elephant™

Certificate in Payroll Operations

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Programme Overview

Our Certificate in Payroll Operations is a 12 month programme focused on building your practical, tactical skills and experience in all the fundamental areas of payroll processing, including employment law, policies and procedures, and payroll management.

Over the Certificate you will complete online learning modules with on the job assignments, case studies, quizzes and assessments. The programme also involves rating your achievement level from the start to the finish and mapping your skills and experience.

What will you finish with?

The Certificate in Payroll Operations is different from tertiary study as you need to be working in a role where you can apply what you're learning, rather than just covering theory.

You'll work through case studies, exercises and real situations as well as reviewing your own workplace practices so that you get as much experience as you can, to deliver effectively in real life. Once you've completed your final assessment you will be awarded your certificate.

Elephant Certificates are now recognised globally, in New Zealand, Australia, the Pacific Islands, Singapore, Malaysia, Canada, the US and United Kingdom.

Who should attend?

You'll benefit most from the Certificate in Payroll Operations if you are:
- Studying business or finance and want to prepare for your first payroll role or an HR role which will have payroll responsibilities
- New to a payroll role and want to make sure you know everything you should
- In a role where you have payroll responsibilities but haven't completed a formal qualification in payroll

Programme Structure

The programme is structured over 12 months. You must complete 12 modules to complete the Certificate. The components of the Certificate include:
- A self-assessment of your knowledge and skills to map against when you finish.
- Recorded webinars to watch from work or home, on your computer or phone. You also get a set of handouts to make notes from the webinar.
- Suggested articles to read or other videos to watch.
- Assignments to complete which consist of questions based on case studies and your own processes. For more about these see the FAQ page.

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For the Certificate in Payroll Operations, you must complete **12 modules**. Ten of these are core modules which are compulsory and two can be chosen from our five optional modules. If you have significant experience or training in 1 or 2 areas covered by the core modules, you can swop these for optional modules.

Core Modules

Employment Relations Act

Payroll are often responsible for checking what status new employees are (regardless of the employment agreement HR have put them on) and to ensure they are set up and paid correctly.

This module covers:

- The differences between full time, part time and casual employees
- What to know about fixed term employees and those on availability agreements
- Paying contractors or temps

Annual Leave & Public Holidays

The Holidays Act can cause many payroll headaches and cost your business if leave isn't calculated and paid correctly. This module takes you through understanding the complexities around:

- The legislation on annual leave and public holidays
- Where the payroll issues can be with calculating annual leave especially for variable hour employees and how to overcome these
- Knowing when and what to pay for public holidays

Sick & Bereavement Leave

Like annual leave, there are some complications to correctly paying sick and bereavement leave under the Holidays Act. This module covers:

- The legal provisions of sick and bereavement leave
- How to calculate sick leave for employees with non-standard days or hours and work out entitlements
- What to watch with bereavement leave
- ACC and paying people who are off work long term due to illness or accident

Other Leave Provisions

There are a number of other types of leave that payroll may be asked to process. This module covers:

- Long service leave, jury leave, leave without pay, Volunteers Protection Leave and paying unauthorised leave
- Domestic Violence Leave - the provisions and what payroll needs to consider when calculating pay
- Leave policies that can be useful and how to apply policies that are different to the Holidays Act

Parental Leave provisions

When employees take parental leave and when they return to work, there are a number of issues payroll must navigate correctly. This module covers:

- Calculating leave entitlements and wage/salary payments when employees go on parental leave
- Employer vs Government payments and processes
- Paying keeping in touch hours & days and impact on leave accruals
- How leave is affected once employees return to work and other payments you may need to make

Allowances & Tax

There are a number of allowances that payroll may have to set up and pay to employees. You need to make sure you have set these up correctly and understand the tax issues, to mitigate any issues for your business. This module covers:

- The different types of taxable allowances and the impact on PAYE, tax and holiday pay
- Deductions from allowances
- How to deal with non taxable allowances
- Allowances and ACC
- Gross earnings calculations and PAYE
- Other types of tax that apply to pay

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Core Modules continued

Deductions & Overpayments

There are a number of deductions you may have to set up and make from employee's pays. Again there are some complexities with getting these right!

