



Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

Professional Development Scheme

Generalist Personnel and Development

Learning and Development

November 2007

7 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.**

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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.

A hospital trust has been struggling to improve its performance and its organisational effectiveness. It has been hampered in the past by its hierarchical structure, bureaucratic management and ineffective leadership at all levels. It has also had a divisive, inward-looking culture with, for example, many doctors tending to look down on generalist managers while failing to see that they themselves, despite their degrees in clinical subjects, often have much to learn about the effective management of budgets and people.

Leadership skills at senior management level have been particularly poor, but the Trust's new chief executive officer has begun a process of radical transformation to make the Trust more outward-looking, with improved levels of employee engagement and of internal and external customer service. Management and the provision of specialist services including human resource (HR) management and development have been streamlined, using assessment centres to help determine suitability for new or changed roles. This has led to the recruitment of new staff as many former managers and professionals failed to gain re-employment in the downsized Trust. A new performance management process currently being established has as its key features creative ways of rewarding good performance, clear measures for activity, and an emphasis on behaviours that will ensure across the Trust well-managed service delivery provided by trained and motivated people.

The Trust's reorganised HR department now employs eight HR professionals, four of them new to the Trust and indeed to the National Health Service. In addition it has a new HR director, brought in from the commercial sector. In the past, HR was seen in the Trust as no more than the guardian of personnel procedures and the organiser of recruitment exercises. Now, the HR director is determined that the department will become a true business partner, ultimately skilled enough to sell its professional services to external organisations as well as to internal customers. He believes that HR has a particularly vital role to play in helping to build a new culture across the Trust.

The learning and development (L&D) function used to be the 'Cinderella' of the HR department. However there is now a new L&D manager in post, who will be reporting to and working closely with the HR Director. Together they aim to ensure that L&D plays a major part in aiding the transformation of the HR department and of the Trust more widely.

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You are the new L&D manager. You and the HR Director have been discussing the kind of L&D activity that should be carried out within the HR Department and in the Trust more widely. Drawing on research and contemporary practice as well as on the case study data, produce a draft report for the HR Director in which you:

1. Suggest and provide a rationale for an overall strategic L&D goal or goals and related key L&D targets for the next two or three years.
2. Produce an L&D action plan for the coming twelve months, linked to these L&D goals and targets. Its activities must be well-sequenced, value-adding, feasible and affordable.

You should spend around 30% of your time on task 1, and 70% on task 2.

PLEASE TURN OVER

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SECTION B

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

1. Assess what business-related benefits can be achieved by using internal coaches, making use in your answer of one or more examples from reported contemporary practice.
2. Identify some important skills that your organisation will need for the future and justify how learning and development (L&D) staff could help and encourage management to start to tackle that need now.
3. Respond helpfully to a colleague from another organisation who has sent you the following email:

"We've invested a lot in our learning resource centre which we set up 18 months ago. It's open all hours and very well equipped. But most of our employees don't make much use of the resources available there – CDs, books, videos and so on. I'm wondering if we should continue with the centre. What would you advise, and why?"

4. The human resource (HR) profession is increasingly being urged to practise more evidence-based management.

What practical steps could you take to ensure that your own L&D work has a strong base of evidence to support it, and why should you take them?

5. You are a human resource development consultant, and are in discussion with the HR director of a chain of retail stores. He tells you that the store sales assistants are loyal and hard-working but that many are poor at customer service. He wants you to provide an exciting, motivational company-wide training programme that will "sprinkle them all with magic dust" to transform customer service across the chain. What response will you give to this request, and why?
6. A further education (FE) college, like most in the FE sector, is struggling to provide the required 'demand-led' system in the face of a big increase in student numbers, lack of skilled tutors in some key educational areas, high staff turnover and a general strain on resources.

As the college's first HR manager, what kind of L&D activity would you propose for the college in order to improve this situation, and why?

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7. Assess whether L&D activity in your organisation is aligned with wider HR strategic goals, identifying reasons for its high or low level of alignment.
8. You are planning a short awareness-raising course for an organisation's front line managers on 'The vital role of front line managers in developing people'. What does research suggest should be some of the main topics for the course, and why?
9. Provide some practical suggestions for a colleague working in a medium-sized single site organisation who has emailed you as follows:

"Most of our middle managers have been here for years and are slow to innovate. They don't share their knowledge about the business with others or encourage their teams to produce or share new ideas. Currently the business is doing well, so there's nothing to shake them out of their complacency. Any ideas about what I could do to improve their so-called 'knowledge management'?"

