

**ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY**  
**(Department of Business Administration)**

**Strategic Human Resource Management**  
**Code: 9510**

**Semester: Spring 2026**

**CHECKLIST**

1. Study guide is available on the official website of AIOU.
2. Assignment No. 1
3. Assignment No. 2
4. Course Outline

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**WARNING**

- 1. PLAGIARISM OR HIRING OF GHOST WRITER(S) FOR SOLVING THE ASSIGNMENT(S) WILL DEBAR THE STUDENT FROM THE AWARD OF A DEGREE/CERTIFICATE, IF FOUND AT ANY STAGE.**
- 2. SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENT(S) BORROWED OR STOLEN FROM OTHER(S) AS ONE'S OWN WILL BE PENALIZED AS DEFINED IN "AIOU PLAGIARISM POLICY".**

**Course: Strategic Human Resource Management (Code 9510)**  
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**Please read the following instructions for writing your assignments.**

**(AD, BS, BEd, MA/MSc, MEd) (ODL Mode)**

1. All questions are compulsory and carry equal marks but within a question, the marks are distributed according to its requirements.
2. Read the question carefully and then answer it according to the requirements of the question.
3. Avoid irrelevant discussion/information and reproducing from books, study guide or allied material.
4. Hand written scanned assignments are not acceptable.
5. Upload you typed (in Word or PDF format) assignments on or before the due date.
6. Your own analysis and synthesis will be appreciated.
7. Late assignments can't be uploaded at LMS.
8. The students who attempt their assignments in Urdu/Arabic may upload a scanned copy of their hand written assignments (in PDF format) on University LMS. The size of the file should not exceed 5 MB.

**Instructions:**

- (a) All written assignments must be well organized, presented in an easy-to-read format, and neat. If your handwriting is not legible, type or compose the written assignment. Moreover, pay particularly close attention to grammar, spelling, punctuation, and understandability. Communication is extremely important in this course.
- (b) Documentation is likewise very important. Unsupported statements or opinions are worthless to the reader who desires to verify your findings. Complete and specific documentation is mandatory. Also, your references should be to primary sources, except in rare unusual situations.
- (c) Quoting should be kept to an absolute minimum.

**Guidelines for Doing Assignments:**

We expect you to answer each question as per instructions in the assignment. You will find it useful to keep the following points in mind:

1. **Planning:** Read the assignments carefully, and go through the Units on which they are based. Make some points regarding each question and then rearrange them in a logical order.
2. **Organization:** Be a little selective and analytical before drawing up a rough outline of your answer. Give adequate attention to the question's introduction and conclusion.

- a) The answer is logical and coherent,
  - b) It has clear connections between sentences and paragraphs,
  - c) The presentation is correct in your own expression and style.
3. **Presentation:** Once you are satisfied with your answer, you can write down the final version for submission. It is mandatory to write all assignments neatly. If you desire so, you may underline the points you wish to emphasize. Make sure that the answer is within the stipulated word limit.

*Wishing you all the best*

## **ASSIGNMENT No. 1**

**Total Marks: 100**

**Pass Marks: 50**

Q.1 Organizations are increasingly being urged to view human resources not as a cost to be minimized but as a strategic investment capable of generating long-term competitive advantage. Discuss the key considerations that influence how organizations decide how much to invest in their human resources, and critically evaluate whether nontraditional investment approaches such as job security guarantees and retention-focused practices are financially justifiable in highly competitive and uncertain business environments. (20)

Q.2 The legal environment of HR, covering areas such as equal employment opportunity, compensation law, and collective bargaining regulations, is frequently perceived by managers as a constraint on strategic flexibility rather than an enabler of organizational effectiveness. Discuss how the legal environment shapes HR strategy and evaluate whether organizations that proactively align their HR practices with legal requirements gain a genuine strategic advantage over those that treat legal compliance as a minimum obligation. (20)

Q.3 Strategy formulation is traditionally considered the domain of senior executives and business strategists, yet there is growing recognition that HR managers must play an active and influential role in shaping organizational strategy rather than simply implementing decisions made by others. Discuss the specific contributions HR can make during the strategy formulation process and evaluate what organizational conditions, competencies, and reporting structures are necessary for HR managers to participate meaningfully at the strategic level. (20)

