

# Professional in Human Resources (PHR) Practice Exam (Sample)

## Study Guide



**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

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# Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

# How to Use This Guide

**This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:**

## 1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

**Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.**

## 2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

**Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.**

## 3. Learn from the Explanations

**After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.**

## 4. Track Your Progress

**Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.**

## 5. Simulate the Real Exam

**Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.**

## 6. Repeat and Review

**Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.**

**There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!**

## **Questions**

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- 1. Which term refers to the readiness to learn, influenced by ability and motivation?**
  - A. Learning styles**
  - B. Trainability**
  - C. Performance readiness**
  - D. Professional development**
  
- 2. What is a cause-and-effect diagram used for?**
  - A. To list employees' performance metrics**
  - B. To map out factors affecting a problem or outcome**
  - C. To display a historical timeline**
  - D. To compare different data sets**
  
- 3. What is the key role of executive search firms?**
  - A. To train existing employees for higher positions**
  - B. To assist in employee promotions within the company**
  - C. To locate and recruit candidates for high-level positions**
  - D. To conduct exit interviews for departing employees**
  
- 4. Which of the following best defines 'original works' in copyright terms?**
  - A. Any work created within a business setting**
  - B. Literary, artistic, and creative expressions that are unique**
  - C. Only written documents and reports**
  - D. Standard operating procedures and compliance documents**
  
- 5. What does the organizational profile help determine?**
  - A. The overall satisfaction of employees**
  - B. Barriers to equal employment opportunity within organizational units**
  - C. The effectiveness of the training programs**
  - D. The financial health of an organization**

**6. Which of the following best describes competencies?**

- A. A strict set of rules for employee behavior**
- B. A list of academic qualifications**
- C. A set of behaviors including skills, knowledge, and personal attributes**
- D. A framework for employee benefits**

**7. What aspect of management involves strategic resource allocation?**

- A. Operational planning**
- B. Financial management**
- C. Human resource management**
- D. All of the above**

**8. What is the purpose of a Realistic Job Preview (RJP) during the selection process?**

- A. To create a competitive atmosphere among applicants**
- B. To provide complete and honest information about the job**
- C. To evaluate the candidate's performance in real-time**
- D. To simplify the application process for candidates**

**9. What is the consequence of strictness in performance appraisal?**

- A. Underestimation of employee performance**
- B. Inflation of performance standards**
- C. Accurate reflection of employee capabilities**
- D. Random assignment of performance ratings**

**10. In a functional organizational structure, how are departments defined?**

- A. By their geographical location**
- B. By their services to the organization**
- C. By financial performance metrics**
- D. By the number of employees in each department**

## **Answers**

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1. B
2. B
3. C
4. B
5. B
6. C
7. D
8. B
9. B
10. B

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Which term refers to the readiness to learn, influenced by ability and motivation?**

- A. Learning styles**
- B. Trainability**
- C. Performance readiness**
- D. Professional development**

The term that refers to the readiness to learn, particularly as influenced by an individual's ability and motivation, is trainability. This concept encompasses the idea that not only must an individual possess certain skills or knowledge, but they must also have the inherent ability and motivation to engage in the learning process effectively.

Trainability highlights how prepared a person is to absorb new information and skills, which is critical in many training and development scenarios. Learning styles primarily focus on the different ways individuals prefer to learn, rather than their overall readiness or willingness. Performance readiness is more aligned with the immediate capabilities and preparedness to perform a specific task or job, rather than a broader view of overall learning potential. Professional development encompasses a wide range of career growth activities but does not specifically address the individual's readiness or ability to learn new skills at a given moment.

**2. What is a cause-and-effect diagram used for?**

- A. To list employees' performance metrics**
- B. To map out factors affecting a problem or outcome**
- C. To display a historical timeline**
- D. To compare different data sets**

A cause-and-effect diagram, often referred to as a fishbone diagram or Ishikawa diagram, is specifically designed to identify and analyze the various factors that contribute to a particular problem or outcome. This visual tool helps teams systematically brainstorm and categorize potential causes, making it easier to pinpoint root causes of issues and understand the relationships between different factors. The structure of the diagram allows users to lay out a central problem and branch out with potential causes in a logical manner. This clarity facilitates deeper discussions on how these factors interrelate and impact the overall situation, which can lead to more effective solutions. By mapping out these influences, organizations can focus their efforts on addressing the most significant contributors to problems. In contrast, the other options do not reflect the primary purpose of a cause-and-effect diagram. For instance, a list of employees' performance metrics is typically organized in a different format focused on individual assessments, while a historical timeline illustrates events over a time period rather than causal relationships. Comparing different data sets involves analysis of numerical data or trends, which is also not aligned with the identifying cause-and-effect functionality of the diagram.

