tended to do quite well. On part 1, unsurprisingly views differed very considerably. Some argued that the protected characteristics covered in discrimination law are the right ones because those are the groups who suffer most from discrimination in practice. Others, sometimes drawing on the published research about harassment and bullying at work, argued that characteristics such as hair colour, physical appearance and accent in fact provide a quite common basis for unjust discrimination. Therefore the law operates partially and unfairly.

Part 2 was more challenging, not least because it tapped into the very thorny debate about the proper criteria for protected characteristics that should/should not be allowed to be the basis of discriminatory action/behaviour. This is a subject that employment law and business ethics specialists have argued about for decades, so we recognised when marking that it would be unreasonable to expect our candidates to come up with neat solutions in their exam answers. Instead we were really simply looking for a good, sound, pragmatic, common sense argument around the notion that all bullying and harassment is unacceptable irrespective of whether it breaches the law or not. Most managed to do this convincingly.

Conclusion

Overall then this was an impressive cohort. A good majority of students passed what was in my judgement, a pretty challenging paper, while a high proportion (over a third of the passes) did well enough to be awarded merits and distinctions. As a group this was one of the best cohorts yet to have sat the LM&DP exam and it was a pleasure to mark most of the papers. Having done so, as always, the major observation to make is that the candidates

who do best are those who are best informed about the subject. There is no other secret to doing well on this paper. Obviously time management is important in terms of maximising marks (that is, leaving enough time to do justice to all the questions) and candidates sometimes lose marks by failing to address a question fully (that is, not answering all parts of a question). Effective justification remains something that some struggle with, as - in some cases - is the need to draw on your own experience and observations in the workplace when developing arguments. But by and large these are not issues for most candidates. Nor, I am pleased to say, do we get anything like as many answers which address questions from past papers than we used to. The overall standard achieved is remarkably high and is a testament to the hard preparatory work carried out by both the tutor teams and students.

Stephen Taylor
Chief examiner