Q.4 High performance HR practice systems are widely promoted in academic literature as a proven pathway to superior organizational outcomes, yet their real-world application is inconsistent, and their results are difficult to measure. Discuss the key differences between treating HR practices as isolated individual interventions versus implementing them as integrated systems, and critically evaluate whether universal best practices can be applied across all organizational contexts or whether a contingency perspective better explains why the same practices succeed in some organizations and fail in others. (20)

Q.5 Human resource evaluation is one of the most underdeveloped areas of strategic HRM, as many organizations continue to assess HR effectiveness through activity-based metrics such

as number of training sessions held or vacancies filled rather than through measures of strategic contribution and business impact. Discuss the major approaches to HR evaluation, examine why organizations are reluctant to rigorously evaluate their HR functions, and evaluate how HR departments can better demonstrate their strategic value to senior leadership and organizational stakeholders. (20)

## **ASSIGNMENT No. 2** (Units 1–9)

**Total Marks: 100**

**Pass Marks: 50**

### **ASSIGNMENT-2 & PRESENTATION** **Guidelines**

- a) You are required to develop Assignment-2 as a written research paper of 7,000 to 8,000 words on one of the topics listed below. The topic must be selected based on the last digit of your roll number (e.g., if your roll number is D-3427185, you will select Topic No. 5).
- b) In addition to the Assignment-2, you must also prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the same topic.
- c) You are required to upload Assignment-2 and the presentation by the given deadline, prior to the final examination in accordance with the provided instructions.

### **Format for Assignment-2 & Presentation**

#### **a) Introduction to the Topic**

Provide a comprehensive overview of the selected topic, including its background, relevance, and significance in the current academic or organizational context. Clearly define the research problem or objective.

#### **b) Exploration of Key Subtopics**

Identify and elaborate on the major sub-themes or components related to the main topic. This may include relevant theories, models, or dimensions that support a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

#### **c) Practical Implications and Real-World Applications**

Analyse how the topic applies in practical settings, with examples from real-world scenarios, organizational practices, or industry case studies. Highlight any observed trends or patterns.

#### **d) Critical Review of Theoretical and Practical Perspectives**

Conduct a critical review comparing theoretical frameworks with actual practices. Discuss discrepancies, similarities, and implications for researchers and practitioners.

#### **e) SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges) Analysis**

Conduct a detailed SWOC analysis of a selected organization or case study, specifically in relation to the chosen topic. This should reflect internal capabilities and external environmental factors.

**f) Conclusions and Actionable Recommendations**

Summarize the key findings of the research. Provide well-grounded conclusions and suggest practical, evidence-based recommendations for academic, managerial, or policy-related purposes.

**g) Annexures (if applicable)**

Include supporting materials referenced in the main body of the research.

## Topics for Practical Study

0. Visit a local organization and investigate how it approaches investment in employee training and development, finding out what budget is allocated for this purpose, how training needs are identified, whether the organization tracks the return on its training investment, and how training decisions are connected to broader business goals.
1. Select any organization and examine how recent technological changes have affected its HR structure and workforce utilization, identifying whether technology has led to restructuring of job roles, reduction in workforce size, or creation of new positions, and how HR has managed these transitions.
2. Visit a local private or public sector organization and investigate how it ensures compliance with equal employment opportunity requirements, finding out what policies exist to prevent discrimination in hiring and promotion, whether these policies are actively enforced, and how employees perceive the fairness of the organization's employment practices.
3. Research any organization operating in Pakistan that has an international dimension, such as a multinational company or an export-oriented firm, and examine how international developments and cross-border legal requirements have influenced its HR policies, staffing decisions, and employee management practices.
4. Visit an organization and investigate how its HR planning process is connected to its overall strategic plan, finding out who is involved in HR planning, what forecasting techniques are used to anticipate future workforce needs, and whether strategic salary planning is conducted as part of the overall planning cycle.
5. Identify a local organization that has recently faced either an employee shortage or an employee surplus and study how it responded to that challenge, examining whether it used recruitment drives, outsourcing, retraining, voluntary separations, or layoffs, and assess how effectively the HR department managed the situation.
6. Visit any organization and examine how it handles special workforce challenges such as career development for technical professionals or the management of dual career couples, finding out whether formal policies exist for these situations and how HR supports employees who face such circumstances.
7. Research a local organization's compensation system to find out whether it is strategically oriented, meaning whether pay structures are designed to reinforce specific employee behaviors and performance outcomes aligned with organizational strategy, and assess whether employees understand the connection between their pay and the organization's strategic priorities.
8. Visit a well-established local organization and investigate how it evaluates the effectiveness of its HR practices, finding out what metrics or indicators are used to assess HR performance, whether HR evaluation results are reported to senior