### 3. What is the key role of executive search firms?

- A. To train existing employees for higher positions
- B. To assist in employee promotions within the company
- C. To locate and recruit candidates for high-level positions**
- D. To conduct exit interviews for departing employees

The key role of executive search firms is to locate and recruit candidates for high-level positions. These firms specialize in identifying and attracting highly qualified individuals for executive roles within an organization, often focusing on niche markets or leadership positions that are critical to a company's success. They utilize extensive networks, in-depth market knowledge, and targeted search strategies to find candidates who may not be actively seeking a new job, ensuring that companies have access to the best talent available for their senior management or specialized roles. By concentrating on high-level recruitment, these firms not only save organizations time and effort in the hiring process but also help in finding candidates who match the specific skills and cultural fit required for significant leadership positions. This means they play a crucial part in shaping the strategic direction of a company by ensuring that the right leaders are in place. The other options relate to different human resource functions that are not the primary focus of executive search firms. Training employees, assisting in promotions, and conducting exit interviews are typically managed internally within an organization or handled by HR departments.

### 4. Which of the following best defines 'original works' in copyright terms?

- A. Any work created within a business setting
- B. Literary, artistic, and creative expressions that are unique**
- C. Only written documents and reports
- D. Standard operating procedures and compliance documents

The definition of 'original works' in copyright terms refers specifically to the unique literary, artistic, and creative expressions that are created by an individual. Original works must exhibit a degree of creativity and originality, and they can include a wide spectrum of forms such as written content, music, visual arts, and more. This definition encompasses a variety of works as long as they possess the quality of being unique and not simply reproductions of existing works. In contrast to the other options, which are more restricted in scope, this choice captures the essence of copyright protection, which aims to safeguard the rights of creators over their original expressions. Originality is a key component in the context of copyright law, distinguishing creative works from mere ideas or functional items. Thus, the option that highlights literary, artistic, and creative expressions appropriately aligns with the fundamental principles of copyright.

## 5. What does the organizational profile help determine?

- A. The overall satisfaction of employees
- B. Barriers to equal employment opportunity within organizational units**
- C. The effectiveness of the training programs
- D. The financial health of an organization

The organizational profile is a crucial tool in assessing various aspects of an organization's structure and function, particularly in relation to equal employment opportunities. It primarily helps determine barriers to equal employment opportunity within organizational units by providing a comprehensive view of the demographics, workforce composition, and employment practices across the organization. This profile allows companies to identify disparities in hiring, promotions, and employee retention, thereby spotlighting potential systemic issues that might hinder certain groups from achieving equal representation. Analyzing this data enables organizations to make informed decisions about policy changes, recruitment strategies, and initiatives aimed at fostering inclusivity and diversity. While other options may reflect important areas of interest for an organization, they do not align as directly with the specific purpose of the organizational profile as it relates to equity in employment opportunities. Understanding employee satisfaction, training program effectiveness, and financial health involves different metrics and assessments that are typically outside the scope of what the organizational profile is designed to evaluate.

## 6. Which of the following best describes competencies?

- A. A strict set of rules for employee behavior
- B. A list of academic qualifications
- C. A set of behaviors including skills, knowledge, and personal attributes**
- D. A framework for employee benefits

The correct answer highlights that competencies encompass a comprehensive set of behaviors, including skills, knowledge, and personal attributes that are necessary for effective performance in a given role. This definition underscores the importance of not just technical skills but also the soft skills and traits that contribute to an individual's ability to perform tasks and collaborate effectively in a workplace. Competencies serve as a foundation for various HR functions, including recruitment, performance management, and employee development, as they provide a clear understanding of what is required for success in specific positions. The other options do not encapsulate the full essence of competencies. A strictly defined set of rules for employee behavior would imply a rigid framework that does not account for the nuances of individual performance and adaptability. A list of academic qualifications focuses solely on educational background and does not encompass the broader aspects of personal attributes and time-tested skills that are essential in the workplace. Lastly, a framework for employee benefits refers to compensation and perks, which is distinct from the concept of competencies related to performance and skill sets. Thus, option C accurately reflects the holistic nature of competencies in the professional context.

