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**Associate in Human
Resources Certification**

Study Guide
2024 Exams



Sandra M. Reed, SPHR
James J. Galluzzo III, SPHR



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Dedicated to all HR practitioners, especially those just beginning—every one of us has stood where you are now. Your growth will shape the future of work!

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Our hope is that those who read it are inspired to continue their journey into the world of HR with knowledge, passion, and purpose.

About the Authors

Sandra M. Reed, SPHR, has more than 25 years of experience in human resources, the last 20 of which have been spent in training and instruction. She holds her undergraduate degree in industrial-organizational psychology and her graduate degree in organizational leadership. Fun fact: it took her 30 years to complete her college degrees! She was certified before her first degree, and it is this that fuels her passion for helping others achieve HR certification, regardless of their educational level. Sandra is a master practitioner of the MBTI, Working Genius and the Profiles XT personality assessments. She is the author of *A Guide to the Human Resource Body of Knowledge (HRBoK™)*, *The Big Book of HR Exam Questions*, and other certification study guides, all available through John Wiley & Sons. Sandra is the owner and founder of sandrareed.co, a consulting firm specializing in executive coaching and the unique needs of small to mid-size organizations. Find her on the web at <https://sandrareed.co>.

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Introduction

Why should you learn about HR certification? It's a fast-growing field and an integral part of any business that values its people. Earning an HR certification, like the aPHR or aPHRi, can significantly boost your career, especially if you're just starting out. These certifications confirm that you have the foundational knowledge of HR principles, laws, and best practices, making you stand out in the job market. Whether you are thinking about transitioning to the HR career field or if you're already working in HR, earning an aPHR or aPHRi certification shows employers that you have a strong understanding of the field and are dedicated to professional growth.

The aPHR (Associate Professional in Human Resources) and aPHRi (international version) are great introductory certifications for people entering the HR field. These exams assess your knowledge of key HR operations, including recruiting, employee relations, and compliance. Understanding these topics will not only help you pass the exam but will also give you practical knowledge that can be applied directly to real-world HR tasks. Preparing for these exams will help you gain a solid understanding of the fundamentals, boost your confidence in your knowledge, and set you up for success as you advance in your HR career.

This guide is designed to help you study for and pass the aPHR or aPHRi exams by covering essential HR topics and providing practical tips for success.

What Is Human Resources?

Human resources (HR) refers to the department within an organization that is responsible for managing everything related to the people who work there. HR focuses on recruiting, hiring, training, and development of employees, ensuring that the company has the right talent at the right time to compete in their respective markets. HR professionals also work to maintain workplace safety, handle employee compensation and benefits, and resolve any issues or conflicts that arise. In short, HR helps both the organization and its employees succeed by balancing the needs of the business with the well-being of its workforce.

Why Become HR Certified?

HR Certification through the HR Certification Institute (HRCI) is an internationally recognized credential that validates the expertise and knowledge of HR professionals. HRCI offers several certifications, including the Associate Professional in Human Resources (aPHR) and Associate Professional in Human Resources, International (aPHRi). These exams are designed for entry level HR career professionals, or for non-HR individuals who are responsible for managing people.

There are several benefits to successfully certifying.

Career Advancement Opportunities HR certification, such as those offered by HRCI, opens doors to higher-level positions and leadership roles. According to HRCI, certified professionals are often considered for promotions over noncertified colleagues because certification validates your expertise and commitment to the field.

Increased Earning Potential Studies show that HR professionals with certifications typically earn more than those without them. HRCI reports that individuals with certifications often see higher salaries, making certification a solid investment in long-term financial growth.

Professional Credibility Certification enhances your professional reputation, demonstrating your knowledge and commitment to staying current with HR practices and labor laws. It signals to employers and peers that you are a trusted and credible resource in the HR field.

Up-to-date Knowledge HR certifications require continuing education, ensuring that certified professionals stay informed on the latest trends, regulations, and best practices in the rapidly evolving HR landscape. This helps professionals manage compliance and improve organizational performance.