This module takes you through:

- The Wages Protection Act – understanding the key points of the legislation, and what happens when an overpayment has been made
- The different deductions that you can make from employee pay and the issues to know
- Holidays Act Remediation – what the process is with MBIE when your calculations are incorrect

Bonuses and Remuneration

As well as setting up employees when they start with their wages or salaries – Payroll are also involved when salary increases are enacted for individuals or through Collective Bargaining, and for paying bonuses and incentives. This module takes you through:

- Understanding different remuneration concepts and the legal issues around salaries and wages
- Incentives and bonuses – which impact on holiday pay/leave and which don't
- When RDP or AVP apply
- Applying pay increases

Effective Payroll Processes

Whether you are a sole charge Payroll professional or part of a team, there are a number of tools and techniques you can use to make your payroll processing effective, and some legislation around these. This module covers:

- The Privacy Act – what information you can and can't collect, and how to store and share this legally.
- Using Agile, Design Thinking and Six Sigma – different ways to benchmark your payroll processes and make them more effective
- Managing email and other enquiries effectively

Processing final pays

There are a number of payroll challenges you can face when processing final pays. This module covers:

- Calculating a final wage or salary payment including holiday pay or annual leave
- Differences with redundancy payments and tax
- Paying settlements or bonuses in final pays
- Which deductions you can make and which you can't, and how to advise your business on this

Optional Modules

Two optional modules can be chosen from our eight choices or where you have significant training or experience in 1 or 2 areas of the core modules, you can choose 4 of the optional modules.

Clever Communication

To deliver effectively in payroll, you need to understand the different communication styles – both yours and others, and how to adapt to managers, employees and your team!

This module takes you through:

- An easy to use model to recognise and understand the four main communication styles
- Different ways to adapt your written and verbal communications to the different styles when sending out payroll communications or discussing payroll issues
- Knowing the strengths your style brings and what challenges to watch out for when working with others

Remuneration Systems

If your payroll role is also responsible for developing or improving your remuneration systems, or you're involved in the salary review and bonus processes, this module covers:

- Different models you can use for your remuneration model including job sizing, banding and families
- Understanding different salary review philosophies and what the challenges are you might face
- Systems and processes for calculating bulk salary increases or bonuses payments.
- Legal issues if things go wrong

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Offering Employment

In some payroll roles, you can be responsible for managing the operational processes around offering employment to candidates and then setting them up in the payroll system.

This module takes you through:

- The legislative requirements around employment agreements. You might not be preparing the clauses, but you should know what to look out for.
- The challenges that can occur with employment agreements being signed.
- Effective administration and filing of personal information.

Leading Change

This module takes you through using specific change tools with a payroll system change case study so that you are fully prepared to drive change in your business. If you are going to be involved in a payroll change, this module is for you. You will finish the module with:

- An in depth understanding of different change models and how they work
- How you can own change and create engagement
- Techniques to take people through their change journey
- An understanding of different ways to develop and roll out a change plan
- Methods to measure change ROI

Payroll Metrics and Analytics

In recent years many HR teams have been asked to produce more analytics – and where do they turn? To payroll! However payroll teams can also now get asked to produce employee data. If this is an area you want to learn more about, this module covers:

- The different levels of data from metrics through to predictive analytics and how you can take your business on the right journey
- Ideas on different things that you should be measuring and what they can show you
- How to metrics and analytics to build credibility and add value to your business

Leading a Team

Whether you are a team leader, or Payroll Manager – if you have people reporting directly to you, or through a matrix reporting line (e.g. if someone in finance helps with payroll processing) this module will give you some ideas on how to manage your team effectively. This module covers:

