

## APPENDIX A: SELF-ASSESSMENT ASSIGNMENT (BOTH SEMESTERS)

Note that the questions in the self-assessment assignment (Assignment 03) are good examples of possible examination questions and should be used as such in your preparation for the examination. For your convenience, a mark has been allocated to each question. As a general guideline, we suggest that you write at least one to two pages (depending on your handwriting) per 10-mark question. Do not expect a high mark if you do not produce the correct volume and content.

### Assignment 03 for both semesters

**Study workbooks 01 to 05 to complete this self-assessment assignment.**

Do **NOT** send this assignment to the university.

#### **Question 1**

Your friend, Jane, is visiting you as usual. However, you notice that she looks stressed and worried. You ask her what is troubling her. She tells you that her performance appraisal is taking place the next day and that she hates appraisals. Jane says she does not understand why her organisation always wastes time on this activity. She does not see what benefits this performance appraisal has for either herself or the organisation. She also feels that this activity is too formal and finds it boring. She further mentions that, in some cases, employees do not receive any feedback after this activity. It appears that this activity is only carried out as a matter of formality.

Explain the purpose and objectives of a performance appraisal to help Jane understand the importance of performance appraisals. (10)

*Assessment criterion:*

- *The purpose and objectives of a performance appraisal should be clearly explained.*

#### **Question 2**

Gina is a training consultant for an HR outsourcing company. An accounting firm has approached her to deliver leadership and management training for their board of directors to improve their leadership and management skills. Gina decides to use "away-from-the-job" training, because she feels that these directors' jobs are very stressful and training would be more successful away from their working environment. This will enable them to focus only on the training.

Briefly discuss any five appropriate methods that Gina can use for this training session. (10)

*Assessment criterion:*

- *You need to discuss five appropriate methods that Gina can use for this training session.*

#### **Question 3**

Rosina is a single parent of two children, aged four and six. She resides in Pretoria, but has recently been called in for an interview at a company in the Sandton area of Johannesburg. At the interview Rosina voices her concerns relating to her possible acceptance of the position, such as finding day care for her children.

Organisations vary greatly in the services and benefits they offer their employees so as to increase employee loyalty and decrease absenteeism and staff turnover.

Identify five different types of employee services or benefits that organisations can make available that could attract Rosina to this company. Provide an explanation of each. (10)

*Assessment criteria*

- *Identify five employee services or benefits offered by organisations to their employees.*
- *Provide an explanation of each of the five employee services or benefits.*

#### **Question 4**

Lena and Timothy have been married for six years and have three children. They are both medical doctors and work long hours at Shebang Hospital in a rural town. They are currently facing potential conflicts over their career paths and the division of family responsibilities.

As an HR practitioner you advise couples on their dual-career problems. Explain to management the characteristics of effective programmes to assist dual-career couples in overcoming their career-related challenges. (10)

*Assessment criterion:*

- *Clearly explain the characteristics of effective programmes to assist dual-career couples.*

#### **Question 5**

Write a short essay to indicate the differences between EAPs, wellness programmes and safety programmes. Use a table with three columns to structure your answer. (10)

*Assessment criterion:*

- *Clearly explain the differences between EAPs, wellness programmes and safety programmes.*

## APPENDIX B: COMMENTS ON THE SELF-ASSESSMENT ASSIGNMENT



Have you attempted to answer these questions before looking at the answers?

"Self-assessment" means that you need to answer the questions and then assess your answers by means of the guidelines provided.

Do not read the answers if you have not yet attempted to answer the questions by yourself.

These questions refer to workbooks 01 to 05. The marks awarded are indicated in brackets.

### Question 1

Your friend, Jane, is visiting you as usual. However, you notice that she looks stressed and worried. You ask her what is troubling her. She tells you that her performance appraisal is taking place the next day and that she hates appraisals. Jane says she does not understand why her organisation always wastes time on this activity. She does not see what benefits these performance appraisals have for either herself or the organisation. She feels that this activity is too formal and finds it boring. She further mentions that, in some cases, employees do not receive any feedback after this activity. It appears that this activity is only carried out as a matter of formality.

Explain the purpose and objectives of the performance appraisal to help Jane understand the importance of the performance appraisal activity. (10)

***You could have used chapter 9 in your prescribed book and Workbook 02 to answer this question.***

#### **Purpose:**

As far as employees are concerned, one of the primary purposes of PA is looking at past performance.

#### **Evaluative:**

- The most common decisions based on evaluative objectives concern compensation, which includes merit increases, employee bonuses and other increases in pay. Thus the term *merit review* or *merit evaluation* can be found in organisations using PAs to determine pay increases.
- A performance appraisal normally has a two-part effect on future pay. In the short run, it may determine merit increases for the following year; in the long run, it may determine which employees are promoted to higher-paying jobs.
- Staffing decisions constitute a second evaluative objective of the PA because the managers and supervisors must make decisions concerning promotions, demotions, transfers and layoffs. Past performance normally helps to determine which employee is most deserving of a promotion or other desirable job changes.
- PAs can also be used to evaluate the recruitment, selection and placement system. The effectiveness of these functions can be partially measured by comparing employees' PAs with their test scores as job applicants.

