

The Open University of Sri Lanka  
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN HRM  
Final Examination – SEPTEMBER 2018  
MCP2253 –International Dimensions of Human Resource Management  
Duration: 03 Hours



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Date: 02 SEP. 2018

Time: 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

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Answer **FIRST** question (compulsory question) and any **THREE (3)** questions from others.

All answers must be completed and written neatly and focused.

This question paper consists of **SIX** questions.

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[1]. **Case study: The concepts of IHRM**

An employee is being groomed for a future position at an executive level within a multinational organisation in the petrochemical industry. She has performed a variety of roles within the company, all of which were located in her home country, and in non-technical areas. The organisation's policy is for each individual on its fast track to occupy at least one position overseas, running a subsidiary or overseas office.

The individual was offered a position in a predominantly Arabic-speaking and Muslim North African country. It was a relatively new location for the organisation. It had opened an office there because oil had recently been discovered offshore and there was a great opportunity to drill for oil and share in the proceeds with the government.

The employee had not been briefed in any way about the country, its security concerns or politics, only about the exciting oil partnership deal. She had decided that as it was located close to Europe, she could fly back to her home country fairly easily if required. With a husband willing to take a leave of absence, and her young children prepared, she was all set.

A few weeks before starting her new assignment, she travelled to the country in question. Her first meeting was with the US ambassador (there was no UK embassy in the country), who warned her that her forthcoming appointment was already widely known about, and not just in a positive way. She was already apparently on the radar of Al-Qaeda, which was 'known to be operating within the country'. What's more, her place of residence was right next to the TV station, which had been taken-over recently during a coup d'état.

To make matters worse, on meeting with the newly appointed oil minister, he announced that the formula for the royalties split was being amended, so that her organisation would receive less than what had been agreed upon initially, so it seemed she would face a tough challenge in dealing with the government.

The employee met with a couple of locally recruited staff to get acquainted with them in advance of her assignment. The 'employees' turned out to be contractors, and all appeared to be relatives of government ministers, their appointments ratified by the government. None spoke English and no one had any expertise in the oil industry.

Finally, the employee discovered that there were no schools which provided schooling in English – or even French. Arabic was the national language. With small children, she had assumed there would be plenty of English-speaking nannies and teachers. As for her husband, who had planned to take leave of absence from his job, it transpired that the government was not granting entry visas for anyone other than direct employees working for organisations that had contracted with the government.

**Source:** Ann Rennie and Rita McGee (2012), *International Human Resource Management*, Published by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 151 The Broadway, London UK

### Questions:

- a). Identify the main issues raised and discuss how they may be explained in terms of the cultural and institutional contexts in particular. (10 marks)
  - b). Imagine yourself in this position. Which proposal would you make? What should have you done differently? What should HR have done? What policies, steps, and practices should it have had in place to inform, educate and assist the employee before accepting the position? (15 marks)
  - c). In your view, was this the right kind of appointment for her? what kind of ongoing support and practices could the parent organisation have put in place to assist the employee and make the assignment a success? (15 marks)
- [2].
- a). What are the stages a firm typically goes through as it grows internationally and how does each stage affect the HR function? Discuss two HR activities in which a multinational firm must engage that would not be required in a domestic environment. (12 marks)
  - b). What are the specific HRM challenges in a networked firm? What factors should you consider in order to make the virtual assignment effective? (08 marks)

- [3]. “Domestic HRM is taking on some of the flavor of IHRM as it deals more and more with a multicultural workforce. Thus, some of the current focus of domestic HRM on issues of managing workforce diversity may prove to be beneficial to the practice of IHRM. However, it must be remembered that the way in which diversity is managed within a single national, legal, and cultural context may not necessarily transfer to a multinational context without some modification.”

Explain the above statement. Use suitable examples to enhance your answer.

(20 marks)

- [4]. “Due to growing interdependence and a high flow of migration, culture is not confined to a territorially limited area. This represents new challenges for HRM, but at the same time, it also offers new opportunities. Since Generation Y was born into an information society and grew up with the computer, faster, self-organized learners, and highly flexible where this phenomenon should be observed beyond cultural borders.”

Briefly discuss the factors involved in a new combination of various cultural elements as taking place in the MNC with suitable examples.

(20 marks)

- [5]. a). Outline the main characteristics of the four approaches to international staffing. What are the reasons for using international assignments? (08 marks)
- b). Explain the most important factors involved in the selection decision of expatriate. (06 marks)
- c). What is the role of inpatriates? Do inpatriates guarantee a geocentric staffing policy? Discuss using suitable examples. (06 marks)

- [6]. Write short notes on the followings:

- a. An Expatriate
- b. Off-shoring Activities
- c. Business Ethics
- d. Dual Career Couples

(4X5 = 20 marks)

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