



Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

Professional Development Scheme

Specialist Personnel and Development

**Career Management and
Development**

November 2007

15 November 2007 13:50 – 16:00 hrs

Time allowed - Two hours and ten minutes
(including ten minutes' reading time).

Answer Section A and SEVEN of the ten questions in Section B.

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 company. Any similarities to known organisations are accidental.

You will fail the examination if:

- **you fail to answer seven questions in Section B and/or**
- **you achieve less than 40 per cent in any section.**

Career Management and Development

EXAMINER'S REPORT

November 2007

SECTION A – Case Study

Note: It is permissible to make assumptions by adding to the case study details given below provided the essence of the case study is neither changed nor undermined in any way by what is added.

The Galahad Housing Association (GHA) is located in the Birmingham area and operates within the independent voluntary sector. It began its activities ten years ago with the transfer of 5,000 properties from the local authority. It now owns and manages 6,000 properties and has an annual turnover of £20 million. Its mission statement is to meet the needs of the community through the provision of quality homes and services. In its latest annual report it claims to be a listening organisation that takes feedback from its constituent groups very seriously. The GHA has 500 employees located over a number of sites. 30% of the employees are over the age of 55 and 12% are over the age of 60. At present there is no identifiable career development/management strategy. A Training and Development (T&D) officer was appointed nine months ago within the small HR Department, but only on a half-time, 18.5 hours per week contract.

The current position is that:

- Appraisals take place once a year for all employees. The system was imported from the local authority. The focus is on identifying performance gaps and creating objectives to resolve them. Objectives set are not monitored.
- An annual menu-driven training calendar of short courses, run primarily by external consultants, is produced. Many of the courses were inherited from the local authority.
- The organisation will fund 100% courses leading to professional qualifications, but this is not linked to career planning or organisational goals. Employees take advantage of this generous option to satisfy personal goals.
- There is a system of internal job advertising for managerial posts via email, but this is perceived as lip service to employees and 85% of all managerial posts are filled externally.

GHA has recently been inspected by the Housing Inspectorate of the Audit Commission as part of its routine monitoring. As part of the inspection a cross section of staff were asked "How effectively is the association working towards continuous improvement and development?" The following widely held beliefs were revealed.

- Line managers are not willing to develop staff, and particularly do not engage in 'on the job' coaching.
- Appraisals are not treated seriously by line managers, who see them merely as a form filling exercise.
- The organisation does not explain the career options open to people.
- The organisation does not readily promote self-development or help people manage their careers.
- Advice on career opportunities would be appreciated.
- No opportunities exist for experiencing other areas of work within the organisation in order to broaden skills.

Career Management and Development

EXAMINER'S REPORT

November 2007

This resulted in a recommendation that the internal staff and career development processes needed to be improved. The inspectors have asked for a response with action plan.

You are the T&D officer and have been asked to produce for the GHA Board a report to address the Audit Commission recommendation

- 1. Drawing upon appropriate theoretical frameworks, how would you evaluate the current approach adopted towards career management and development within GHA?**
- 2. Identify the key career management and development issues that need to be addressed within GHA to satisfy the Audit Commission's concerns and evaluate possible resolutions.**
- 3. Develop a strategy and action plan for the next two years, indicating priorities and resource implications.**

Each task carries equal marks.

PLEASE TURN OVER

Career Management and Development

EXAMINER'S REPORT

November 2007

SECTION B

Answer SEVEN of the ten questions in this section. To communicate your answers more clearly you may use whatever methods you wish, for example diagrams, flowcharts, bullet points, so long as you provide an explanation of each.

1. Your Human Resources Director has asked you to indicate ways whereby a better work/life balance could be achieved in your own organisation. Describe and justify the main points you would make.
2. You have been asked as a career's guidance consultant to give advice to an organisation that has just announced that it is relocating its UK factory to South East Asia because labour costs are so much cheaper there. 2,500 workers will be made redundant. What advice would you give your client on the formulation and implementation of an outplacement policy?
3. Drawing upon published sources, assess the impact of organisation delayering on career paths.
4. You've been asked to give a talk to Career Management and Development (CMD) professionals. Explain the significance of UK equality legislation permitting 'positive action' for CMD professionals.
5. Summarise the main features of the concept of 'self efficacy'. How might the concept be applied to managing one's own career?
6. Drawing upon research and contemporary practice, what are the organisational implications arising out of the concept of a 'career resilient workforce'?
7. Assess the approach adopted for providing career advancement opportunities for secretarial staff in your organisation. What steps might still be taken, and why?
8. Describe the features of a career stage model that you have discovered during the course of your studies. Critically evaluate its application to your own personal circumstances.
9. A colleague has suggested to you that the concept of career anchors needs to be fundamentally changed since first developed by Edgar Schein some 25 years ago. How do you respond to him?
10. You have been approached by a qualified engineer who has recently arrived in this country from Poland. She has asked for guidance on the sources of support that she might draw on to further her career in the UK. What advice would you give, and why?