How to Become HR Certified

To become certified, candidates must pass a comprehensive exam, demonstrating their skills and knowledge in the field.

There are no eligibility requirements for the aPHR and aPHRi exam. This means that these certifications are ideal for individuals just starting their careers in HR, students, or those looking to transition into the field. Both certifications focus on foundational HR knowledge and are open to anyone looking to build their HR expertise.

The exams are administered by Pearson VUE, a global leader in computer-based testing. To register for the exam, candidates need to visit the HRCI website at www.hrci.org. They can create an account, complete the application, and select a testing location and date. Once the application is approved and the exam fees are paid, the candidate will receive instructions to schedule the exam with Pearson VUE. For those outside of the United States, HRCI exams are available in many international locations, allowing candidates to sit for the exam at a Pearson VUE testing center near them. If you need assistance, HRCI's customer service can be reached at 1-866-898-4724 or info@hrci.org.

Who Should Buy This Book?

If you are preparing to take the aPHR or aPHRi exams, you can benefit from this study guide. If you're new to the HR field, this guide covers essential topics you'll need to understand from the very basics, leading up to the level of knowledge required to pass the

certification exams. Even if you’re just starting your HR career, this book will guide you through the material in a clear, structured way. If you already have some HR experience or are familiar with basic HR concepts, this guide can help you review key areas and fill any gaps in your knowledge. US military service members who perform HR functions as their military occupation can also use this guide to transition into civilian HR by demonstrating competency in key HR tasks.

This book assumes that you have a basic understanding of workplace environments and human resources, such as general knowledge of HR functions like recruitment, employee relations, and compliance. It’s helpful if you’ve worked in HR or have some familiarity with it, but it’s not a requirement. Whether you’re just beginning your HR career or seeking to solidify your foundational knowledge, this book will help prepare you for the aPHR or aPHRi exams, ensuring you’re ready to pass.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is broken down into three sections. Section 1 includes Chapter 1, which introduces you to both the aPHR and aPHRi exams. You should read this no matter which exam you plan to take. It outlines the fundamental exam content, the structure of the questions, and a few essential exam-day details to be aware of before test day.

If you are seeking to become aPHR certified, then Section 2 is for you. If you are focusing on the aPHRi certification, then you’ll want to jump to Section 3.

Section 2 for aPHR contains chapters 2 through 6. Again, these cover the exam content for the aPHR exam.

Chapter 2 Functional Area 01 | Talent Acquisition

Talent acquisition involves sourcing, recruiting, and selecting the right candidates for a company. This function focuses on building a strong workforce by identifying job requirements, utilizing recruitment tools, and implementing strategies to attract diverse and qualified candidates. It includes everything from creating job descriptions to managing the interview process and ensuring an effective onboarding experience.

Chapter 3 Functional Area 02 | Learning & Development

Learning and development focuses on training and equipping employees with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their roles. This functional area involves creating and delivering training programs, providing ongoing education, and supporting career development. It also assesses training effectiveness to ensure employees can contribute to the organization’s success.

Chapter 4 Functional Area 03 | Compensation & Benefits

Compensation and benefits management involves designing and administering pay structures, incentive programs, and employee benefits such as health care, retirement

plans, and paid leave. The goal is to create a competitive package that attracts, retains, and motivates employees while ensuring internal and external equity.

Chapter 5 Functional Area 04 | Employee Relations

Employee relations is about managing the relationship between employers and employees to foster a positive work environment. It involves addressing employee concerns, mediating conflicts, and ensuring fair treatment. This area also covers handling grievances, conducting investigations, and maintaining open communication.

Chapter 6 Functional Area 05 | Compliance and Risk Management

Compliance and risk management is responsible for ensuring that the company follows all labor laws, regulations, and internal policies. This includes monitoring compliance with legal standards related to discrimination, workplace safety, and data protection. Risk management involves identifying potential risks, such as legal liabilities or operational hazards, and implementing measures to mitigate these risks.

