Appendix A

HUMAN RESOURCE CERTIFICATION INSTITUTE:
PHR AND SPHR TEST SPECIFICATIONS

The two most utilized levels of certification are the **Professional in Human Resources (PHR)** and the **Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR).** Examination questions for both levels cover a wide range of topics. PHR questions tend to be at an operational/technical level, whereas SPHR questions tend to be more at the strategic and/or policy level. Each question lists *four possible answers,* only one of which is correct.

The test specifications identify six *Functional Areas* plus a *Core Knowledge* section. After each major functional area are the weightings for that area. **The first number in the parentheses is the PHR percentage weighting, and the second number is the SPHR percentage weighting.** Within each area *responsibilities* and *knowledge* topics are specified. Readers of this book can identify specific content information for the PHR and SPHR topics using the www.hrci.org website. Exams can be taken by professionals either online or at designated physical locations.

FUNCTIONAL AREAS:

01 STRATEGIC BUSINESS MANAGEMENT (12%, 29%)

Developing, contributing to, and supporting the organization's mission, vision, values, strategic goals, and objectives; formulating policies; guiding and leading the change process; and evaluating HR's contributions to organizational effectiveness.

Responsibilities:

01 Interpret information related to the organization's operations from internal sources, including financial/accounting, business development, marketing, sales, operations and information technology, in order to contribute to the development of the organization's strategic plan.

02 Interpret information from external sources related to the general business environment, industry practices and developments, technological developments, economic environment, labor pool, and legal and regulatory environment, in order to contribute to the development of the organization's strategic plan.

03 Participate as a contributing partner in the organization's strategic planning process.

04 Establish strategic relationships with key individuals in the organization to influence organizational decision making.

05 Establish relationships/alliances with key individuals and organizations in the community to assist in achieving the organization's strategic goals and objectives.

06 Develop and utilize metrics to evaluate HR's contributions to the achievement of the organization's strategic goals and objectives.

07 Develop and execute strategies for managing organizational change that balance the expectations and needs of the organization, its employees, and all other stakeholders.

08 Develop and align the organization's human capital management plan with its strategic plan.

09 Facilitate the development and communication of the organization's core values and ethical behaviors.

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10 Reinforce the organization's core values and behavioral expectations through modeling, communication, and coaching.

11 Develop and manage the HR budget in a manner consistent with the organization's strategic goals, objectives, and values.

12 Provide information for the development and monitoring of the organization's overall budget.

13 Monitor the legislative and regulatory environment for proposed changes and their potential impact to the organization, taking appropriate proactive steps to support, modify, or oppose the proposed changes.

14 Develop policies and procedures to support corporate governance initiatives (for example, board of directors training, whistle-blower protection, code of conduct).

15 Participate in enterprise risk management by examining HR policies to evaluate their potential risks to the organization.

16 Identify and evaluate alternatives and recommend strategies for vendor selection and/or outsourcing (for example, HRIS, benefits, payroll).

17 Participate in strategic decision making and due diligence activities related to organizational structure and design (for example, corporate restructuring, mergers and acquisitions (M&A), offshoring, divestitures). **SPHR ONLY**

18 Determine strategic application of integrated technical tools and systems (for example, HRIS, performance management tools, applicant tracking, compensation tools, employee self-service technologies).

Knowledge of:

01 The organization's mission, vision, values, business goals, objectives, plans, and processes.

02 Legislative and regulatory processes.

03 Strategic planning process and implementation.

04 Management functions, including planning, organizing, directing, and controlling.

05 Techniques to promote creativity and innovation.

06 Corporate governance procedures and compliance (for example, Sarbanes-Oxley Act).

07 Transition techniques for corporate restructuring, M&A, offshoring, and divestitures. **SPHR ONLY**

02 WORKFORCE PLANNING AND EMPLOYMENT (26%, 17%)

Developing, implementing, and evaluating sourcing, recruitment, hiring, orientation, succession planning, retention, and organizational exit programs necessary to ensure the workforce's ability to achieve the organization's goals and objectives.

Responsibilities:

01 Ensure that workforce planning and employment activities are compliant with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

02 Identify workforce requirements to achieve the organization's short- and long-term goals and objectives (for example, corporate restructuring, M&A activity, workforce expansion or reduction).

