



**CERTIFICATIONS IN  
HUMAN RESOURCES »**

**aPHR™**  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONAL  
IN HUMAN RESOURCES™

**aPHR™**

**EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE**

aPHR™

# EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE AT-A-GLANCE

## aPHR™ EXAM WEIGHTING BY FUNCTIONAL AREA

- » HR Operations (38%)
- » Recruitment and Selection (15%)
- » Compensation and Benefits (14%)
- » Human Resource Development and Retention (12%)
- » Employee Relations (16%)
- » Health, Safety, and Security (5%)

### IF LAWS CHANGE

We realize that employment laws change constantly. Candidates are responsible for knowing the HR laws and regulations that are in effect as of the start of each exam period. New exams are produced annually.

The aPHR™ EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE will be updated periodically (approximately every five years) to ensure it is consistent with current practices in the HR field. This exam content outline was developed effective Spring 2016.

# aPHR™ EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

The Associate Professional in Human Resources (aPHR™) exam is created using the aPHR™ EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE, which details the knowledge needed by those performing early HR career roles. The aPHR™ EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE was created by HR subject matter experts through a rigorous practice analysis study and validated by HR professionals working in the field through an extensive survey instrument. It will be updated periodically to ensure it is consistent with current practices in the HR field.

## **FUNCTIONAL AREA 01: HR OPERATIONS (38%)**

Understanding the tactical and operational tasks related to workforce management and the HR function. Complying with the laws, regulations, and policies that affect the organization.

### **KNOWLEDGE OF**

- 01 Organizational strategy and its connection to mission, vision, values, business goals, and objectives
- 02 Organizational culture (for example: traditions, unwritten procedures)
- 03 Legal and regulatory environment
- 04 Confidentiality and privacy rules that apply to employee records, company data, and individual data
- 05 Business functions (for example: accounting, finance, operations, sales and marketing)
- 06 HR policies and procedures (for example: ADA, EEO, progressive discipline)
- 07 HR Metrics (for example: cost per hire, number of grievances)
- 08 Tools to compile data (for example: spreadsheets, statistical software)
- 09 Methods to collect data (for example: surveys, interviews, observation)
- 10 Reporting and presentation techniques (for example: histogram, bar chart)
- 11 Impact of technology on HR (for example: social media, monitoring software, biometrics)
- 12 Employee records management (for example: electronic/paper, retention, disposal)
- 13 Statutory reporting requirements (for example: OSHA, ERISA, ACA)
- 14 Purpose and function of Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS)
- 15 Job classifications (for example: exempt, non-exempt, contractor)
- 16 Job analysis methods and job descriptions
- 17 Reporting structure (for example: matrix, flat)
- 18 Types of external providers of HR services (for example: recruitment firms, benefits brokers, staffing agencies)
- 19 Communication techniques (e.g., written, oral, email, passive, aggressive)

## FUNCTIONAL AREA 02: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION (15%)

Understanding the hiring process including regulatory requirements, sourcing of applicants, formal interview and selection process, and on-boarding of a new hire.

### KNOWLEDGE OF

- 01 Applicable laws and regulations related to recruitment and selection, such as non-discrimination, accommodation, and work authorization (for example: Title VII, ADA, EEOC Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures, Immigration Reform and Control Act)
- 02 Applicant databases
- 03 Recruitment sources (for example: employee referral, social networking/social media)
- 04 Recruitment methods (for example: advertising, job fairs)
- 05 Alternative staffing practices (for example: recruitment process outsourcing, job sharing, phased retirement)
- 06 Interviewing techniques (for example: behavioral, situational, panel)
- 07 Post-offer activities (for example: drug-testing, background checks, medical exams)

## FUNCTIONAL AREA 03: COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS (14%)

Understanding concepts related to total rewards such as pay and benefit programs. Responding to employee questions and handling claims in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and company policies.

### KNOWLEDGE OF

- 01 Applicable laws and regulations related to compensation and benefits, such as monetary and non-monetary entitlement, wage and hour, and privacy (for example: ERISA, COBRA, FLSA, USERRA, HIPAA, PPACA, tax treatment)
- 02 Pay structures and programs (for example: variable, merit, bonus, incentives, non-cash compensation, pay scales/grades)
- 03 Total rewards statements
- 04 Benefit programs (for example: health care plans, flexible benefits, retirement plans, wellness programs)
- 05 Payroll processes (for example: pay schedule, leave and time-off allowances)
- 06 Uses for salary and benefits surveys
- 07 Claims processing requirements (for example: workers' compensation, disability benefits)
- 08 Work-life balance practices (for example: flexibility of hours, telecommuting, sabbatical)

## FUNCTIONAL AREA 04: HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION (12%)

Understanding the techniques and methods for delivering training programs and developing individual employees.