**Developmental:**

- This is the second type of objective of PA – it encompasses developing employee skills and motivation for *future* performance.
- Performance feedback is a primary developmental need because almost all employees want to know how their supervisors feel about their performance. Their motivation to improve their current performance increases when they receive feedback that specifies goals, which in turn enhances future career moves.
- Developmental PA is mainly focused on giving employees direction for future performance. Such feedback recognises strengths and weaknesses in past performances and determines what direction employees should take to improve their performance. Employees want to know exactly how they can improve. Because PAs are designed to cope with poor employee performance, they should develop better employees.
- The results of appraisals influence decisions about the training and development of employees. Below-average evaluations may signal areas of employee behaviour that may be strengthened through on-the-job and away-from-the-job training. However, not all performance deficiencies may be overcome through T&D. Supervisors must distinguish performance problems resulting from a lack of critical skills or abilities from those caused by low morale or some form of job dissatisfaction.

**Question 2**

Gina is a training consultant for an HR outsourcing company. An accounting firm has approached her to deliver leadership and management training for their board of directors to improve their leadership and management skills. Gina decides to use "away-from-the-job" training, because she feels that these directors' jobs are very stressful and that training would be more successful away from their working environment. This will enable them to focus only on the training.

Briefly discuss any five appropriate methods that Gina can use for this training session. (10)

***You could have used chapter 10 in your prescribed book and Workbook 03 to answer this question.***

**Lecture:**

The lecture is the second-most popular away-from-the-job T&D technique, with some 85% of organisations in South Africa using this controversial method. Its strength lies in delivering uniform information to a large group of people in a timely manner. Almost all T&D methods contain at least some lectures.

**Conference/discussion:**

Many training programmes focus on organisational problems, innovative ideas and new theories and principles. Discussing problems and critical issues in a conference/discussion format permits a dialogue between the trainer and trainee, as well as among the trainees. This two-way communication provides trainees with immediate feedback on their questions and ideas, and heightens the motivation for the learner.

**Vestibule or simulation:**

In a training area created to resemble the employee's actual work area, vestibule or simulation training is performed with the aid of an instructor who demonstrates on the same kinds of machines and uses processes that the trainee will use on the job. Vestibule training has been successfully used for a variety of skilled positions, including retail sales personnel, bank tellers, machine operators and aircraft pilots.

### **Technology-based systems:**

There are two main types of computer-based training (CBT) – CD-ROM approaches and web-based training. Programmed instruction allows trainees to learn the information or skill in small segments and at the learner's own pace. We have shifted from the old booklet-based applications to computers using this same idea. Anyone who has been through a tutorial for programs such as Quicken, Windows or Print Shop realises how well computers can apply the programmed instruction approach. E-learning takes place through the use of the internet or an organisational intranet to conduct training online. No educational or training approach has ever exploded onto the scene faster and with as much promise as web-based training (WBT) or e-learning. The internet offers training opportunities not bound by either time or place.

### **Case study:**

A case study is a written description of an organisational problem. Case studies require participants to identify and analyse specific problems, develop alternative courses of action and recommend the best alternative. A case study may be analysed by individuals or groups. In T&D programmes, participants often form teams to study cases and then present their recommendations for discussion and analysis. The primary purpose of the case study is to enhance problem-solving skills. Participants practise defining problems, generating solutions and deciding on optimal solutions. Working in a group gives members insight into group dynamics and group decision-making processes.

### **Role playing:**

This is a training method in which participants are required to respond to specific problems they may actually encounter in their jobs. During role playing (or *reality practice*), participants play the roles of those involved in an organisational problem. Usually there are no scripts and participants have limited information on which to base their roles. The primary goals of role playing are to analyse interpersonal problems and develop human relations skills. Role playing is commonly used to develop skills in interviewing, negotiation, job counselling, disciplining, performance appraisal, sales and other job duties that involve interpersonal communication.

### **Management games:**

Management games (or *simulation exercises*) are designed to replicate conditions faced by real organisations and usually involve competing teams that make decisions concerning planning, production, finance and control of a hypothetical organisation. The winner is typically the team which achieves the highest net profit at the completion of the game. More complex games involve the use of a computer. In these games, teams receive a printout detailing the overall impact of their decisions on the effectiveness of the enterprise.