10. An L&D professional has been asked to present to top management her ideas on a leadership development strategy for her small but expanding organisation that operates in an unpredictable business environment.
Justify key points to make in her presentation.

END OF EXAMINATION

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Introduction

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Grade	Number	Percentage of total (to 1 decimal point)
Distinction	2	0.6%
Merit	27	8.6%
Pass	105	33.3%
Marginal Fail	33	10.5%
Fail	148	47.0%
Total	315	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.

Candidates from fifty one centres sat the examination. As usual I wish to record my thanks to the members of the expert Learning and Development (L&D) marking team who worked so hard and well to fulfil their assessment tasks. On this occasion they were Alison Davies, Deb Groves, Jane Muir, Claire Valentin and Professors Rona Beattie and Jim Stewart,

Following May's slippage to a pass rate just below 50% this November saw a far greater slippage. 64% of candidates failed in Section A, 54% in Section B. Of those who failed the exam, 76% failed in both sections of the paper; with 21% of that number falling below the basic 40% level. For a postgraduate examination many candidates showed disturbingly low standards in analytical, diagnostic and evaluative competence. Many also demonstrated little or no ability to understand and relate relevant research and contemporary practice knowledge to practical scenarios.

I have subsequently been able to identify that 44% of the candidates were resits, with only 37% of those gaining a pass. Those who have failed this time need to think carefully before attempting a resit exam and should seek their tutors' help in deciding how best to prepare for their next attempt.

In my May report I advised students to focus on six essential points if they were to have a reasonable hope of success in the L&D exam. Despite this warning, the same weaknesses recurred in November. That is:

1. Failure to use theories with care

Yet again candidates lifted standard prescriptions wholesale from text books and applied them, without any real understanding of their meaning, to far too many questions in both sections of the paper.

2. Failure to apply research and contemporary practice sensibly

Yet again candidates regularly recommended so-called 'best practice' – usually in only a few words that were quite insufficient to convey its real content and meaning – for use in scenarios for which it had no apparent relevance. To take a typical example, of what use would Human

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Resource (HR) practices employed in leading-edge, highly competitive global commercial enterprises be for a hospital trust – at least when unaccompanied by any justification to explain their choice?

Candidates also continued to show knowledge of a worryingly narrow and shallow research base, with many relying on only two sources: the Black Box studies and the CIPD's annual Learning and Development surveys. Of course both, used with sufficient grasp of their findings, can be significant and valuable sources. But often there was no evidence of such a grasp. In addition far too many seemed to think that they constitute the only body of Human Resource/Learning and Development (L&D) research that decades of scholarly endeavour across the world have produced. For a post-graduate exam, this is simply not good enough.

3. Failure to contextualise

This time, this was probably the most common of the six major weaknesses. As just one example, candidates regularly failed to even mention the terms 'hospital trust' or 'customer service' in their analysis and action plans for Section A, despite the fact that these were explicitly identified in the case as two key contextual issues.

Standard recipes, without any mention of context, abounded in Section B answers to questions involving mini-case and 'own organisation' scenarios.

4. Failure to provide an evidence base

While not such a marked weakness as those outlined above, this still featured in many of the poor scripts. Furthermore there was a marked lack of understanding shown by a very significant number of candidates of the meaning of 'evidence-based practice' as my guideline to Question B4 below will illustrate.

5. Failure to demonstrate professionalism

Yet again a majority of the weaker candidates provided little beyond the naïve and the basic in their answers. I was particularly concerned at the number who argued for L&D practitioners to 'be given a seat in the boardroom'. Seats have to be earned – they do not come as a right. And research shows that even when occupying such seats, HR and L&D professionals often do nothing to justify their tenure – so why should they retain their place at the boardroom table?

6. Failure to establish feasibility and outcomes

This was especially evident In Section A, betraying a level of ignorance that was sometimes staggering. How can a recommendation, for example, to introduce coaching wholesale across an organisation carry "no costs except time"? How can "producing strategy" take only one day? How can a management development programme that must cover all managers – including reluctant clinical managers – in a hospital trust – hope to transform attitudes and competence levels if it comprises simply a one-day workshop, or a couple of days on "Handling", "Budgets" and "Emotional Intelligence"? Why should a Trust, or any other organisation, sign up to the Investors in People process – costly, long-term and complex as it usually is – for no better reason than to "improve its public profile", all other, and in this case more value-adding likely outcomes, being ignored?

