4.7 Job Descriptions and Person Specifications in Recruitment: 30-minute Pack

Total Marks

AQA 8132 · Calculators not allowed · about 30 minutes

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions in the spaces provided. Use the Sunny Lane Cafe scenario printed in question 1 where requested. At least some questions require full-sentence answers. Time suggested: 30 minutes.

1 Vacancy scenario: Sunny Lane Cafe is recruiting a part-time Supervisor. Job description excerpt: job title Supervisor; main duties include opening and closing the cafe, supervising three staff on shift, cash handling, and ensuring food safety standards; reports to the Cafe Manager. Person specification excerpt: essential: Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate, experience of supervising a small team, good numeracy skills for cash handling; desirable: barista training, availability on weekend mornings.

Identify two items from the scenario that belong on the job description and two items that belong on the person specification.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 State one reason why the reporting line (who the role reports to) is useful to include on the job description for the Sunny Lane Cafe Supervisor role.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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3 A business needs a delivery driver. Which one of the following would be a sensible essential criterion on the person specification?

- ☐ A) Likes the colour red
- ☐ B) Has a degree in Business Studies
- ☐ C) Lives within one mile of the depot
- ☐ D) Holds a full driving licence

(Total for Question 3 is 1 mark)

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4 State two different kinds of criteria that appear on a person specification, using the Sunny Lane Cafe scenario as a guide.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

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5 Explain why a Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate is included as an essential criterion on the Sunny Lane Cafe person specification. Give one developed reason.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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6 Explain why 'supervising three staff on shift' is an appropriate duty to include on the Sunny Lane Cafe's job description for the Supervisor role. Give one developed reason.

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

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7 Harbour Street Bookshop, a fictional independent shop, is about to recruit its first part-time assistant. The owner says: 'A job advert is enough. Writing a job description and a person specification would be a waste of my time.'
Analyse whether the owner is right.

(Total for Question 7 is 6 marks)

8 Analyse whether the person specification excerpt given for the Sunny Lane Cafe Supervisor role is fit for purpose. The excerpt reads: essential: Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate, experience of supervising a small team, good numeracy skills for cash handling; desirable: barista training, availability on weekend mornings.
Analyse strengths and weaknesses and reach a conclusion about fitness for purpose.

(Total for Question 8 is 6 marks)

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Mark scheme · 4.7 Job Descriptions and Person Specifications in Recruitment: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

one correct job description item, e.g. supervising three staff, or opening and closing the cafe, or cash handling, or ensuring food safety standards, or reports to the Cafe Manager **B1**

a second correct job description item, distinct from the first **B1**

one correct person specification item, e.g. Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate, or experience supervising a small team, or good numeracy skills, or barista training, or weekend availability (desirable) **B1**

a second correct person specification item, distinct from the first **B1**

Answer: Job description items: supervising three staff; reports to the Cafe Manager (or opening/closing the cafe; cash handling; ensuring food safety standards). Person specification items: Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate; experience supervising a small team (or good numeracy skills; barista training; weekend availability).

Question 2

identifies a reason, e.g. shows who the Supervisor will be accountable to or who they will take instruction from **B1**

adds a consequence, e.g. helps applicants understand the level of responsibility and where the role sits in the team **B1**

Answer: It shows who the Supervisor is accountable to, for example the Cafe Manager, which helps applicants understand the level of responsibility and where the role sits in the team.

Question 3

D cao **B1**

Answer: D

Question 4

one kind of criteria, e.g. qualifications such as Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate **B1**

a second kind of criteria, e.g. experience or skills such as experience supervising a small team or good numeracy skills **B1**

Answer: Examples: qualifications (Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate) and experience or skills (experience supervising a small team; good numeracy skills).

Question 5

identifies a reason, e.g. ensures the candidate knows how to maintain food safety standards **B1**

develops the point, e.g. reduces risk of food contamination and helps the cafe meet legal or health requirements **B1**

provides a secondary effect, e.g. protects customer safety and the cafe's reputation **B1**

links to the scenario, e.g. the job description includes ensuring food safety standards, so the certificate shows the candidate can meet that duty **B1**

Answer: It shows the candidate understands food safety, which reduces the risk of contamination and helps the cafe meet legal health requirements; this protects customers and the cafe's reputation, and matches the job duty of ensuring food safety standards.

Question 6

identifies a reason, e.g. clarifies the level of responsibility expected in the role **B1**

develops the point, e.g. helps applicants understand supervisory duties such as allocating tasks and resolving staff issues **B1**

provides a practical consequence, e.g. allows the employer to assess whether a candidate has suitable experience or leadership skills **B1**

links to the person specification, e.g. connects to the essential experience of supervising a small team listed on the person specification **B1**

Answer: It clarifies the level of responsibility, showing applicants they will need to manage others, which involves allocating tasks and resolving staff issues; this lets the employer assess leadership experience and links to the person specification requirement for experience supervising a small team.

Question 7

Level 1 Makes simple or undeveloped points about writing the documents or about the advert, with little link to the bookshop and no clear conclusion. **1-3**

Level 2 Analyses points for and against the owner's view, linked to the bookshop's situation, and reaches a supported conclusion about whether the owner is right. **4-6**

Indicative content:

- For the owner: the bookshop is small and the post is part-time, so the duties may be few and easy to describe in an advert, and writing long documents takes time the owner may not have.
- Against the owner: writing down the duties and the qualities wanted makes the owner decide what the job really needs, which helps to attract suitable applicants and reduces time wasted interviewing unsuitable ones.
- Against the owner: a person specification gives a fair, consistent basis for shortlisting, and a job description gives the new assistant clear expectations and a record if there is later a disagreement about duties.
- Judgement: the owner is only partly right; short versions of both documents take little time for a small post and the advert can then be taken from them, so the time is unlikely to be wasted.

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Question 8

Level 1 Shows simple points about the person specification, for example naming one or two strengths or weaknesses, with limited development and little use of the scenario. **1-3**

Level 2 Analyses both strengths and weaknesses in a developed way, applies points to the Sunny Lane Cafe scenario and reaches a reasoned conclusion about whether the person specification is fit for purpose. **4-6**

Indicative content:

- Strengths: includes relevant essential qualifications and skills, for example Level 2 Food Hygiene matches the job duty to ensure food safety, and numeracy skills relate directly to cash handling duties.
- Strengths: includes experience of supervising a small team, which is directly relevant to supervising three staff on shift and helps shortlisting identify candidates with the right background.
- Weaknesses: the person specification is brief and may miss other useful criteria such as customer service skills or flexibility in shift patterns, which could be important for a cafe role.
- Weaknesses: desirable criteria such as barista training and weekend availability are helpful, but the specification does not state how essential weekend availability is for shortlisting, potentially causing unsuitable applicants to be considered.
- Conclusion: overall the person specification is largely fit for purpose because it links to key duties, but it could be improved by adding explicit personal qualities or availability requirements to make shortlisting more focused.

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