

Major Assignment

There is one major assignment to be returned via the return box "Major Assignment". There is **one deadline** for this course (cf return box).

This assignment is divided into 3 parts, A, B, C, which have to be returned into a single document according to the deadline you have chosen.

Please note that:

- The grading of this assignment will start after the deadline you have chosen.
- The extent of the different parts of this assignment is expressed in words. A positive/negative margin of 15% is acceptable. Eg. If the part is of 2 000 words, 1 700 words would be the minimum while 2 300 the maximum.
- You are expected to refer in an academic way to the sources you use (please check Messi (under thesis) for instructions about referring).
- If you do interviews to complete this assignment, you will have to refer to them too.

Part A

2000 words

Read the following article/book:

Hong, Lehtonen and Stähle : Co-evolution of knowledge and Competence Management and its strategic implications

Manninen and Viitala, Competence and human recourse development

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxr5wMfO59I>

The purpose of this first part is to present your own understanding of what knowledge and competence management is/should be about i.e. what are the concepts which makes sense to you, why, how, why not...

You may first describe what you think of the concepts "knowledge", "competence", "management" mean before presenting what "knowledge and competence management" is for you. Taking, for instance, the questions posed in the article by Hong, Lehtonen and Stähle, you are here expected to make informed statements about what assumptions you yourself are operating with. What kind of choices regarding the pragmatic understanding of these words have you made / are you making? E.g. Is knowledge, for you, objective or subjective or both (and how)? What is management to you? And what should knowledge and competence management be about?

You are expected to use the aforementioned article and book as references in your work and refer to them in an academic way. You may want to use sources of your own as well as the other reading materials available in optima.

The point here is not to supply a “final answer” or the “right” one. Rather, it is to show that you are capable of discussing knowledge competence management in different ways, and argue for your perspectives on the issues pertaining to knowledge management. The essay is open-ended, and you can choose how to construct it. This part will thus be graded on the way in which you argue for your perspectives, not on the “correctness” of your answers.

Part B

3000 words

The purpose of this 2nd part is to examine the linkages/cohesiveness between an organisation strategy and its human capital. Select an organisation you know well (like an organisation you worked for/are working for). With the help of the reading materials available (it is allowed to use reading materials from other courses, e.g. strategic management):

- Describe the strategic objectives of that organisation
- Describe the main challenges (internal and external, if any) the organisation is facing
- Make a critical assessment the human capital of that organisation with regard to its strategic objectives (e.g. what areas of knowledge and competences the organization is good at, which are strongly/under represented, what knowledge and competences/qualifications are required for achieving strategic objectives, knowledge and competence gaps? What strengths and weaknesses/development targets of competence do you recognized?). If your case organization is of a significant size, you may have to focus on a specific department/business unit (the idea is to go as deep as possible in the analysis).
- Draft a model for mapping out the knowledge and competences needed to achieve the strategic objectives of that organization (you will find examples of competence map either in text books or in Internet).

Part C

1000 words

The main purpose of this 3rd part is to have you develop processes to maintain and nurture the knowledge and competences of the human resources for the organisation/department you studied in the part B. If the organisation has already clear processes, you will make a critical assessment of the existing processes and make suggestions for improvement.

To help you with this part C, you may look the tools and methods (knowledge system, mentoring, training...) which are used to strengthen the knowledge and competences in your own organization. You may also consider issues related to knowledge sharing/hoarding (e.g. how to prevent knowledge hoarding, how to make knowledge sharing smoother, how to develop an organization culture where knowledge sharing is the norm).

You will conclude this part by explaining the importance of knowledge and competence management to achieve and maintain competitive advantage.