

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
Cambridge International Diploma in Business
Advanced Level

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

5175/01

Optional Module

May 2005

2 hours 15 minutes

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

The time allocated for this examination includes 15 minutes reading time.
Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on all the work you hand in.
Write in dark blue or black pen.
You may use a soft pencil for any diagrams, graphs or rough working.
Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Attempt **all** tasks.
Start each task on a new piece of paper.
Please leave a margin on the right and left hand side of each new page.
At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together, in the correct order.
The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.



You must read the case study below and attempt ALL the tasks that follow.

[The following case study is fictitious]

Planet News

Planet News is a regional newspaper produced on a weekly basis. It is so successful that a number of national newspapers have tried to buy the company out, but the owner, Mandeep Bagri, has fought hard to keep the newspaper independent from the nationals.

Both Mandeep and his editor, Bharat, are fierce protectors of the truth and insist that every story printed is based on fact. Although Mandeep is the owner, he does not really work on the newspaper but deals with the strategic side of the Human Resource Management (HRM) function, leaving the operational side to Bharat. The management of the entire newspaper, from the stories printed to the Human Resources, is centralised and every issue must be referred to Bharat. Bharat even allocates reporters and photographers to particular stories as they occur. 5

The newspaper has a staff of 20 reporters, 3 photographers, 5 printers and 5 office staff. Only 5 of the reporters are on full-time permanent contracts, with a further 3 on full-time temporary one year contracts, 3 on part-time temporary one year contracts and the rest employed on a casual basis. All of the reporters work on a flexitime basis. All of the photographers are employed on full-time permanent contracts and, as well as their salary, they receive a number of extra benefits. Mandeep explains this by stating that photographers with the right skills are rare, but reporters, or at least people who would like to be reporters, are plentiful, especially as across the region there is a high standard of education but insufficient jobs for the young educated person. In fact those under 25 years of age, which form the largest part of the regional population, account for 40% of the unemployment in the region. The majority of the unemployed are male, whilst the number of females slightly outweigh the number of males in the under 25 age group. 10 15 20

The printers are employed on full-time permanent contracts but with a condition that they must attend at least two training sessions per year, usually arranged in-house by Bharat, on the latest technology and its uses in the newspaper industry. If they fail to attend at least two training sessions, then their contract is terminated. Such is the progress of technology within the industry, Bharat is thinking of increasing the number of training events to three per year, but he is worried that he would not be able to provide all of these sessions in-house. The printers work a shift system which includes some night working. They dislike this and would prefer to work standard daytime hours as the office staff do. 25

In two months time each of the reporters on a temporary one-year contract has to reapply for their jobs. There are six jobs available in total and they are open to everyone, including the casual workers. Everyone will have to go through the normal selection process, including practical tests, and for those who are employed at present, the results of their half-yearly individual performance appraisal will also be considered. 30

There are rumours that Mandeep has decided that the newspaper needs two more full-time reporters and that the best two will be given full-time permanent contracts. Another rumour is that the company is to be reorganised into divisions such as politics, sports etc., and then subdivided on a geographical basis across the region. This would avoid the present system where the first available reporter and photographer cover whatever story breaks. There are serious concerns about this reorganisation as some staff would find news stories easier to come by. 35

These rumours were neither confirmed nor denied by Bharat or Mandeep. 40

You must attempt ALL of the following tasks.

- 1 (a) Explain Bharat's role as the operational manager of human resources and describe how it is different to the strategic role of Mandeep. [10]
- (b) Explain how the approach to the management of human resources at Planet News could be changed from the present centralised approach. [10]
[Total: 20]
- 2 (a) Describe the significance of the main features of the local employment market for Planet News. [10]
- (b) Explain the influence of technical change on HRM at Planet News. [10]
[Total: 20]
- 3 (a) Describe the different forms of employment contract used by Planet News. [10]
- (b) Explain the normal selection process that the candidates for the six jobs at Planet News will have to go through. [10]
[Total: 20]
- 4 (a) Explain the different working patterns at Planet News. [10]
- (b) Explain how the performance of the staff at Planet News is monitored. [10]
[Total: 20]
- 5 (a) Explain what benefits Planet News might provide for the printers it employs. [10]
- (b) Explain how Planet News has identified the type and level of reward it pays to its employees. [10]
[Total: 20]

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