- Understanding your own management style, the strengths you have and what to watch out for
- Systems for setting up team processes, delegating and measuring performance
- Different ways you can develop your payroll teams skills and experience
- Dealing with different personality styles in your team

Writing Payroll Policies

There are several policies that you may have responsibility for developing or updating when working in payroll. This module covers:

- The different payroll policies that can be useful to have
- Making your policies engaging & adapting them to different communication styles
- When you should and shouldn't introduce a new policy
- Building your managers engagement and ownership of the policies so they're not just owned by payroll
- Use your policies effectively to address issues

Establishing Yourself

It's hard early in your career when you are still building your payroll experience, but advising your business on best practise, and answering questions from managers. . This module will help you work out how to establish yourself including:

- Identifying your core skills but also areas that may cause you challenges, and how to mitigate these
- How to get managers and your team onside when you don't have experience of a particular area
- How to advise and answer managers without taking the monkey onto your back all the time!

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Frequently asked Questions

How do the assignments work?

For each topic you'll be sent an assignment. This consists of case studies with different questions to answer or asking you to review of your own processes. The pass mark is 70%. Our team will assess whether you have passed the paper and have demonstrated good thinking around each answer. If they feel there are areas that you need to provide more information, they will come back to you to provide you further time and some coaching to do this. The aim is to help you develop your skills in each area so you can deliver excellence in payroll to your business so you do get a second chance if your first try at the assignment isn't as well thought out as needed or you didn't get enough of the answers correct.

How long does each assignment take?

You have a month to complete each assignment and it will take you 2 – 3 hours to complete. Along with watching the webinar and reading any articles, you should be able to complete each module by putting aside an hour a week, or four hours a month.

What if I need more time?

While we schedule your Certificate over a 12 month period, you can ask for an extension on assignments if you have a busy workload, or are travelling or have any other issue that means you need more time. In total you can extend your Certificate up to 6 months, however you must finish within 18 months of beginning to be awarded the Certificate.

Can I fail the Certificate?

Yes if you don't complete your assignments, then you cannot pass the Certificate! If you complete an assignment but haven't demonstrated the knowledge to pass the topic, our team will provide you with feedback and coaching and give you a chance to review and resubmit your assignment.

How much does it cost?

The investment for the Certificate is NZ$1,750.
There is a 10% discount if you work for a registered Charity.
To register for the Certificate just click here.

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Testimonials

Still not convinced you'll get the best learning you've ever experienced? Here are some of the comments from people who have completed our HR Certificates:

"The information provided was just so informative and then being able to actually apply that knowledge through the case studies is just fantastic and really helped to bed in the information. In addition, I have gone back to the information many times already to make sure I am on the right track.
The webinars, the printable slides form the webinars, the case studies, the feedback, the workshop – gosh these have been so thoroughly helpful for each and every topic!"

Melissa, HR Advisor, NZ University

"I'm most proud of completing the assignments. I was very nervous "going back to school". I felt quite exposed submitting assignments to be marked as I haven't done this in a long time. I understand now that I was given an opportunity to fail in a safe environment without judgement."

Nicole, HR Manager, Food Production Company

"Each assignment delivered an enormous learning for me. I believe my biggest learning was from the Recruitment Strategy and processes assignment. This is an area I'm currently participating more and more in and referenced a lot of information from my assignment".

Helen, Learning and Development Officer, Travel Company

"I think the one thing that has had the widest and most visible effect is that HR policies can, and should, be written simply! After doing the Writing HR policies assignment, I went through our HR policies and they are all very complicated and use a whole bunch of words that just don't need to be there. Keep it simple! I am now going through each of our policies and simplifying the language".

Courtenay, HR Advisor, ITO

"I just want to pass on feedback that your material is easy to understand and the training you offer in my opinion is by the far the most relevant I've seen in a very long time".

Rebecca, HR Advisor, Dairy Company

"I am already seeing the value of this course from the first assignment. Thank you so much for the coaching and feedback your team provided."

Alvina, Junior HR Business Partner, Banking Sector