### KNOWLEDGE OF

- 01 Applicable laws and regulations related to training and development activities (for example: Title VII, ADA, Title 17 [Copyright law])
- 02 Training delivery format (for example: virtual, classroom, on-the-job)
- 03 Techniques to evaluate training programs (for example: participant surveys, pre- and post-testing, after action review)
- 04 Career development practices (for example: succession planning, dual career ladders)
- 05 Performance appraisal methods (for example: ranking, rating scales)
- 06 Performance management practices (for example: setting goals, benchmarking, feedback)

## FUNCTIONAL AREA 05: EMPLOYEE RELATIONS (16%)

Understanding the methods organizations use to monitor and address morale, performance, and retention. Balancing the operational needs of the organization with the well-being of the individual employee.

### KNOWLEDGE OF

- 01 Applicable laws affecting employment in union and nonunion environments, such as laws regarding antidiscrimination policies, sexual harassment, labor relations, and privacy (for example: WARN Act, Title VII, NLRA)
- 02 Employee and employer rights and responsibilities (for example: employment-at-will, privacy, defamation, substance abuse)
- 03 Methods and processes for collecting employee feedback (for example: employee attitude surveys, focus groups, exit interviews)
- 04 Workplace behavior issues (for example: absenteeism, aggressive behavior, employee conflict, workplace harassment)
- 05 Methods for investigating complaints or grievances
- 06 Progressive discipline (for example: warnings, escalating corrective actions, termination)
- 07 Off-boarding or termination activities
- 08 Employee relations programs (for example: recognition, special events, diversity programs)
- 09 Workforce reduction and restructuring terminology (for example: downsizing, mergers, outplacement practices)

## **FUNCTIONAL AREA O6: HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SECURITY (5%)**

Understanding the laws, regulations, and policies that promote a safe work environment. Use risk mitigation procedures to protect against workplace hazards.

### **KNOWLEDGE OF**

- 01 Applicable laws and regulations related to workplace health, safety, security, and privacy (for example: OSHA, Drug-Free Workplace Act, ADA, HIPAA, Sarbanes-Oxley Act)
- 02 Risk mitigation in the workplace (for example: emergency evacuation procedures, health and safety, risk management, violence, emergencies)
- 03 Security risks in the workplace (for example: data, materials, or equipment theft; equipment damage or destruction; cyber crimes; password usage)

Since the aPHR™ is a knowledge-based exam, candidates are responsible for the six knowledge areas described above. What follows is a list of tasks an individual would likely be expected to perform at the early HR career level.

## aPHR™ TASKS

- 01 Access, collect, and provide information and data to support HR-related decisions (for example: recruiting, employee relations, training, safety, budgeting, needs analysis, off-boarding, termination)
- 02 Comply with all applicable laws and regulations
- 03 Coordinate and communicate with external providers of HR services (for example: recruiters, COBRA administrators, employee recognition services)
- 04 Maintain employee data in HRIS or system of record
- 05 Maintain, file, and process HR forms (for example: notices, announcements, new hire forms, salary forms, performance, termination paperwork)
- 06 Prepare HR-related documents (for example: reports, presentations, organizational charts)
- 07 Provide internal customer service by answering or referring HR-related questions from employees as the first level of support
- 08 Communicate information about HR policies and procedures
- 09 Communicate the organization's core values, vision, mission, culture, and ethical behaviors
- 10 Identify risk in the workplace
- 11 Minimize risk by conducting audits (for example: I-9, workers' compensation, employee records)
- 12 Document and update essential job functions with the support of managers
- 13 Post job listings (for example: company website, social media, job boards)
- 14 Manage applicant databases (for example: enter data, access records, update records)
- 15 Screen applicants for managers to interview
- 16 Answer questions from job applicants
- 17 Coordinate interview logistics
- 18 Interview job candidates
- 19 Arrange for tests and assessments of applicants
- 20 Coordinate the employment offer (for example: start date, salary, benefits)
- 21 Administer post-offer employment activities (for example: execute employment agreements, complete I-9/e-Verify process, coordinate relocation, immigration)
- 22 Communicate compensation and benefits programs and systems
- 23 Coordinate activities to support employee benefits programs (for example: wellness, retirement planning)
- 24 Coordinate payroll-related information (for example: new hires, adjustments, paid time off, terminations)

## aPHR™ TASKS

- 25 Process claims from employees (for example: workers' compensation, short-term or long-term disability benefits)
- 26 Resolve routine employee compensation and benefits issues
- 27 Conduct orientation and on-boarding for new hires, rehires, and transfers
- 28 Coordinate training sessions (for example: logistics, materials, tracking, registration, evaluation)
- 29 Conduct employee training programs (for example: safety regulations, emergency preparedness, presentation skills, time-management skills)
- 30 Coordinate the logistics for employee relations programs (for example: recognition, special events, diversity programs)
- 31 Monitor completion of performance reviews and development plans





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ORGANIZATION COMMITTED  
TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS  
OF THE PROFESSION.**

**OUR VISION IS CLEAR:  
A GLOBAL HR PROFESSION,  
WHOSE MOST EFFECTIVE AND  
INFLUENTIAL PRACTITIONERS AND  
LEADERS PROUDLY MAINTAIN OUR  
CREDENTIALS.**

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