

## **SPARK ARPS Certification Exam Outline**

### **(20%) I – REVIEW AND ANALYZE**

#### **A. GATHER AND REVIEW BASIC EMPLOYER INFORMATION (e.g., TYPE OF ORGANIZATION, SIZE, PROFITABILITY, CORPORATE CULTURE, EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHICS, PLAN TYPE, PLAN ASSETS)**

The competent and responsible performance of this task requires knowledge of:

- ▶ Retirement plan selection factors
- ▶ Information sources (e.g., RFP, website, filings)
- ▶ Retirement plan types
- ▶ Retirement plan features
- ▶ Investment options and features
- ▶ Accounting methodologies
- ▶ Plan documents
- ▶ Plan reports and filings
- ▶ Compliance requirements
- ▶ Nondiscrimination testing
- ▶ Service and investment fees
- ▶ Fiduciary requirements (e.g., 404(c), QDIA, prohibited transactions)
- ▶ Employee communications and education programs
- ▶ Participant investment advice
- ▶ Implementation of new or conversion of existing plans

#### **B. IDENTIFY ISSUES/NEEDS AND DETERMINE NEXT STEPS (e.g., RETIREMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES, INVESTMENT GOALS, EXISTING PLAN PERFORMANCE AND PARTICIPATION)**

The competent and responsible performance of this task requires knowledge of:

- ▶ Retirement plan selection factors
- ▶ Information sources (e.g., RFP, website, filings)
- ▶ Retirement plan types
- ▶ Retirement plan features
- ▶ Investment options and features
- ▶ Accounting methodologies
- ▶ Plan documents
- ▶ Plan reports and filings
- ▶ Compliance requirements
- ▶ Nondiscrimination testing
- ▶ Service and investment fees
- ▶ Fiduciary requirements (e.g., 404(c), QDIA, prohibited transactions)
- ▶ Employee communications and education programs
- ▶ Participant investment advice
- ▶ Implementation of new or conversion of existing plans

**C. COMMUNICATE AND ASSIST IN ISSUE RESOLUTION (e.g., RETIREMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES, INVESTMENT GOALS, EXISTING PLAN PERFORMANCE AND PARTICIPATION)**

The competent and responsible performance of this task requires knowledge of:

- ▶ Retirement plan selection factors
- ▶ Information sources (e.g., RFP, website, filings)
- ▶ Retirement plan types
- ▶ Retirement plan features
- ▶ Investment options and features
- ▶ Accounting methodologies
- ▶ Plan documents
- ▶ Plan reports and filings
- ▶ Compliance requirements
- ▶ Nondiscrimination testing
- ▶ Service and investment fees
- ▶ Fiduciary requirements (e.g., 404(c), QDIA, prohibited transactions)
- ▶ Employee communications and education programs
- ▶ Participant investment advice
- ▶ Implementation of new or conversion of existing plans

**(10%) II – CONVERT AND IMPLEMENT**

**A. ASSIST WITH PROJECT PLAN DELIVERABLES (e.g., SETTING EXPECTATIONS, OBTAINING PLAN DOCUMENTS, INSTALLING INVESTMENTS AND DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN)**

The competent and responsible performance of this task requires knowledge of:

- ▶ Retirement plan selection factors
- ▶ Information sources (e.g., RFP, website, filings)
- ▶ Retirement plan types
- ▶ Retirement plan features
- ▶ Investment options and features
- ▶ Accounting methodologies
- ▶ Plan documents
- ▶ Plan reports and filings
- ▶ Compliance requirements
- ▶ Nondiscrimination testing
- ▶ Service and investment fees
- ▶ Fiduciary requirements (e.g., 404(c), QDIA, prohibited transactions)
- ▶ Employee communications and education programs
- ▶ Participant investment advice
- ▶ Implementation of new or conversion of existing plans
- ▶ Employee communications, education and investment advice programs
- ▶ Plan implementation process
- ▶ Plan establishment or conversion responsibilities

**B. ASSIST IN THE DELIVERY OF THE COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN (e.g., SETTING OBJECTIVES, DEVELOPING MATERIALS AND DELIVERY METHODOLOGY, MEASURING RESULTS)**

The competent and responsible performance of this task requires knowledge of:

- ▶ Retirement plan types
- ▶ Retirement plan features
- ▶ Investment options and features
- ▶ Plan documents
- ▶ Compliance requirements, including nondiscrimination testing
- ▶ Service levels (e.g., call center metrics, accuracy and timeliness of deliverables)
- ▶ Industry benchmarks and best practices
- ▶ Fiduciary requirements (e.g., 404(c), QDIA, prohibited transactions)
- ▶ Employee communications, education and investment advice programs
- ▶ Provider characteristics, capabilities and pricing
- ▶ Competitive landscape

**C. COORDINATE DATA MOVEMENT BETWEEN THE PLAN SPONSOR AND VENDORS (e.g., PRIOR SERVICE AND PAYROLL PROVIDERS)**

The competent and responsible performance of this task requires knowledge of:

- ▶ Information sources (e.g., employer, providers)
- ▶ Implementation of new or conversion of existing plans

**(70%) III – DELIVER ONGOING RETIREMENT PLAN SERVICES**

**A. PROCESS TRANSACTIONS (e.g., PROCESS TRANSACTIONS AND TRADES, ACCOUNT FOR INVESTMENTS, PROVIDE REPORTS TO SPONSOR AND PARTICIPANTS)**

The competent and responsible performance of this task requires knowledge of:

- ▶ Information sources
- ▶ Retirement plan types
- ▶ Retirement plan features
- ▶ Investment options and features
- ▶ Accounting methodologies
- ▶ Plan documents
- ▶ Plan reports and filings
- ▶ Compliance requirements
- ▶ Nondiscrimination testing
- ▶ Service and investment fees
- ▶ Fiduciary requirements (e.g., 404(c), QDIA, prohibited transactions)
- ▶ Employee communications and education programs
- ▶ Participant investment advice, education programs, participation rates

## **B. ACCOUNT FOR PLAN FINANCIALS**

The competent and responsible performance of this task requires knowledge of:

- ▶ Information sources (e.g., RFP, website, filings)
- ▶ Investment options and features
- ▶ Accounting methodologies
- ▶ Plan reports and filings
- ▶ Service and investment fees
- ▶ Fiduciary requirements (e.g., 404(c), QDIA, prohibited transactions)

## **C. SERVICE ONGOING PLAN**

The competent and responsible performance of this task requires knowledge of:

- ▶ Retirement plan selection factors
- ▶ Information sources (e.g., RFP, website, filings)
- ▶ Retirement plan types
- ▶ Retirement plan features
- ▶ Investment options and features
- ▶ Accounting methodologies
- ▶ Plan documents
- ▶ Plan reports and filings
- ▶ Compliance requirements
- ▶ Nondiscrimination testing
- ▶ Service and investment fees
- ▶ Fiduciary requirements (e.g., 404(c), QDIA, prohibited transactions)
- ▶ Employee communications and education programs
- ▶ Participant investment advice
- ▶ Implementation of new or conversion of existing plans