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Section A

This case study painted a familiar picture of stresses and challenges in NHS hospital Trusts. It required candidates to demonstrate a sound understanding of the L&D Standard overall, and had particularly strong links to its second and third performance indicators.

Task 1

At this early stage, before there had been any detailed assessment of needs, it would be ideal to suggest two types of goals, one related to improving the HR Department and one to improving organisational performance more widely. Related targets could tackle:

Urgent organisational needs:

- L&D activity to encourage and support employees in working effectively together in a customer-focused organisation
- L&D activity to contribute to the introduction and embedding of the new culture needed across the Trust.
- L&D activity to aid multi-disciplinary working
- L&D activity to promote flexible team working
- L&D processes to support the new performance management system
- The introduction of a leadership development strategy for the organisation and of specific initiatives to commence the leadership development process

Urgent HR department needs:

- The development of a high-performing, credible, adaptable team of professional and support staff to support the Trust's search for excellence and build and sustain effective business partnerships at all organisational levels
- HR staff collaborating to forge links with external support agencies, knowledge networks and potential customers
- An innovative team committed to the discovery and the creation of best practice, whose members would continuously improve their products, services and working processes
- A team skilled in self-directed learning and engaged in continuous personal and professional development.

It was surprising to find how few candidates understood the difference between a goal and a target, how many ignored targets altogether, and how many outlined a few actions of a generalised kind that lacked any clarity in terms of their relationship to L&D activity.

Task 2

Candidates were required to provide a plan that linked clearly to their suggested goal and targets in their first answer while also meeting the criteria set in this question. The timescale was one important determinant of feasibility. Others included the expertise and credibility of the HR professional and support staff, the scope of proposed actions and the resources they were likely to consume. Weak candidates provided few or none of such details.

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Award of a pass grade for Section A overall

A pass grade for Section A was awarded to those who:

- made at least an implicit use of some, no matter how little, research and contemporary practice
- provided some useful even if limited analysis in the first answer to justify the goals/s and targets proposed
- produced action plans that, even though not covering all the big issues, did convince as being relevant, worth investment by the business, and capable of implementation given the facts in the case.

For a merit or distinction grade candidates' answers needed more depth, better analytical and diagnostic skill, clearer and more convincing application of research and contemporary practice knowledge, and plans that responded better to the specifics of Task 2.

Section B

Question 1

This question related primarily to the L&D Standard's third knowledge indicator, since it concerned the use of coaching as an aid to performance management. The question required candidates to 'assess' benefits and to draw on contemporary practice.

Many sources of information could have been cited in answering this question. Typical of a mass of articles were 'Inside Job', by Liz Hall (*People Management*, 10 August 2006) and 'Lighting the Way' by Sam Tulip (*People Management* 14 September 2006) where the authors drew on a number of different types and sizes of organisation to demonstrate ways in which organisations are using internal coaches.

Predictably this was a popular question. Most tackled it at least adequately although there were some very weak answers that failed because of one or more of the following features:

- contained no evaluative content
- made no evident attempt to draw on relevant contemporary practice
- showed no real understanding of the coaching process
- failed to demonstrate (explicitly or implicitly) an awareness of business benefits etc. related to use of internal coaches
- focused on individual instead of on business-related benefits
- produced a list of 'benefits' that could apply to any L&D intervention instead of being explicitly about internal coaching.

It was surprising to find so many claiming that internal coaching comes cost-free. Of course it does not, and sometimes it can end up being more costly for an organisation than hiring expert, highly professional external coaches.

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Question 2

This question focused on the L&D Standard's third and fourth knowledge indicators. In so far as it concerned recruitment policy it related to the third indicator, and in so far as it related to career and management development it related to the fourth. It was a two-part and 'own organisation' question and although it was popular performance was very mixed.

Research continues to show that many organisations are aware of future needs yet are slow to respond to them. This can be because:

- those needs are not felt to be urgent enough yet to drive recruitment decisions
- it can be difficult to translate an understanding about future needs into something specific enough to act on now
- despite problems already in finding the right skills in the market place many organisations have cost constraints that inhibit upskilling.