### **In-basket exercise:**

The in-basket exercise is designed to develop the analytical and problem-solving skills of lower-level managers. The technique centres on a series of hypothetical problems that a supervisor may find in a typical in-basket. The in-basket exercise forces the trainee to make immediate decisions and to determine priorities. For this reason, the exercise is often part of an assessment centre programme.

### **Question 3**

Rosina is a single parent of two children, aged four and six. She resides in Pretoria, but has recently been called in for an interview at a company in the Sandton area of Johannesburg. At the interview, Rosina voices her concerns relating to her possible acceptance of the position, such as finding day care for her children.

Organisations vary greatly in the services and benefits they offer their employees so as to increase

employee loyalty and decrease absenteeism and staff turnover.

Identify five different types of employee services or benefits made available by organisations that could attract Rosina to this company. Provide an explanation of each. (10)

**You could have used chapter 11 in your prescribed book and Workbook 04 to answer this question.**

### Employer services and benefits

*Childcare programmes:* One of the rapidly growing employer services offered is the provision of childcare programmes. The recent growth in employee interest in childcare programmes provided by employers has been enhanced by the employment equity efforts of many companies in South Africa. Employers could follow any of at least four different approaches to childcare, such as on-site programmes, flexible benefits, referral centres and employer consortiums.

*Food services:* Most companies provide some type of food facility to minimise the time taken for breaks and lunch. Food services vary according to the size of the company and the nature of the work. Some organisations may only provide vending machines and a few tables; others provide complete cafeteria services underwritten by the company.

*Education benefits:* Many organisations offer employees partial or full tuition reimbursement. Employees often use these highly sought-after benefits to prepare themselves for promotion opportunities.

*Transportation programmes:* Higher energy costs have caused employers to consider methods of helping employees to get to work. Many alternatives can be considered: paying a transport allowance, offering a motor financing scheme (for all employees), providing company cars for certain job grades and running a company bus.

*Housing subsidy:* An important benefit offered by companies is the payment of a housing subsidy. The subsidy is normally granted towards the repayment of a housing loan with a registered financial institution. To ensure that the organisation retains control of the process, the subsidy is paid directly to the financial institution together with the employees' repayments, which are deducted from their salary.

(Marks are awarded for identifying and discussing employee benefits and services that organisations offer to increase loyalty and decrease absenteeism or staff turnover.)

### **Question 4**

Lena and Timothy have been married for six years and have three children. They are both medical doctors and work long hours at Shebang Hospital in a rural town. They are currently facing potential conflicts over their career paths and the division of family responsibilities.

As an HR practitioner you advise couples on their dual-career problems. Explain to management the characteristics of effective programmes to assist dual-career couples in overcoming their career-related challenges. (10)

**You could have used section 8.12 of chapter 8 in your prescribed book and Workbook 01 to answer this question.**

Refer to section 8.12 in the prescribed book.

- **Dual-career audit:** An audit, performed through a company survey, should be a starting point for a company to recognise the extent of the problem. Areas the audit should address include the number of dual-career employees, the conflicts they face, how effective they perceive present company policies and opportunities to be and how competent they think they are in managing their careers.

- Special recruiting techniques: By giving a potential employee and his/her spouse a realistic view of the company's workload, travel and career opportunities, employers may be able to avoid a potentially poor job match. Some companies offer employees couple counselling immediately after hiring them to help identify potential problems and conflicts.
- Revision of transfer policies: In many companies, advancement inevitably means a geographical move. But in many cases, relocation results in a crisis for the dual-career couple. Employers are now finding ways to enhance their employees' careers without permanent geographical transfer.
- Examination of nepotism policies: Many employers are revising their policies to allow both spouses to work for the company, as long as an employee does not supervise a relative or participate in decisions concerning the relative's salary, performance or advancement.
- Assistance for dual-career couples: Many employers are helping couples learn how to manage their careers. Workshops and seminars enable participants to assess their opportunities, obstacles, potential conflicts and developmental needs.

### **Question 5**

Write a short essay to indicate the differences between EAPs, wellness programmes and safety programmes. Use a table with three columns to structure your answer. (10)

***You could have used chapter 12 in your prescribed book and Workbook 05 to answer this question.***

EAPs	Wellness programmes	Safety programmes
Are designed to help employees overcome personal problems ranging from substance abuse to stress and burnout, as well as family and financial problems.	Assist employees with their overall health, mainly with the aim of preventing health issues in future, but can also be applied to address existing health problems.	Focus on the effective management of matters related to the physical safety of employees.
Identify problems early in their development.	Help employees identify potential health risks through screening and testing.	Motivate employees to adopt safe work habits.
Use positive and negative employer reinforcement to motivate EAP patients to continue treatment.	Educate employees about health risks such as high blood pressure, smoking, poor diet, obesity and stress.	Can reduce accidents.
Follow-up monitoring to minimise relapse problems.	Encourage employees to change their lifestyle through exercise, good nutrition and health monitoring.	