- management, and whether evaluation findings are actually used to improve HR systems and practices.
9. Identify any organization that has undergone significant strategic change such as a merger, diversification, or market expansion and examine how its HR department supported strategy implementation, focusing on how workforce utilization was adjusted, how employees were selected or redeployed for new roles, and how performance management and reward systems were revised to align with the new strategic direction.

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**Course Outline**

**Unit–1: Investment Perspective of Human Resources**

- 1.1 HR Investment Considerations
- 1.2 Investments in Training and Development
- 1.3 Investment Practices for Improved Retention
- 1.4 Investments in Job-Secure Workforces
- 1.5 Nontraditional Investment Approaches

**Unit–2: Human Resource Environment**

- 2.1 Technology and Organization Structure
- 2.2 Worker Values and Attitudinal Trends
- 2.3 Management Trends
- 2.4 Trends in Utilization of HR
- 2.5 International Developments

**Unit–3: HR Legal Environment**

- 3.1 Equal Employment Opportunity
- 3.2 Compensation
- 3.3 Employee Relations
- 3.4 Labor Relations and Collective Bargaining
- 3.5 Strategic Impact of Legal Environment

**Unit–4: Strategy Formulation**

- 4.1 Importance of HR to Strategy
- 4.2 International Strategy
- 4.3 HR Contributions to Strategy
- 4.4 Strategy Driven Roles, Behaviors and Practices
- 4.5 Strategic HR Activity Topology
- 4.6 Integration of Strategy and HR Planning
- 4.7 HR Manager and Strategic Planning

**Unit–5: Strategic Role of HR Planning**

- 5.1 Developmental Planning For Strategic Leadership
- 5.2 Assessment of Strategic Alternatives

- 5.3 Contribution to Strategic HRM
- 5.4 Strategic Salary Planning
- 5.5 Selecting Forecasting Techniques

**Unit–6: Strategy Implementation: Workforce Utilization and Employment Practices**

- 6.1 Efficient Utilization of HR
- 6.2 Dealing with Employee Shortages
- 6.3 Selection of Employees
- 6.4 Dealing with Employee Surplus
- 6.5 Special Implementation Challenges
  - 6.5.1 Career Path for Technical Professionals
  - 6.5.2 Dual Career Couples

**Unit–7: Strategy Implementation: Reward and Development Systems**

- 7.1 Strategically Oriented Performance Management Systems
- 7.2 Strategically Oriented Compensation Systems
- 7.3 Employee Development

**Unit–8: Performance Impact of HR Practices**

- 8.1 Individual High Performance Practices
- 8.2 Limitations of Individual Practices
- 8.3 Evolution of Practices
- 8.4 Systems of High Performance HR Practices
- 8.5 Universal Practices Vs. Contingency Perspectives

**Unit–9: Human Resource Evaluation**

- 9.1 Overview of Evaluation
- 9.2 Approaches to Evaluation
- 9.3 Prevalence of Evaluation
- 9.4 Evaluating Strategic Contributions of Traditional Areas

**Recommended Book / Study Guide:**

Bagram, M. M. M., & Ali, H. (2025). *Strategic Human Resource Management*. Allama Iqbal Open University. Pakistan.

Armstrong M., & Baron A. (2002). *Strategic Human Resource Management, The Key to Improve Business Performance*. London: CIPD

Armstrong M., & Baron A. (2008). *Strategic Human Resource Management, a Guide to Action* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). USA: Kogan Page Ltd.

Greer C. R. (2008). *Strategic Human Resource Management, a General Managerial Approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Delhi: Dowling Kindersley.