One good approach to the question was to discuss how to help and encourage managers to assess skills change. Tamkin in the CIPD's '*Reflections*', (CIPD 2005, pp.13-16) suggested that HR staff (including L&D professionals) could help management to tackle the problem by:

- thinking about future skills in the context of the organisation's specific business environment. Is major or just incremental change in skills needed?
- Identifying the goal that is creating the need for skills change – is it innovation, quality/service improvement, cost reduction and therefore more efficiency, and so on? Identify specific skills to support that goal.
- translating these into core requirements in new recruits and in those internally promoted, as well as in staff in their current positions.
- making a clear and well evidenced case for future skill needs and their implications for developing people.

Question 3

This question focused on the L&D Standard's second knowledge indicator, dealing with the provision of a value-adding L&D function.

This was another popular question, and it was pleasing to see that most candidates tackled it thoughtfully, with many providing very well-rounded, sound advice. Most stressed the need for the colleague to establish the facts before deciding on an appropriate prescription – training course or otherwise. Some added, appropriately, that the problem described is not an uncommon one, especially in the relatively early stages of a centre's development.

The main causes for the low usage of a learning resource centre have been identified in the CIPD's 2005 annual *Training and Development Survey* as (Mayo, *Reflections*, 2005, CIPD, p19):

- The purpose and intended outcomes of a centre have not been clearly communicated throughout the organisation.
- The establishment of a centre has not been the result of any systematic and reliable identification of need; it lacks a convincing business case.

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- Management support for a centre is lacking because managers have not had adequate training in the centre's business purpose and value, or in how to ensure that employees make good use of its resources.
- Likewise managers often lack an incentive, built into the performance management process, for them to encourage and support employees in using a centre.
- A centre is being used as a stand-alone means of learning instead of being integrated within a blended learning approach.
- There has not been any monitoring or evaluation of outcomes from a centre. (In this case, for example, why had it taken so long to identify problems)?

Question 4

This two-part question focused on the L&D Standard's tenth knowledge indicator, concerning the development of L&D practitioners' expertise, professionalism and credibility. It reflected a vital issue for all PDS students, as well as for the HR profession more widely. It was therefore worrying to see how few chose to answer it, and how many of those who did tackle it fared so badly.

In an article in *People Management* (28 September 2006) by Pfeffer and Sutton entitled 'A matter of fact' the authors provided the following advice:

- **Use data to identify where the greatest improvement opportunities are.** This will help the organisation to understand what their real, as distinct from their assumed, problems are and what is causing them.
- **Know what the literature says** about HR practices and use that knowledge to design more effective ways of doing things.
- **Run experiments and gather information on how well things are working**, building up a spirit of inquiry and learning, and a commitment to gathering data and doing the necessary analysis to make decisions based on fact. The authors contrast this approach with acting on hunches, or "... on belief, ideology, casual benchmarking, what they want or hope for, what they have done in the past, what they seem to be good or experienced in doing" (*ibid*, p26).
- **Have a commitment to acting upon such data** in order to design more effective L&D systems and processes and to ensure that those that already exist do no harm to those who use them or are affected by their use.
- **Develop the right mindset** - embracing learning and enquiry and tolerating failure - your own as well as that of others. The authors gave the organisational example of kidney dialysis services operator DaVita here. It has a culture that allows employees the freedom to ask difficult questions, and to try things that may or may not work. When its senior executives are faced with questions to which they don't know the answers they admit this openly and then seek to find them by uncovering and analysing relevant problems.

Of course it was not necessary to be familiar with that article to gain a pass – simply to show some understanding of the basic principles that evidence-based management involves. The few good answers:

- showed awareness of the fact that evidence-based practice goes far beyond 'evaluation of training'
- demonstrated a sound practical as well as theoretical understanding of the issues in the question

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- related particularly well to the candidate's own organisational or personal context and to the nature of their current L&D activity
- while suggesting some steps, also showed awareness of the difficulty of achieving evidence-based management when so many sources purport to offer 'evidence' while in reality suffering from some inherent bias. (Note, for example, the selectivity behind a government's choice of reports that will support its policies or proposals on controversial subjects or discredit the views of those opposed to them, or by some top managements whose organisations are under fire for alleged unethical activity).

Question 5

This question focused on the L&D Standard's seventh knowledge indicator, being about diagnosis of training needs and placing all training in its organisational context in order to ensure that it achieves positive outcomes for the organisation and individuals.

This was a popular question and most tackled it at least adequately – some very well. It was reassuring to see that most seemed aware of the need to look beyond the obvious at the reasons for alleged poor customer service before deciding on an appropriate prescription – whether training or otherwise. Good candidates paid particular attention to contextual factors such as the company's performance management system, leadership and HR practices.