## 7. What aspect of management involves strategic resource allocation?

- A. Operational planning**
- B. Financial management**
- C. Human resource management**
- D. All of the above**

The correct choice encompasses various fundamental management aspects, all of which play a role in strategic resource allocation. Operational planning includes determining how resources—such as personnel, materials, and technology—will be utilized to achieve short-term goals and objectives. Effective operational planning ensures that resources are allocated efficiently to meet daily operational needs and fulfill the overall strategic vision of the organization. Financial management involves budgeting, forecasting, and controlling financial resources. It's crucial for determining where to invest funds to maximize returns, which is a key component of strategic resource allocation in an organization. Proper financial management ensures that resources are directed towards the most beneficial projects and initiatives. Human resource management focuses on optimizing the organization's workforce. This includes recruiting, training, and developing employees, as well as ensuring that the right talents are available and assigned effectively within the organization. Strategic resource allocation in HR means placing the best individuals in the right roles to enhance productivity and organizational performance. With all these management functions contributing to the overall effectiveness of resource allocation, it is clear that strategic resource allocation is not limited to just one area but is an essential component across all management practices.

## 8. What is the purpose of a Realistic Job Preview (RJP) during the selection process?

- A. To create a competitive atmosphere among applicants**
- B. To provide complete and honest information about the job**
- C. To evaluate the candidate's performance in real-time**
- D. To simplify the application process for candidates**

The purpose of a Realistic Job Preview (RJP) during the selection process is to provide complete and honest information about the job. RJP are designed to give candidates a thorough understanding of what the position entails, including both the positive and negative aspects. By presenting a clear picture of the job and the work environment, RJP help manage the expectations of applicants and can lead to better job fit. This transparency can also reduce turnover, as candidates who understand the job are more likely to accept the position and stay longer. The other options, while related to different aspects of the hiring process, do not accurately capture the primary objective of RJP. For instance, creating a competitive atmosphere does not align with the informative and supportive nature of RJP. Evaluating candidate performance in real-time is more relevant to assessment methods rather than previews. Lastly, simplifying the application process pertains to administrative efficiencies rather than the purpose of providing job-related information.

## 9. What is the consequence of strictness in performance appraisal?

- A. Underestimation of employee performance
- B. Inflation of performance standards**
- C. Accurate reflection of employee capabilities
- D. Random assignment of performance ratings

The consequence of strictness in performance appraisal often leads to the inflation of performance standards. When evaluation criteria are set excessively strict, it creates a scenario in which employees may find it challenging to meet or exceed these high standards. This can result in a culture where achieving satisfactory performance is difficult, thereby raising the overall expectations for employee performance. Such inflation of performance standards can demotivate employees who feel they cannot achieve the targets set before them, potentially leading to lower morale and even decreased productivity. When standards are too stringent, they may not accurately reflect the actual performance capabilities of employees or the resources available to them, which can skew appraisal outcomes. In summary, strict performance appraisals can distort employees' perceptions of their performance and create unrealistic expectations, leading to a workplace environment that is counterproductive to employee development and success.

## 10. In a functional organizational structure, how are departments defined?

- A. By their geographical location
- B. By their services to the organization**
- C. By financial performance metrics
- D. By the number of employees in each department

In a functional organizational structure, departments are defined by their services to the organization. This structure groups employees based on the functions or roles they perform, such as marketing, finance, human resources, and operations. Each department is responsible for a specific set of tasks and activities that contribute to the overall goals of the organization, which allows for specialization and efficiency within each function. This approach enhances clear lines of communication and expertise within departments, as individuals with similar skills and responsibilities work closely together. It fosters a greater depth of knowledge and skill development relevant to each functional area, leading to better performance in executing specialized tasks and functions. In contrast, options like geographical location, financial performance metrics, or the number of employees do not comprehensively capture the essence of how departments are organized within a functional structure. Instead, those aspects might define different types of organizational structures or performance indicators, which are not the main criteria for defining departments in a functional setting.

# Next Steps

**Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.**

**As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.**

**If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at [hello@examzify.com](mailto:hello@examzify.com).**

**Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:**

**<https://phr.examzify.com>**

**We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!**

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