

EASTERN UNIVERSITY, SRI LANKA
FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT

First Year First Semester Examination in Master of Business Administration –
2016/2017 (Proper / Repeat) (July, 2017)

MBA 1053 Human Resource Management

Answer all questions

Time: 03 Hours

Q1. Read the Case study and answer the questions given below.

Mary Corey recently completed her fourth year with Statewide Services Cooperation. In her position as customer support specialist, she consistently received high performance evaluations – until recently. Indeed, her most recent evaluation, completed three weeks ago, rated her as “less than satisfactory”, her supervisor, Helene Rowe, wondered why this previously strong employee had fallen so quickly.

Helene, had just returned from a meeting with her boss, Betty Alden, when again the subject of Mary came up. Betty suggested that Helene look through Mary’s past work-records to try to find some clues about what happened and what they should do now.

Helene closed the door to her office, sat at her desk, and pulled Mary’s personnel folder from her desk drawer. As she flipped through the materials in the folder, Mary’s story came into better focus:

About six months ago, around Christmastime, Mary started taking longer lunch breaks. Given the cramped quarters in which Helene’s Customer Support Department worked and the demanding routines they had to follow, it was easy to notice her stretching her regular lunch period by 10 to 15 minutes. Once she even stretched it for a full 25 minutes. Since, it was the holiday season. Helene, took no specific action. However, her occasional remark reminding Mary of the lunch break schedules would produce an uncharacteristically evasive, defensive response from Mary. On at least two occasions, she nodded off to sleep at her desk after returning from lunch.

In January and February, she was 10 to 20 minutes late for work on six different days and called in sick on four other days. It was during this time that Mary’s dealings with

her coworkers deteriorated. Normally quiet yet sociable, Mary became increasingly short-tempered and given to periodic outbursts of anger and belligerence. Since Mary, 36, was a single mother of two teenage girls, almost everyone in the office assumed there was something going on at home.

On February 23rd, though, things took a disturbing turn. Mary left for lunch at her usual time, but did not return. She called in three hours later to say she had gone home because she had suddenly become ill. Her speech seemed slurred, somehow not quite right. She returned to work two days later, with a doctor's note explaining she had been sick with a stomach flu.

Nonetheless, the pattern of lateness continued. Two weeks later, Helene gave Mary her first written disciplinary notice regarding her attendance and punctuality, during the discussion, Mary confessed to Helene: "I know I've been a little different recently. I'm just having some problems at home with my children". She didn't elaborate, and Helene didn't probe. For the next weeks, Mary was on time every day and rarely left her desk during working hours. Her level of performance improved, as did her interaction with co-workers.

By April, however, Helene noticed Mary slipping back into her negative habits of lateness and irritability. Helene began to notice something else in Mary's after lunch behaviour; she seemed to have real difficulty completing her work, making decisions and solving problems. On one occasion, there was a big argument between her and several co-workers. Mary went home, claiming she was "too upset to work". She continued coming in late to work and was absent on two successive Mondays. However, after each absence, she produced a doctor's excuse.

In early May, Helene issued a second written warning, this one concerning not only Mary's punctuality and attendance, but also her deteriorating work performance. At this time, Helene made it clear that Mary's continued employment was on the line. Helene made it clear that Mary's continued employment was on the line: "I don't know what is going on, but you're in danger of losing your job. I've tried to be understanding, but I'm losing my patience. You need to get straightened up and soon

or I'll have no choice but to let you go."

During the following weeks, Mary again improved her productivity and performance. She was obviously concerned about losing her job. By mid-July, it was time for her formal performance evaluation. Although her evaluation was "less than satisfactory," Helene did note that there had been improvement in all areas recently.

Then, last week, the bottom fell out. On July 23rd, Mary returned from lunch 45 minutes late, glassy-eyed and weaving slightly, fumbling with things, and smelling strongly of peppermint. She sat at her desk for a full 20 minutes, rummaging through drawers, moving paper, nodding, spilling things, and creating quite a distraction among the other employees. Helene came to her desk: "Mary, what's the matter here? Something's wrong, and you don't seem able to work at all. Are you ill? Can you work? Are you drunk? Tell me right now!" Mary slowly looked up, taking a while to focus on Helene. After what seemed like a minute or so, during which time she appeared to be again listening to Helene's remarks, Mary burst into tears. She grabbed her purse, pushed and stumbled past Helene, and left.