Question 6

This two-part question related to the L&D standard's 1st knowledge indicator in its focus on a key component of the national education system - colleges of further education. However, some candidates interpreted it as being essentially about performance management and answered it without making any reference to national skills policy, agencies or initiatives. Given the question's wording, that interpretation was accepted.

In recent years major changes have been introduced by government relating to business planning, funding and targets for colleges. The situation described in the question is common as colleges struggle to achieve both national skills targets and a genuinely demand-led education system, since those requirements often work against each other. Colleges' leadership and management are continually being put to the test because, although colleges have been given more freedom to manage themselves, they are also far more exposed to market forces with which some are ill-equipped to deal effectively.

Relevant L&D activity that the HR manager could propose for the college in the question includes:

- **working closely with Sector Skills Councils and the local Learning and Skills Council** as well as with local employers in order to produce shared educational programmes and initiatives that would respond to local demand while also attracting LSC funding by tackling national targets for the FE sector
- **improving leadership and management skills and behaviour** in the college. This would require carefully blended learning to make full use of processes like mentoring, coaching, and action learning sets and multi-disciplinary projects. All such processes use real tasks and challenges as their basis and so can be incorporated into daily work routine. The HR manager could make good use of the special Investors in People standard that relates to leadership and management here.

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- **supporting any college staff facing redundancy or retirement** (voluntary or otherwise) by appropriate training and development for them and for their managers/departmental heads.
- **enhancing the college's performance management system**, for example by:
 - introducing a developmental assessment process to aid recruitment, selection and promotion decisions
 - improving appraisal by ensuring all staff had personal development plans, and that appraisers and appraisees received appropriate training
 - opening up career routes, training and development opportunities as a priority for those who represented the college's most valuable skills and any skills in short supply
 - improving the level of support staff's basic skills by introducing NVQ and Foundation Degree opportunities.

This was a very unpopular and poorly-tackled question. Main causes of failure were the following:

- did not focus on both parts of the question ('what' and 'why')
- showed no understanding of a 'demand-led' system
- provided trite generalities, lacking substance
- focused on HR activity overall instead of on L&D activity specifically.

Question 7

This question focused on the L&D Standard's 1st knowledge indicator, being concerned with the integration of L&D activity with wider personnel policy. It was one of the most popular questions on the paper and most tackled it reasonably well. Some, however, failed because of one or more of the following weaknesses:

- did not tackle both parts of the question ('assess' and 'identify')
- ignored the instruction to relate their answer to their own organisation (or some other of their choice)
- produced only naive and generalised points
- produced purely descriptive answers without evaluative content
- made completely unsubstantiated claims in relation to 'own organisation' practices.

High marks went to those answers that dealt well with the 'own organisation' requirement, showed a real understanding of 'alignment' issues (for example by assessing the influence of structure and culture of HR/L&D functions on alignment in their organisation) and provided a significant degree of evaluative as distinct from descriptive content.

Question 8

This question had a primary focus on the L&D Standard's 2nd indicator since it was to do with line managers' L&D roles. It had a secondary focus on the 7th knowledge indicator but was only in a limited way a question about training design.

Relevant research findings have been reported in such publications as the core text (*markers only: see pages 99-106, and 305-7*), the 2003 CIPD Black Box reports including 'Bringing policies to life: the vital role of front line managers in people management' and CIPD 2007 annual L&D survey report and special report on line managers and L&D). Most findings centre on key areas in which

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front-line managers make a critical difference - performance appraisal, training, coaching and guidance, involvement and communication, openness, work-life balance and recognition of performance achievements. This provides a powerful rationale to introduce such topics in the kind of awareness-raising course mentioned in the question.

Since the question dealt with one of today's 'hot topics' it is unsurprising that so many candidates opted for it. However the failure rate was quite high. Some did not provide any meaningful research base, others did not identify topics focused on learning and development tasks, and others again outlined a few topics but did not justify them. A surprising number did not identify any topics; they simply made generalised observations about line managers' L&D responsibilities.

Question 9

This question focused on the L&D Standard's 6th knowledge indicator. Knowledge Management (KM) is a term loosely used to cover knowledge creation and knowledge sharing as well as the management of tangible knowledge. The problems described in the scenario are widely discussed in text books and research reports but I did not make this a research-based question. Candidates were therefore free to produce original thinking and home-grown examples if they wished.