END OF EXAMINATION

Career Management and Development

EXAMINER'S REPORT

November 2007

Introduction

Only eight candidates undertook this paper, all of them coming from one centre. Five achieved a pass grade and there were three failures, thus resulting in a 62.5% pass rate, broken down as follows

November 2007		
Grade	Number	Percentage of total (to 1 decimal point)
Distinction	0	0
Merit	0	0
Pass	5	62.5%
Marginal fail	0	0
Fail	3	37.5%
Total	8	100

The figures shown are simply calculations based on the number of candidates sitting the examination in November 2007, whether for the first or a subsequent time, and are for interest only. They are not to be confused with the statistics produced by CIPD headquarters, which are based on the performance of candidates sitting the examination for the first time. It is from these figures that the national average pass rates are calculated.

All of the marks were clustered within the 40% - 60% band. The sample size was too small to draw any meaningful statistical conclusions, although I did observe that all of the candidates attempted Section B question 8, all but one of the rest attempted questions 1 and 9 whereas question 2 was the least popular with only two responses. Similarly no real insights can be derived from a detailed review of candidates' answers. The following are my general comments on the paper and answers received.

Section A

This is a straightforward scenario, designed to enable candidates to demonstrate their range of knowledge and understanding about career management and development issues.

Task 1

This asks candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of overarching theoretical frameworks which will enable them to anchor their analysis. There are a number in the literature including that of Pemberton and Herriot. The better candidates did attempt to draw upon frameworks - not all of them appropriate.

Career Management and Development

EXAMINER'S REPORT

November 2007

Task 2

This asks them to identify key issues and suggest possible ways forward. The issues are clearly signalled in the text. It was expected that the better candidates would be able to draw upon recommended practice suggestions from a variety of sources. For this small group not many sources were presented, but overall there were some thoughtful and convincing answers.

Task 3

This asks for a strategy and action plan over the next two years. Again this should be relatively straightforward and emerge from the recommendations. The time scale enables candidates to prioritise their recommendations, and to deal with process issues also. Although there are no specified budgetary restrictions, it would be expected that candidates would not propose approaches that are too ambitious, given the low start point from which the organisation is coming. There were some good answers to this.

There were two failures from candidates (35% and 44%) with the rest of the marks ranging from 54% to 64%

Section B

Question 1

Candidates had a range of sources that they could have drawn upon including a (then) DfEE report of 2000 that specifically deals with the issue. None of them were familiar with this report.

Question 2

This is an ongoing issue affecting a broad cross-section of the UK economy. Advice on outplacement is accordingly a central theme for CM&D and prepared candidates should have been able to provide a coherent set of guidelines that take into account the sensitivities of the situation.

Question 3

Concepts such as the 'protean career' emerged in the 1990s on the back of business process re-engineering and delayering/downsizing initiatives in the corporate world. There has been much written on the career development implications of delayering over the last decade.

Career Management and Development

EXAMINER'S REPORT

November 2007

Question 4

Professionals in the field should be fully aware of the opportunities afforded for the career development of disadvantaged groups of Positive Action programmes and other associated initiatives, and be able to cite a number of examples. Similarly they should be aware of the distinction between positive action and positive discrimination.

Question 5

This question is asking candidates to demonstrate semantic knowledge about Bandura's concept of 'self-efficacy', and then apply it to themselves. There have been a number of research articles in the career management literature that have discussed the career management implications in terms of personal goal setting. I noted that a number of candidates who attempted this question used the term (slogan) "success breeds success" without demonstrating any understanding of the underlying concept!!

Question 6

The notion of a 'career resilient workforce' to reflect the need for individuals to take ownership of the career development has been very influential following the article in Harvard Business review by Waterman, Waterman and Collard in the early 1990s. Sadly those who attempted this question had very little understanding of the construct.

Question 7

There have been a number of studies indicating that secretarial staff do not consider themselves to have a career path, and this is reflected in organisational practice. But it is central to the ethos of CM&D that all staff are encouraged to think of career possibilities and opportunities. Personal development plans would be a start!!

Question 8

There are a number of career stage models to draw from. Levinson, Schein, Super etc - a useful summary is to be found in Baruch (op cit.) pp48-55. Of those candidates who attempted the question the framework of super was the most popular - and the older students quite appropriately felt it was an inadequate reflection of the career stages they were going through.

Question 9

On the whole the better candidates were familiar in broad terms with the concept of career anchors, how they had changed over time, and some even incorporated the perspective of Baruch. .

Career Management and Development

EXAMINER'S REPORT

November 2007

Question 10

It can be anticipated that this will become an increasingly common phenomenon, with possible issues of language, and also the perceived sexism in the UK to female engineers despite efforts by professional engineering associations to overcome this. I was expecting a temptation in some candidates – based on past answers - to deflect the issue and not consider themselves to be a source of support!! I didn't detect this in the papers this time round, although the support was very sketchy!!

John Walton

Examiner