Section 3 of the book focuses on the aPHRi exam. This section contains chapters 7 through 11, which are reviewed next.

Chapter 7 Functional Area 01 | HR Operations

In an international context, HR operations involve managing the global workforce's day-to-day administrative tasks. This includes navigating the complexities of international payroll, employee benefits across multiple countries, maintaining compliance with varied labor laws, and managing expatriate assignments.

Chapter 8 Functional Area 02 | Recruitment and Selection

Global recruitment and selection require understanding the diverse labor markets and legal frameworks across different countries. HR professionals in an international setting must adapt job descriptions, sourcing strategies, and selection processes to align with local employment laws and cultural differences. This could involve using international job boards, engaging in global talent sourcing, and navigating visa and work permit requirements.

Chapter 9 Functional Area 03 | Compensation and Benefits

Compensation and benefits in an international HR context must take into account the varying cost of living, tax regulations, and legal requirements in different countries. HR professionals are responsible for creating equitable pay structures that reflect local market standards while maintaining consistency with global corporate guidelines. This includes managing cross-border benefits packages, such as international health insurance, retirement plans, and tax considerations for expatriates.

Chapter 10 Functional Area 04 | Human Resource Development and Retention

Global HR development and retention strategies involve creating training and career development programs that are applicable across different cultural and regional contexts. HR professionals must consider language barriers, time zone differences, and the availability of training resources in multiple regions. Retention efforts focus on building leadership pipelines that prepare employees for international roles and adapting professional development opportunities to meet the unique career aspirations of employees in different countries.

Chapter 11 Functional Area 05 | Employee Relations, Health, and Safety

In an international environment, managing employee relations requires HR professionals to navigate different labor laws, cultural expectations, and conflict resolution strategies. Ensuring compliance with international health and safety standards, such as those set by the International Labour Organization (ILO), is critical to protecting employees. This includes creating policies that address workplace harassment, safety protocols, and employee well-being across multiple countries.

Chapter Features

Each chapter begins with a list of the aPHR and aPHRi objectives that are covered in that chapter. The book doesn't cover the objectives in order, but rather, connects key concepts to optimize learning. Thus, you shouldn't be alarmed at some of the odd ordering of the objectives within the book.

Within each chapter are key terms you should be familiar with to understand the concepts covered, along with an "HR Done Wrong" feature to highlight the exam content within a real-world context. At the end of each chapter, you'll find a couple of elements you can use to prepare for the exam:

Exam Essentials This section summarizes important information that was covered in the chapter. You should be able to perform each of the tasks or convey the information requested.

Review Questions Each chapter concludes with 20 review questions. If you can't answer at least 80% of these questions correctly, go back and review the chapter, or at least those sections that seem to be giving you difficulty. The answers to these review questions are covered in Appendix A.



The review questions, assessment test, and other testing elements included in this book are *not* derived from the exam questions, so don't memorize the answers to these questions and assume that doing so will enable you to pass the exam. You should learn the underlying topic, as described in the text of

the book. This will let you answer the questions provided with this book *and* pass the exam. Learning the underlying topic is also the approach that will serve you best in the workplace—the ultimate goal of a certification like the aPHR and aPHRi.

To get the most out of this book, you should read each chapter from start to finish and then check your memory and understanding with the chapter-end elements. Even if you’re already familiar with a topic, you should skim the chapter; HR is complex enough that there are often multiple ways to accomplish a task, so you may learn something even if you’re already competent in an area.

Interactive Online Learning Environment and Test Bank

This book is accompanied by an online learning environment that provides several additional elements. Items available among these companion files include the following:

Practice tests All of the questions in this book appear in our proprietary digital test engine—including the 60-question assessment test at the end of this introduction and the 200+ questions that make up the review question sections at the end of each chapter. In addition, there are two 50-question bonus exams.