03 Conduct job analyses to create job descriptions and identify job competencies.

04 Identify and document essential job functions for positions.

05 Establish hiring criteria based on job descriptions and required competencies.

06 Analyze labor market for trends that impact the ability to meet workforce requirements (for example, SWOT analysis, environmental scan, demographic scan). **SPHR ONLY**

07 Assess skill sets of internal workforce and external labor market to determine the availability of qualified candidates, utilizing third-party vendors or agencies as appropriate.

08 Identify internal and external recruitment sources (for example, employee referrals, online job boards, résumé banks) and implement selected recruitment methods.

09 Evaluate recruitment methods and sources for effectiveness (for example, return on investment (ROI), cost per hire, time to fill).

10 Develop strategies to brand/market the organization to potential qualified applicants.

11 Develop and implement selection procedures, including applicant tracking, interviewing, testing, reference and background checking, and drug screening.

12 Develop and extend employment offers and conduct negotiations as necessary.

13 Administer post-offer employment activities (for example, execute employment agreements, complete I-9 verification forms, coordinate relocations, schedule physical exams).

14 Implement and/or administer the process for non-U.S. citizens to legally work in the United States.

15 Develop, implement, and evaluate orientation processes for new hires, rehires, and transfers.

16 Develop, implement, and evaluate retention strategies and practices.

17 Develop, implement, and evaluate succession planning process.

18 Develop and implement the organizational exit process for both voluntary and involuntary terminations, including planning for reductions in force (RIF).

19 Develop, implement, and evaluate an AAP, as required.

Knowledge of:

08 Federal/state/local employment-related laws and regulations related to workforce planning and employment (for example, Title VII, ADA, ADEA, USERRA, EEOC Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures, Immigration Reform and Control Act, Internal Revenue Code).

09 Quantitative analyses required to assess past and future staffing effectiveness (for example, cost-benefit analysis, costs per hire, selection ratios, adverse impact).

10 Recruitment sources (for example, Internet, agencies, employee referral) for targeting passive, semiactive and active candidates.

11 Recruitment strategies.

12 Staffing alternatives (for example, temporary and contract, outsourcing, job sharing, part-time).

13 Planning techniques (for example, succession planning, forecasting).

14 Reliability and validity of selection tests/ tools/methods.

15 Use and interpretation of selection tests (for example, psychological/personality, cognitive, motor/physical assessments, performance, assessment center).

16 Interviewing techniques (for example, behavioral, situational, panel).

17 Relocation practices.

18 Impact of total rewards on recruitment and retention.

19 International HR and implications of global workforce for workforce planning and employment. **SPHR ONLY**

20 Voluntary and involuntary terminations, downsizing, restructuring, and outplacement strategies and practices.

21 Internal workforce assessment techniques (for example, skills testing, skills inventory, workforce demographic analysis) and employment policies, practices, and procedures (for example, orientation and retention).

22 Employer marketing and branding techniques.

23 Negotiation skills and techniques.

03 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (17%, 17%)

Developing, implementing, and evaluating activities and programs that address employee training and development, performance appraisal, talent and performance management, and the unique needs of employees to ensure that the knowledge, skills, abilities, and performance of the workforce meet current and future organizational and individual needs.

Responsibilities:

01 Ensure that human resource development programs are compliant with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

02 Conduct a needs assessment to identify and establish priorities regarding human resource development activities. **SPHR ONLY**

03 Develop/select and implement employee training programs (for example, leadership skills, harassment prevention, computer skills) to increase individual and organizational effectiveness. Note that this includes training design and methods for obtaining feedback from training (e.g., surveys, pre- and post-testing).

04 Evaluate effectiveness of employee training programs through the use of metrics (for example, participant surveys, pre- and post-testing). **SPHR ONLY**

05 Develop, implement, and evaluate talent management programs that include assessing talent, developing talent, and placing high-potential employees. **SPHR ONLY**

06 Develop/select and evaluate performance appraisal process (for example, instruments, ranking and rating scales, relationship to compensation, frequency).

07 Implement training programs for performance evaluators. **PHR ONLY**

08 Develop, implement, and evaluate performance management programs and procedures (for example, goal setting, job rotations, promotions).

09 Develop/select, implement, and evaluate programs (for example, flexible work arrangements, diversity initiatives, repatriation) to meet the unique needs of employees. **SPHR ONLY**

Knowledge of:

24 Applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations related to human resources development activities (for example, Title VII, ADA, ADEA, USERRA, EEOC Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures).