The next day, one of Mary's children called in, saying she couldn't work because she was "in bed sick." Helene checked and Mary had only three days of accrued sick leave available to her. She didn't return to work until today. She went to the ladies room for an hour. When she emerged, she went into Helene's office and asked for an immediate transfer to some other department "where the pressure isn't so great". She seemed very agitated and would not look Helene in the eyes. Helene told her to return to her desk and pick up on her work as well as she could until Helene could get into things more closely. It was then that Helene met with the boss, Betty Alden. They were trying to decide what to do.

In thinking about where things stood now, Helene knew that Mary's presence in the unit was becoming a source of contention and disgruntlement. Everyone knew that she had some kind of problem, and most people thought it was due to drugs or alcohol, or both, although no one had ever personally seen her use or abuse either. Since her work was so erratic, the other employees in the unit had to regularly back up her work

by either finishing it or correcting it. She seemed to have no remorse about her conduct and could not presently be counted on to make an effort to correct it. Helene wanted to fire her. As she explained to Betty: "when she's here, she fights with everyone, and I'm never sure when she's coming to work or how long she'll stay. She's hopeless. I hate to do this, but she has screwed up just too much." Betty, as unit manager, could see that a previously valued and productive member of her department had for some reason, fallen well below accepted work standards. Both Betty and Helene believed there must be some serious, extenuating circumstances affecting Mary, although they didn't know for certain what it was. Betty was concerned whether there would be any legal problems in firing someone in this condition. Betty reminded Helene that the company did have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) wondered whether they should try to involve Mary in the EAP before taking further action.

Case Study Questions:

- i) Can Helene terminate Mary without running into legal problem? Justify your answer. (08 Marks)
- ii) What should Helene do now regarding the Employee Assistance Programme? (07 Marks)
- iii) How you would make a referral to the EAP if you were Helene. (08 Marks)
- iv) Should Helene have acted sooner? If so, how? (05 Marks)

(Total 28 Marks)

- Q2. i) *"What competencies are essential in order to perform human resource management roles effectively is a big question."* Briefly elaborate the *core competencies* and *leverage competencies* need by an HR professional. (04 Marks)
- ii) Briefly elaborate the *generic purpose* and any four (04) *objectives* of Human Resource Management (HRM). (05 Marks)

iii) Briefly explain any one of the *techniques of the Job Design* with its pros and cons.

(05 Marks)

iv) “*Job Analysis (JA) information are helpful to the organization in several ways.*” Explain any four *usage of JA information* to an organization in HRM context.

(04 Marks)

(Total 18 Marks)

Q3. i) Briefly elaborate the *consequences associated with the failure* to plan for human resources.

(04 Marks)

ii) “*A recruitment programme has five (05) goals it leads to competitive advantage.*” Explain this statement.

(05 Marks)

iii) “*Certain Interview’s findings are distorted by several problems.*” Elaborate the *problems* caused by interviewer, interviewee, and method of interview.

(05 Marks)

iv) Briefly explain any four (04) *benefits of the induction.*

(04 Marks)

(Total 18 Marks)

Q4. i) “*Though promotions are given to employees in order to achieve various objectives, various problems may arise because of promotions.*” Provide evidence to support or prove the truth of this statement.

(04 Marks)

ii) Briefly elaborate any three (03) *issues in the Performance Appraisal.*

(06 Marks)

iii) “*Training needs identification can be conducted at three levels.*” Explain the *three levels of need analysis* of a training programme.

(04 Marks)

- iv) Briefly elaborate the *equity issues* in wage and salary administration with examples.

(04 Marks)

(Total 18 Marks)

- Q5. i) "*Inappropriate LMR will create problems to the organizations as well as to the country*". Substantiate this statement.

(06 Marks)

- ii) "*Collective bargaining refers to a process in which employer's representative or managers and workers representatives/trade unions meet, discuss and attempt to negotiate about working conditions and terms of employment.*" Elaborate the *types of collective bargaining structure*.

(06 Marks)

- iii) "In recent years, mental health of employees, particularly that of executives, has engaged the attention of employers." Justify this statement.

(06 Marks)

(Total 18 Marks)