The core issues in the question concerned the need in an increasingly knowledge-based economy and in uncertain times for all organisations, whether or not currently 'successful', to generate and share knowledge that will stimulate innovation and improve practices, products and services. The specific challenge that candidates were asked to address, however, was to suggest ways in which to motivate the 'complacent' middle managers in the question to do this.

The question was not popular. Many who did tackle it ignored the requirement to concentrate on how to engage the middle managers and so failed. Happily there were some good answers, suggesting such levers as:

- helping to raise top management's awareness of the need for there to be a vision and supporting policies for KM in the organisation, to emphasise its importance to the future of the business
- making effective KM a key performance indicator in the middle managers'/all employees' performance management process
- ensuring there was some recognition/reward attached to it also
- ensuring that middle managers were given the time and resources to carry out their KM tasks
- training them in KM tasks and systems appropriate to the organisation (not necessarily e-based)
- embedding knowledge-sharing and KM systems into the structure and business processes of the organisation.

Question 10

This question focused primarily on the L&D Standard's 4th knowledge indicator, to do with factors influencing choice of a leadership development strategy for an organisation. It was unpopular and badly tackled, with few candidates demonstrating any real understanding either of the context in the question (which many ignored) or of leadership development strategy. Answers gaining a pass or more identified and justified at least some of the following points to raise:

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- What were the main problems and challenges confronting current and future leadership of the company?
- Given the company's small size and its stage of growth, would a formal leadership strategy work better in tackling these than the present ad hoc approach?
- What corporate purpose should the leadership strategy serve? That would determine the direction and type of strategy to choose.
- What levels of leadership should the strategy cover – corporate, front-line, team – or all three?
- Should the strategy's aim be to identify and develop outstanding individuals as the company's future leaders, or to promote strong collective leadership?
- What should be the balance of internal promotion and external recruitment in developing a stock of leaders for the company?
- What kind of development should the strategy incorporate - work-based learning, competency frameworks, formal educational programmes, a mix of all? (Note: Since this question was about strategy not detailed planning, any discussion of methods should have been brief)
- How could stakeholders - especially line managers – be encouraged and enabled to take active ownership of any leadership development strategy? Without such ownership strategy will founder at implementation stage.

A different kind of answer, concentrating on the choice of an appropriate strategy process, was equally acceptable and made the following kind of points:

- **There should be a systematic approach to producing a strategy.** The usual approach here would be to establish a broad-based strategy-making team to represent key stakeholders and also challenge accepted thinking and promote new ideas. That team would need to clarify the organisational mission, core values and long-term goals that leadership development strategy must serve, identify the strategic issues facing the company that future leaders would have to tackle, and then agree on a proposed leadership strategy and strategic plan.
- **However this was a small firm in an uncertain environment,** and also any strategy-making team would inevitably include a variety of interests, some conflicting. So top management would have to take a powerful and skilled lead over the whole process. It would also have to include in the strategy-making team some who customarily would have no input into such activity but who in this situation had important knowledge and insights to contribute.
- **Implementation must be carefully determined during the planning process.** The strategy-making team would need to pay as much attention to how to carry out its proposed leadership development strategy as to the nature of that strategy. In a small expanding firm the margin of error allowable here would be very slight.

It seems clear from the generally low standard of answers to this question that students are not paying much attention at present to leadership development despite the fact that it is an important part of the L&D Generalist Standard. They are not expected to have detailed specialist knowledge here, of course, but they must acquire an adequate grasp of core issues, concepts and challenges.

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Conclusion

Earlier in this report I have explained key weaknesses that caused many candidates to fail the November exam. In this section I want to address a few words to those who gained a pass or higher. I congratulate you on your success, and particularly on the very promising performance of the few who were awarded merit and distinction grades. Everyone who passed this exam did so by demonstrating a sound understanding of the L&D Standard and genuine 'thinking performer' quality in responding to the paper's questions. That quality will be vital for you to sustain and nourish throughout your professional life. I hope that many of you will choose to spend at least some time in the Learning and Development field. It is a difficult one, and constantly in a state of change. However it is also full of exciting and important challenges. It is in great need of well-qualified professionals who are dedicated to high standards of practice, committed to their own continuous learning and development, and in possession of a holistic understanding of organisational life rather than a blinkered, narrowly-based functional perspective. That is where you come in!

Rosemary Harrison

Chief Examiner