



CERTIFICATIONS IN  
HUMAN RESOURCES

SPHR®  
Senior Professional in  
Human Resources®

# SPHR® Exam Content Outline



# SPHR® Exam Content Outline At-a-Glance:

## SPHR Exam Weighting by Functional Area:

Functional Area 01 | Leadership and Strategy (40%)

Functional Area 02 | Talent Planning and Acquisition (16%)

Functional Area 03 | Learning and Development (12%)

Functional Area 04 | Total Rewards (12%)

Functional Area 05 | Employee Relations and Engagement (20%)

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### IF LAWS CHANGE

We realize that employment laws change constantly. Candidates are responsible for knowing the HR laws and regulations that are in effect at the time of their exam. This exam content outline took effect in 2018.

The Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR®) exam is created using the SPHR EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE, which details the responsibilities of and knowledge needed by today's HR professional. The SPHR EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE is created by HR subject matter experts through a rigorous practice analysis study conducted by HRCI. It is updated periodically to ensure it is consistent with current practices in the HR profession.

HRCI developed the HRCI Capability Model™ in 2021 to support the interplay between evidence-based knowledge, stakeholder-relevant capabilities and results-oriented outcomes. It serves as a roadmap designed to support and guide HR's diverse community of professionals as they pursue learning and assessment opportunities. For more information about the Capability Model, please visit our [website](#).

## Functional Area 01 | Leadership and Strategy (40%)

Leading the HR function by developing HR strategy, contributing to organizational strategy, influencing people management practices, and monitoring risk.

### Responsibilities:

- 01 Develop and execute HR plans that are aligned to the organization's strategic plan (for example: HR strategic plans, budgets, business plans, service delivery plans, HRIS, technology)
- 02 Evaluate the applicability of federal laws and regulations to organizational strategy (for example: policies, programs, practices, business expansion/reduction)
- 03 Analyze and assess organizational practices that impact operations and people management to decide on the best available risk management strategy (for example: avoidance, mitigation, acceptance)
- 04 Interpret and use business metrics to assess and drive achievement of strategic goals and objectives (for example: key performance indicators, financial statements, budgets)
- 05 Design and evaluate HR data indicators to inform strategic actions within the organization (for example: turnover rates, cost per hire, retention rates)
- 06 Evaluate credibility and relevance of external information to make decisions and recommendations (for example: salary data, management trends, published surveys and studies, legal/regulatory analysis)
- 07 Contribute to the development of the organizational strategy and planning (for example: vision, mission, values, ethical conduct)
- 08 Develop and manage workplace practices that are aligned with the organization's statements of vision, values, and ethics to shape and reinforce organizational culture
- 09 Design and manage effective change strategies to align organizational performance with the organization's strategic goals
- 10 Establish and manage effective relationships with key stakeholders to influence organizational behavior and outcomes



## Knowledge of:

- 01 Vision, mission, and values of an organization and applicable legal and regulatory requirements
- 02 Strategic planning process
- 03 Management functions, including planning, organizing, directing, and controlling
- 04 Corporate governance procedures and compliance
- 05 Business elements of an organization (for example: products, competition, customers, technology, demographics, culture, processes, safety and security)
- 06 Third-party or vendor selection, contract negotiation, and management, including development of requests for proposals (RFPs)
- 07 Project management (for example: goals, timetables, deliverables, and procedures)
- 08 Technology to support HR activities
- 09 Budgeting, accounting, and financial concepts (for example: evaluating financial statements, budgets, accounting terms, and cost management)
- 10 Techniques and methods for organizational design (for example: outsourcing, shared services, organizational structures)
- 11 Methods of gathering data for strategic planning purposes (for example: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats [SWOT], and Political, Economic, Social, and Technological [PEST])
- 12 Qualitative and quantitative methods and tools used for analysis, interpretation, and decision making purposes
- 13 Change management processes and techniques
- 14 Techniques for forecasting, planning, and predicting the impact of HR activities and programs across functional areas
- 15 Risk management
- 16 How to deal with situations that are uncertain, unclear, or chaotic

## Functional Area 02 | Talent Planning and Acquisition (16%)

Forecast organizational talent needs and develop strategies to attract and engage new talent.