25 Career development and leadership development theories and applications.

26 OD theories and applications.

27 Training program development techniques to create general and specialized training programs.

28 Training methods, facilitation techniques, instructional methods, and program delivery mechanisms.

29 Task/process analysis.

30 Performance appraisal methods (for example, instruments, ranking and rating scales).

31 Performance management methods (for example, goal setting, job rotations, promotions).

32 Applicable global issues (for example, international law, culture, local management approaches/practices, societal norms). **SPHR ONLY**

33 Techniques to assess training program effectiveness, including use of applicable metrics (for example, participant surveys, pre- and post-testing).

34 E-learning.

35 Mentoring and executive coaching.

04 TOTAL REWARDS (16%, 12%)

Developing/selecting, implementing/administering, and evaluating compensation and benefits programs for all employee groups that support the organization's strategic goals, objectives, and values.

Responsibilities:

01 Ensure that compensation and benefits programs are compliant with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

02 Develop, implement, and evaluate compensation policies/programs and pay structures based upon internal equity and external market conditions that support the organization's strategic goals, objectives, and values.

03 Administer payroll functions (for example, new hires, deductions, adjustments, terminations).

04 Conduct benefits programs needs assessments (for example, benchmarking, employee survey).

05 Develop/select, implement/administer, and evaluate benefits programs that support the organization's strategic goals, objectives, and values (for example, health and welfare, retirement, stock purchase, wellness, employee assistance programs (EAP), time-off).

06 Communicate and train the workforce in the compensation and benefits programs and policies (for example, self-service technologies).

07 Develop/select, implement/administer, and evaluate executive compensation programs (for example, stock purchase, stock options, incentive, bonus, supplemental retirement plans). **SPHR ONLY**

08 Develop, implement/administer, and evaluate expatriate and foreign national compensation and benefits programs. **SPHR ONLY**

Knowledge of:

36 Federal, state, and local compensation, benefits, and tax laws (for example, FLSA, ERISA, COBRA, HIPAA, FMLA, FICA).

37 Total rewards strategies (for example, compensation, benefits, wellness, rewards, recognition, employee assistance).

38 Budgeting and accounting practices related to compensation and benefits.

39 Job evaluation methods.

40 Job pricing and pay structures.

41 External labor markets and/or economic factors.

42 Pay programs (for example, incentive, variable, merit).

43 Executive compensation methods. **SPHR ONLY**

44 Non-cash compensation methods (for example, stock options, ESOPs). **SPHR ONLY**

45 Benefits programs (for example, health and welfare, retirement, wellness, EAP, time-off).

46   International compensation laws and practices (for example, expatriate compensation, entitlements, choice of law codes). **SPHR ONLY**
47   Fiduciary responsibility related to total rewards management. **SPHR ONLY**

05 EMPLOYEE AND LABOR RELATIONS (22%, 18%)

Analyzing, developing, implementing/administering, and evaluating the workplace relationship between employer and employee, in order to maintain relationships and working conditions that balance employer and employee needs and rights in support of the organization's strategic goals, objectives, and values.

Responsibilities:

01   Ensure that employee and labor relations activities are compliant with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
02   Assess organizational climate by obtaining employee input (for example, focus groups, employee surveys, staff meetings).
03   Implement organizational change activities as appropriate in response to employee feedback.
04   Develop employee relations programs (for example, awards, recognition, discounts, special events) that promote a positive organizational culture.
05   Implement employee relations programs that promote a positive organizational culture.
06   Evaluate effectiveness of employee relations programs through the use of metrics (for example, exit interviews, employee surveys).
07   Establish workplace policies and procedures (for example, dress code, attendance, computer use) and monitor their application and enforcement to ensure consistency.
08   Develop, administer, and evaluate grievance/dispute resolution and performance improvement policies and procedures.
09   Resolve employee complaints filed with federal, state, and local agencies involving employment practices, utilizing professional resources as necessary (for example, legal counsel, mediation/arbitration specialists, and investigators).
10   Develop and direct proactive employee relations strategies for remaining union-free in nonorganized locations.
11   Participate in collective bargaining activities, including contract negotiation and administration. **SPHR ONLY**

Knowledge of:

