## AC 1.1 Appraise what it means to be a people professional.

The term professional typically refers to when people work within a profession with a scope of knowledge and skills that let them perform to certain standards (Perez, 2019). It is also about presenting oneself and the way of behaving and espousing the key values (Herrity, 2023). Therefore, a professional is the person who have a knowledge base, skills, espoused values or key behaviors that enable them to work in the world of business.

A people professional is someone who has specialized knowledge, with certain skill-set, and personal values and interact with and support people. Professionals need to be affiliated with a professional body to provide the knowledge base and the code of conduct by which people professionals abide by. CIPD introduced its profession map that show people professionals the core knowledge, skills and behaviors they should possess. CIPD profession map introduces key principles for people professionals, one of which is people matter (CIPD, n.d.). Dealing with people equally and identifying own biases and challenging them is a core value for a people professional.

Empathy with others is understanding of their perspectives and emotions and putting oneself in their positions. It enables individuals to relate to others that can help building relationship and mutual trust. Empathizing with others helps creating a culture of fairness and professionalism.

## AC3.1 Explore how the role of a people professional is evolving and the implications this has for continuing professional development.

In the world of knowledge and skills-based work, continuous professional development (CPD) is not an option; it is a must. Especially with people practice which is on a steep changing curve nowadays. The UK’s CPD certificate center defines the CPD as the lifelong commitment towards developing own skills through engaging in learning activities (CPD, n.d.). It enables individuals to be proactive and have a passion for learning and develop their own skills. To gain the most of CPD, it needs to be coupled with reflective practice.

Reflective practice in general is the learning form experience through reflecting of what we had done in the past and learn from it in future situations (Top Hat, n.d.). When an individual engages in a learning activity, they should reflect on it: what they learned from that activity, what should have done better, and what can be done in the future to gain the most benefits from learning activity.

The new CIPD profession map introduced new knowledge and principles like business acumen and evidence-based practice respectively (peopleprofession.cipd, n.d). That had a great impact on people professional’s CPD: increasing the areas which they need to learn about in addition to upskilling their current skill set. People professional, for example, now need to be commercially driven and recognize the commercial context and the business environment in which the organization operates. In other words, they should have an outside-in perspective (Ulrich, 2019). Moreover, in the big data era, and with evidence-based practice, people professionals must not neglect the power of data analysis and the field of people analytics. The changing nature of people professional work, therefore, has a great impact on learning activities and CPD of people professionals.

Effective CPD should have certain characteristics:

* Continuous: It is a life-long process of learning and developing.
* Personalized: It should be based on any skills gap addressed, and it should enforce strengths as well.
* SMART: The learning objectives should be smart ones.
* Reflective: Individuals should reflect on their CPD to measure its viability with their career and personal development as well.

## AC 1.2 Recognize how personal and ethical values can be applied in the context of people practice.

Ethical values are the principles people live individually, or the how the business run on a corporate level (Sherman, 2020). They provide the moral compass through which decisions are made and dictate drive human behavior because it is the right thing to do (CIPD, 2019). These values reflect the belief system about what is morally acceptable and what is not, what is right and what is wrong. Working unethically does not only raise the red flag about organization’s behaviors, but it also impacts the business in terms of employee retention and performance (Baker, 2022).

Personal values that are applicable to people professional that could impact people professional work and their relationship with others are, for example:

* Integrity:

Integrity is the adherence to a code of conduct or a professional ethical standard. It is about being honest and accountable for making mistakes and rectifying them. Showing honesty at work is a fundamental ethical value that could improve working practices. For example, employees who lack the ability of doing task and asks for help and admit mistakes when they happen help increasing performance and teamwork. They also gain trust, respect, and good reputation among their colleagues.

* Fairness

Fairness is the value of being just and impartial and treat people from an equal distance. People professional must espouse fairness in the workplace as it has a significant impact on relationship within workplace and how work is done. Opportunities for advancement, for instance, should be provided for people on just basis. When employees perceive equal treatment based on fair policy, they would be more committed to their work and more engaged. Unfair working values, however, would lead to alienated and disengaged employees.

* Valuing people:

Valuing people is an essential principle in people practice professional life. It refers to the fact that all people are equally treated and deserve respect, dignity and consideration. It helps to create an environment of diversity and inclusion in the workplace which has a great benefit for the organization in terms of abiding by legislation, better decision making, creativity and innovation. It creates a sense of trust between coworkers and the organization alike.

## AC 1.3 Consider the importance of people professionals contributing to discussions in an informed, clear and confident way to influence others.

One of the key behaviors in the CIPD profession map that could be espoused by a people professional is the courage to influence others (CIPD, n.d.). It is an essential behavior for a people professional to build a strong business case and be able to influence stakeholders. For building a strong business case, people professional must have the necessary tools to lead an informed, clear and confident discussion to influence others. Changing the recruitment policy and procedures that issues with core values like transparency and respecting others, for instance, requires a bold people professional to challenge the status quo and call for a change.