### Responsibilities:

- 01 Evaluate and forecast organizational needs throughout the business cycle to create or develop workforce plans (for example: corporate restructuring, workforce expansion, or reduction)
- 02 Develop, monitor, and assess recruitment strategies to attract desired talent (for example: labor market analysis, compensation strategies, selection process, onboarding, sourcing and branding strategy)
- 03 Develop and evaluate strategies for engaging new employees and managing cultural integrations (for example: new employee acculturation, downsizing, restructuring, mergers and acquisitions, divestitures, global expansion)



### Knowledge of:

- 17 Planning techniques (for example: succession planning, forecasting)
- 18 Talent management practices and techniques (for example: selecting and assessing employees)
- 19 Recruitment sources and strategies
- 20 Staffing alternatives (for example: outsourcing, temporary employment)
- 21 Interviewing and selection techniques and strategies
- 22 Impact of total rewards on recruitment and retention
- 23 Termination approaches and strategies
- 24 Employee engagement strategies
- 25 Employer marketing and branding techniques
- 26 Negotiation skills and techniques

- 27 Due diligence processes (for example: mergers and acquisitions, divestitures)
- 28 Transition techniques for corporate restructuring, mergers and acquisitions, offshoring, and divestitures
- 29 Methods to assess past and future staffing effectiveness (for example: cost per hire, selection ratios, adverse impact)

## Functional Area 03 | Learning and Development (12%)

Develop training, development, and employee retention strategies.

### Responsibilities:

- 01 Develop and evaluate training strategies (for example: modes of delivery, timing, content) to increase individual and organizational effectiveness
- 02 Analyze business needs to develop a succession plan for key roles (for example: identify talent, outline career progression, coaching and development) to promote business continuity
- 03 Develop and evaluate employee retention strategies and practices (for example: assessing talent, developing career paths, managing job movement within the organization)



### Knowledge of:

- 30 Training program design and development
- 31 Adult learning processes
- 32 Training and facilitation techniques
- 33 Instructional design principles and processes (for example: needs analysis, content chunking, process flow mapping)
- 34 Techniques to assess training program effectiveness, including use of applicable metrics
- 35 Career and leadership development theories and applications
- 36 Organizational development (OD) methods, motivation methods, and problem-solving techniques
- 37 Coaching and mentoring techniques
- 38 Effective communication skills and strategies (for example: presentation, collaboration, sensitivity)
- 39 Employee retention strategies
- 40 Techniques to encourage creativity and innovation

## Functional Area 04 | Total Rewards (12%)

Monitor the effectiveness of compensation and benefit strategies for attracting, rewarding, and retaining talent.

### Responsibilities:

- 01 Analyze and evaluate compensation strategies (for example: philosophy, classification, direct, indirect, incentives, bonuses, equity, executive compensation) that attract, reward, and retain talent
- 02 Analyze and evaluate benefit strategies (for example: health, welfare, retirement, recognition programs, work-life balance, wellness) that attract, reward, and retain talent



### Knowledge of:

- 41 Compensation strategies and philosophy
- 42 Job analysis and evaluation methods
- 43 Job pricing and pay structures
- 44 External labor markets and economic factors
- 45 Executive compensation methods
- 46 Non-cash compensation methods
- 47 Benefits program strategies
- 48 Fiduciary responsibilities
- 49 Motivation concepts and applications
- 50 Benchmarking techniques



## Functional Area 05 | **Employee Relations and Engagement (20%)**

Develop and/or monitor strategies impacting employee satisfaction and performance including diversity and inclusion, safety, security, and labor strategies.

### **Responsibilities:**

- 01 Design and evaluate strategies for employee satisfaction (for example: recognition, career path) and performance management (for example: performance evaluation, corrective action, coaching)
- 02 Analyze and evaluate strategies to promote diversity and inclusion
- 03 Evaluate employee safety and security strategies (for example: OSHA, HIPAA, emergency response plan, building access, data security/privacy)
- 04 Develop and evaluate labor strategies (for example: collective bargaining, grievance program, concerted activity, staying union free, strategically aligning with labor)



### **Knowledge of:**

- 51 Strategies to facilitate positive employee relations
- 52 Methods for assessing employee attitudes, opinions, and satisfaction
- 53 Performance management strategies
- 54 Human relations concepts and applications
- 55 Ethical and professional standards
- 56 Diversity and inclusion concepts and applications
- 57 Occupational injury and illness prevention techniques
- 58 Workplace safety and security risks, and strategies
- 59 Emergency response, business continuity and disaster recovery strategies
- 60 Internal investigation, monitoring, and surveillance techniques

- 61 Data security and privacy
- 62 The collective bargaining process, strategies, and concepts (for example: contract negotiation, costing, administration)

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