Electronic “flashcards” The digital companion files include 150 questions—75 for the aPHR and 75 for the aPHRi—in flashcard format (a question followed by a single correct answer). You can use these to review your knowledge of the exam objectives.

Glossary The key terms from this book, and their definitions, are available as a fully searchable PDF.



You can access all these resources at www.wiley.com/go/sybextestprep.

Conventions Used in This Book

This book uses certain typographic styles in order to help you quickly identify important information and to avoid confusion over the meaning of words such as on-screen prompts. In particular, look for the following styles:

- *Italicized text* indicates key terms that are described at length for the first time in a chapter. (Italics are also used for emphasis.)

- A monospaced font indicates an online url to provide additional online resources or references

In addition to these text conventions, which can apply to individual words or entire paragraphs, a few conventions highlight segments of text:



A note indicates information that's useful or interesting but that's somewhat peripheral to the main text. A note might be relevant to a small number of networks, for instance, or it may refer to an outdated feature.

Sidebars

A sidebar is like a note but longer. The information in a sidebar is useful, but it doesn't fit into the main flow of the text.



Real World Scenario

A real world scenario is a type of sidebar that describes an example that's particularly grounded in the real world. This may be a situation we or somebody I know has encountered, or it may be advice on how to work around problems that are common in real, working human resources environments.

aPHR and aPHRi Exam Objectives

The *aPHR and aPHRi Exam Prep Study Guide* has been written to cover every exam objective at a level appropriate to its exam weighting. The following tables provides a breakdown of this book's exam coverage, showing you the weight of each section and the chapter where each objective is covered:

aPHR EXAM WEIGHTING

Subject area	% of Exam	Chapter
Talent Acquisition	19%	2
Learning and Development	15%	3

Subject area	% of Exam	Chapter
Compensation and Benefits	17%	4
Employee Relations	24%	5
Compliance and Risk Management	25%	6
Total	100%	

aPHRi EXAM WEIGHTING

Subject area	% of Exam	Chapter
HR Operations	33%	7
Recruitment and Selection	22%	8
Compensation and Benefits	15%	9
Human Resource Development and Retention	10%	10
Employee Relations, Health, and Safety	20%	11
Total	100%	

aPHR and aPHRi Assessment Exams

Use these practice questions to test your knowledge in the key functional areas of the exams. The following are two assessments. One is for the aPHR followed by one for the aPHRi.

aPHR Assessment Exam

1. What is the primary benefit of a matrix organizational structure?
 - A. Simplifies decision-making
 - B. Allows employees to report to multiple managers based on different projects

- C.** Streamlines communication between departments
 - D.** Reduces employee supervision
- 2.** What is a key feature of a flat organizational structure?
 - A.** Few levels of management and wider spans of control
 - B.** Many levels of management and narrow spans of control
 - C.** Employees reporting to multiple managers
 - D.** Teams divided by function
- 3.** Which structure might work best for a small startup with limited staff?
 - A.** Bureaucratic structure
 - B.** Functional structure
 - C.** Geographic structure
 - D.** Flat organizational structure
- 4.** What is the first step in handling an employee complaint?
 - A.** Notify the employee's supervisor
 - B.** Initiate an investigation
 - C.** Open a file to set up the record
 - D.** Listen and gather information
- 5.** Which of the following is a common tool used to assess future staffing needs in an organization? (Choose all that apply.)
 - A.** Benchmarking
 - B.** AI
 - C.** Forecasting
 - D.** Regression analysis
- 6.** What is the primary purpose of a job analysis in the hiring process?
 - A.** It analyzes for internal wage equity
 - B.** To differentiate jobs from each other
 - C.** To analyze external wage equity
 - D.** To identify the KSAOs for each position
- 7.** Which recruiting strategy focuses on increasing the company's visibility and attractiveness to potential candidates?
 - A.** Employer branding
 - B.** Online job boards
 - C.** Job fairs
 - D.** Candidate pipelines