*Informed discussion:*

One of the key people practices is making decisions or arguing based on solid evidence that prove evidence-based practice. People professionals should not make decisions or arguing based on opinions and views; their arguments are based on evidence. Based on French and Raven's forms of power, people professional have the power of information and knowledge to influence others (mind tools, n.d.). To utilize the power of evidence-based arguments, people professionals need to collect all relevant information about the deficiency of the current policy and how to fix it.

*Clear discussion:*

To demonstrate a clear discussion to influence others, people professional could use the divide and conquer principle. Dividing the bigger picture or the whole argument into smaller parts helps make it clear. Giving a bird eye view about the discussion and cascading down to discuss small issues one in a turn, and then summarizing and collecting all together at the end of discussion makes it clear to the audience.

*Engaging discussion:*

To engage stakeholders during discussing changing recruitment policy, it is a fundamental practice to leave a room for feedback and thoughts. For stakeholder to be engaged, the discussion should be back and forth, not a lecturing style. Additionally, presenting active listening skills during the discussion makes it more engaging.

## AC 1.4 Recognize when and how you would raise matters which conflict with ethical values or legislation.

An example in which there was a conflict with ethical and social values is when a university professor tried to sexually harass one of his female students. A university professor in Saudi Arabia managed to get the phone number of a female student with the help of an employee who works in admission and registration department in the university. In a conservative society like Saudi Arabia, this behavior is unacceptable on all levels: ethically, socially, and on legislation level. Both the professor and the employee who released the student’s information (phone number) have committed an unacceptable behavior.

Whistleblowing policy is a policy to protect the whistleblower – the person who raises the concern about wrongdoing (whistlelink, 2020) – from any victimization or unfair dismissal (Homann, 2022). Saudi government introduced a royal decree to protect the whistleblower who report unethical and illegal behaviors in workplace. The National Anti-Corruption Commission (Nazaha) are taking extra measures to protect the whistleblowers (Alissa, 2020).

Hence, the incident was reported to human resources manager, who in turn reported to higher management (college dean and board of trustees) for investigation. A committee was formed to investigate the incident to take an action after hearing from the employee and the professor. Both could not deny the incident: the employee admitted that he released sensitive student’s information, and the professor confessed that he wanted the phone number for unethical purposes i.e., for harassment. They both agreed that that behavior is not acceptable ethically or legally. The committee decision was a dismissal for both employees without notice.

## AC 2.1 Argue the human and business benefits of people feeling included, valued, and fairly treated at work linking to related theory.

When people feel included, valued, and treated fairly on an ethical basis, many benefits result from an employee as well as organization perspectives including job satisfaction, higher level of performance, lower level of absenteeism.

According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), there are three basic needs for individuals that derive their intrinsic motivation (Ackerman, 2018). The three needs are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy is the need to control one’s own life, and in terms of world of work, the need to control the way of working. Competence is the need to be competent in what individuals do, while relatedness is the need for affiliation and having relationship with others.

Fulfilling these basic needs help employees fell included, valued and treated fairly. Employees can feel valued when they are autonomous and have control over their job they are doing. Similarly, they feel valued and included when they receive constructive feedback about their performance. Also, when employees treated fairly at workplace, they feel that they are connected to their colleagues and the need of relatedness is fulfilled. Satisfying basic needs of employees and when they feel they are valued, included, and treated fairly, job satisfactions hikes, and hence employee retention; they would not seek another place to satisfy their needs.

From the business perspective, employees with higher job satisfaction are more productive and promoter to the employer brand. In other words, satisfied employees are willing to recommend their organization to others. Research showed that belonged employees showed 167% increase in their employer promotor score (Carr, Reece, et al., 2019). Further results from the research showed that employee belonging linked to increased job performance by 56%, lowering the employee turnover by 50% and a 75% reduction is sick days.

## AC2.2 Discuss strategies for designing and ensuring inclusive people practices.

Inclusion is a fundamental people practice principle and it means giving voice to all relevant stakeholders in a particular initiative. There are several ways out there to collect feedback from relevant stakeholders like online surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.

Employee turnover is a serious problem that faces organizations and costs them time and money. The available data of turnover figures indicate that there is a problem that needs intervention. To face the problem, people practitioners first need to collect data using different methods to ensure inclusion of all relevant stakeholders. Exit interviews are an essential part of the tool kit in hand to determine the problem and fix it. Although it is historical data, it is very useful to focus on the problem. Next, focus groups including line managers and people professional to brainstorm potential reasons behind high turnover rate. Moreover, employee satisfaction survey gives a great indication about employee satisfaction scores, which will complement the data in hand.

Consolidating and analyzing that data give a bird eye view about the situation, and through further investigation the potential reasons reveal. Assuming that the most significant reason for high turnover rate is insufficient learning and development activities that support career progression. Consequently, the problem is clear, and the solution is to introduce fair policy for Learning and Development activities based on solid performance management system. To ensure inclusion, a training needs analysis is conducted for all staff based on which L&D programs are designed.

After the intervention, the data should be collected to check the viability of the solution. The turnover rate after the intervention is a clear measure of the solution. In addition, employee satisfaction survey is conducted and compared with the scores before the intervention. Line managers should also be listened to so that they give feedback about the success of the initiative.