48   Applicable federal, state, and local laws affecting employment in union and nonunion environments, such as antidiscrimination laws, sexual harassment, labor relations, and privacy (for example, WARN Act, Title VII, NLRA).
49   Techniques for facilitating positive employee relations (for example, employee surveys, focus groups, dispute resolution, labor/management cooperative strategies and programs).
50   Employee involvement strategies (for example, employee management committees, self-directed work teams, staff meetings).
51   Individual employment rights issues and practices (for example, employment at will, negligent hiring, defamation, employees' rights to bargain collectively).
52   Workplace behavior issues/practices (for example, absenteeism and performance improvement).
53   Unfair labor practices (for example, employee communication strategies and management training).
54   The collective bargaining process, strategies, and concepts (for example, contract negotiation and administration). **SPHR ONLY**
55   Positive employee relations strategies and nonmonetary rewards.

06 RISK MANAGEMENT (7%, 7%)

Developing, implementing/administering, and evaluating programs, plans, and policies that provide a safe and secure working environment and protect the organization from liability.

Responsibilities:

01   Ensure that workplace health, safety, security, and privacy activities are compliant with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
02   Identify the organization's safety program needs.
03   Develop/select and implement/administer occupational injury and illness prevention, safety incentives, and training programs. **PHR ONLY**

04 Develop/select, implement, and evaluate plans and policies to protect employees and other individuals, and to minimize the organization's loss and liability (for example, emergency response, evacuation, workplace violence, substance abuse, return-to-work policies).

05 Communicate and train the workforce on the plans and policies to protect employees and other individuals, and to minimize the organization's loss and liability.

06 Develop and monitor business continuity and disaster recovery plans.

07 Communicate and train the workforce on the business continuity and disaster recovery plans.

08 Develop internal and external privacy policies (for example, identity theft, data protection, HIPAA compliance, workplace monitoring).

09 Administer internal and external privacy policies.

Knowledge of:

56 Federal, state, and local workplace health, safety, security, and privacy laws and regulations (for example, OSHA, Drug-Free Workplace Act, ADA, HIPAA, Sarbanes-Oxley Act).

57 Occupational injury and illness compensation and programs.

58 Occupational injury and illness prevention programs.

59 Investigation procedures of workplace safety, health, and security enforcement agencies (for example, OSHA, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)).

60 Workplace safety risks.

61 Workplace security risks (for example, theft, corporate espionage, asset and data protection, sabotage).

62 Potential violent behavior and workplace violence conditions.

63 General health and safety practices (for example, evacuation, hazard communication, ergonomic evaluations).

64 Incident and emergency response plans.

65 Internal investigation, monitoring, and surveillance techniques.

66 Issues related to substance abuse and dependency (for example, identification of symptoms, substance-abuse testing, discipline).

67 Business continuity and disaster recovery plans (for example, data storage and backup, alternative work locations and procedures).

68 Data integrity techniques and technology (for example, data sharing, firewalls).

CORE KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY HR PROFESSIONALS

69 Needs assessment and analysis.

70 Third-party contract negotiation and management, including development of requests for proposals (RFPs).

71 Communication skills and strategies (for example, presentation, collaboration, influencing, diplomacy, sensitivity).

72 Organizational documentation requirements to meet federal and state requirements.

73 Adult learning processes.

74 Motivation concepts and applications.

75 Training techniques (for example, computer-based, classroom, on-the-job).

76 Leadership concepts and applications.

77 Project management concepts and applications.

78 Diversity concepts and applications.

79 Human relations concepts and applications (for example, interpersonal and organizational behavior).

80 HR ethics and professional standards.

81 Technology to support HR activities (for example, HRIS, employee self-service, e-learning, ATS).

82 Qualitative and quantitative methods and tools for analysis, interpretation and decision-making purposes (for example, metrics and measurements, cost-benefit analysis, financial statement analysis).

83 Change management methods.

84 Job analysis and job description methods.

85 Employee records management (for example, electronic/paper, retention, disposal).

86 The interrelationships among HR activities and programs across functional areas.

87 Types of organizational structures (for example, matrix, hierarchy).

88 Environmental scanning concepts and applications.

89 Methods for assessing employee attitudes, opinions, and satisfaction (for example, opinion surveys, attitude surveys, focus groups/panels).

90 Basic budgeting and accounting concepts.

91 Risk management techniques.